



Council on Aging

October 16, 2014 - **Minutes**
181 Hillman Street, Building 9

Board Members Present:

Bruce Duarte, Chair
Virginia Morrison, Secretary
Inez Mello
Jane Stott
Joan Swain
James Sylvia

Also Present:

Debra Lee, COA Director
Pamela Amaral-Lema, COA Administrative Specialist
Cynthia Wallquist, Community Services Director
Marisol Grant, Hazelwood Senior Center Coordinator
Naomi Carney- Councilor At Large
Dana Rebeiro, Ward 4 City Councilor

Excused:

Patricia Costa, Vice-Chair
Esperanza Alejandro-Berube
Stanley Ociesa
Mary Sullivan

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM by the Chairman, Bruce Duarte

Secretary's Report

Mr. Duarte asked the board members to read over the minutes to see if there were any questions. The board members agreed upon the approval of the minutes from September 11th, 2014 meeting.

A motion to approve the minutes for September 11th, 2014 meeting was made by Mr. Sylvia and seconded by Ms. Swain. The motion was unanimously approved.

Appearances

Marisol Grant, Hazelwood Senior Center Coordinator- Ms. Grant spoke about the many new programs she has implemented into the weekly schedule. Some of the new programs Ms. Grant has started are: Zumba Gold, Zumba Toning, dominoes group, special monthly hot and cold lunches and a monthly craft series. Ms. Grant also stated she will begin teaching a weekly Intro to Spanish class starting in January. Ms. Grant stated attendance has increased with all of the programs. Ms. Grant said the Hazelwood Open House was a huge success with over 70 seniors in attendance. Candida Rose entertained and "The Oaks" provided a free lunch.

Old Business

Electronic Tracking System- Ms. Lee stated the system is all set to start, but is waiting for the computers carts to arrive so the monitors can be securely based. Ms. Lee stated some of the activity programming has to be changed before the system can be launched.

MCOA- Ms. Lee and Ms. Amaral-Lema attended the annual Massachusetts Council on Aging conference at the Seacrest Resort in Falmouth, MA. Ms. Lee reported the seminars were very informative and gave her some ideas of new programming for the different sites.

Senior Center Open Houses- All of the senior centers had successful open houses. The Downtown Open House was held on September 8th, 2014 with “Ray-J” and Victor Fonseca as entertainment. Buttonwood Senior Center open house was held on September 26th and had over 80 seniors go in and out through the day. Hazelwood Senior Center open house was held on October 3rd with Candida Rose as the entertainment. Brooklawn Senior Center had their open house on October 6th. All the open houses displayed new programming offered at each senior center.

Aging Mastery Grant- Mr. Duarte asked Ms. Lee how the Aging Mastery Grant has gone. Ms. Lee stated the aging mastery group is really pleased with the programming that is being offered. They are also interested in continuing a weekly group meeting at the Hillman St. Senior Support Center. Ms. Lee informed the board members that they are an active group who will be utilizing the services offered at Hillman St. Since the Aging Mastery Program is ending on Tuesday, December 16th, the group will still meet on a weekly basis with special guest speakers. There are about 28 seniors who attend this new program.

New Business

CARES Program- Ms. Lee spoke about the new CARES program being offered at Hillman St. This program provides an opportunity for families affected by memory impairment to participate in two separate support groups that will be held simultaneously. These groups will provide information, guidance and respite to care partners and conversation and socialization for those with memory impairment. The program begins on November 7th from 1PM to 2:30PM. The caregiver support group is led by the Director of Community and Family Outreach from Hope Dementia & Alzheimer’s Services. Councilor Carney stated this is a great opportunity for people to understand what is going on with Alzheimer’s and dementia and was wondering if this can continue since there is such a need for it. Ms. Lee stated the service would be provided and continued if the need is there.

Chairman’s Report- Mr. Duarte

Mr. Duarte stated having a coordinator attend monthly has helped the board to stay abreast on the daily activities at the senior centers.

Mr. Duarte is pleased with the new services that are being offered through the Council on Aging and thanked Ms. Lee, Ms. Amaral-Lema and Ms. Wallquist for their hard work and dedication to helping seniors.

Motion to approve the Chairman’s report was made by Ms. Stott and seconded by Ms. Swain. It was unanimously approved.

Director’s Report- Ms. Lee

Boston University will host mental health training on November 12th, 2014 at the Hillman St. Senior Support Center. Many of the senior center staff and administrative staff will attend the face to face sessions. There kick off is the 12th of November from 10-12 which will be followed by a 16 hours of training online to be completed over the next four months. There will then be another face to face session in April upon the course completion. Training was offered to other COA’s in the area.

Tuesday, November 18th is national memory screening day reported by Ms. Lee. This service is open up to the community to help seniors to find out how they are doing with memory assessment. The service is from 1:30PM-4PM and it will be offered at 181 Hillman St., Building 9. This service is offered by Alzheimer’s Association.

Ms. Lee spoke about the success of twilight bingo and seniors have asked to continue it once the weather is

nicer. Ms. Lee stated it will resume again in the spring.

Ms. Lee said Shine has been extremely busy since the open enrollment is here. The New Bedford Council on Aging has four SHINE counselors to assist seniors with Medicare insurance questions and supplement plans. Also, Shine counselors help clients apply for state benefits they may be eligible for. Ms. Lee stated she and Ms. Amaral-Lema were on WBSM with Phil Paleologos to discuss Shine services.

Ms. Lee spoke about the possibility of having a monthly cable access show to spotlight different activities going on at the senior centers and the support center.

Motion to approve the Director's report was made Ms. Swain and seconded by Mr. Sylvia. It was unanimously approved.

Director of Community Services Report- Cynthia Wallquist

Clear Path Program- Ms. Wallquist spoke about the Clear Path snow removal program offered to seniors and disabled homeowners. There are 60 slots for this service with 30 of them paid for by the Disabilities Commission and the other half paid by the Council on Aging. Patients who need to leave their home for dialysis or for chemotherapy treatments have first priority. This service helps with snow removal from their driveway and walkway to ensure safe access to leave their home for treatment. A social worker takes the intake and processes the paperwork needed to be approved.

Fresh Start Program- Ms. Wallquist stated the Fresh Start Program is going well. The Fresh Start committee meets on a monthly basis to go over different cases. There is a storage unit called "Nana's Attic" offered for individuals who are transitioning or downsizing to a smaller home, apartment or assisted living. This service has helped many residents from the Inter-Church Council along with New Bedford Housing Authority.

Senior Center Classes- Ms. Wallquist stated the music program and exercise classes are going well at the senior centers. Seniors are pleased with the extra exercise classes that are offered for free at the senior centers.

Motion to approve the Director of Community Services report was made by Ms. Swain and seconded by Ms. Stott. It was unanimously approved.

Mr. Duarte asked Councilor Rebeiro and Councilor Carney if there was anything they wanted to discuss. Ms. Rebeiro asked if there were any ideas of sources of funding to help seniors who own homes to make repairs they are unable to afford. Councilor Rebeiro is looking to work with contractors who are willing to donate their time to help seniors' upkeep their homes. Ms. Lee stated she had applied for a Home Depot grant and was denied due to the extreme number of applicants.

Councilor Rebeiro asked if there are any programs offered to help with preventing dementia. Ms. Lee said there are many programs offered at all of the senior centers to help keep their minds active, such as: puzzles, computer training, bingo and other services to avoid or slow down the progress of dementia.

Correspondence

Ms. Carney, Councilor At Large, asked Mr. Duarte to read a letter that was sent to the board members from her and Councilor Gomes regarding a former volunteer. Mr. Duarte read the letter to the board members.

The next Council on Aging advisory board meeting will be held on Thursday, November 13th, 2014 at 9AM.

Motion to adjourn this meeting was made by Mr. Sylvia and seconded by Ms. Mello. It was unanimously approved.