



## ***Council on Aging***

December 11, 2014 - **Minutes**  
181 Hillman Street, Building 9

### **Board Members Present:**

Bruce Duarte, Chair  
Patricia Costa, Vice-Chair  
Esperanza Alejandro-Berube  
Inez Mello  
Stanley Ociesa  
Jane Stott  
Mary Sullivan  
Joan Swain  
James Sylvia

### **Also Present:**

Debra Lee, COA Director  
Pamela Amaral-Lema, COA Administrative Specialist  
Cynthia Wallquist, Director of Community Services  
Jordan Duarte, Brooklawn Senior Center Coordinator

### **Excused:**

Virginia Morrison, Secretary

**The meeting was called to order at 9:02 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 November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2014 meeting.

**A motion to approve the minutes for November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2014 meeting was made by Mr. Sylvia and seconded by Ms. Swain. The motion was unanimously approved.**

### **Appearances**

**Jordan Duarte, Brooklawn Senior Center Coordinator-** Ms. Duarte stated she has been the coordinator of the Brooklawn Senior Center since mid to late July of this year. Since arriving at the senior center, Ms. Duarte has implemented several new programs to the weekly schedule such as: Zumba Gold, a knitting and crocheting group and a monthly craft series. Ms. Duarte stated she has had several successful larger social events such as the open house in October and a large Thanksgiving celebration in November. Ms. Duarte stated there is a large group who attend the center daily for lunch. Mr. Ociesa asked Ms. Duarte how the Veteran's group was going. Ms. Duarte stated there has been less members due to health reasons, but since collaborating with Chris Gomes and Cecil Hickman, she hopes to have more veterans utilize the center. Ms. Duarte stated New Bedford Health Care Center has donated pastries and coffee for a special Veteran's breakfast held every first Monday of each month. Mr. Duarte asked Ms. Duarte how the electronic tracking system is working out at Brooklawn. Ms. Duarte replied that the new system will begin in the New Year. Mr. Duarte and other board members thanked Ms. Duarte for her hard work.

### **Old Business**

**Aging Mastery Program-** Ms. Lee stated the Aging Mastery Program will wrap up next week with a special luncheon and a speaker from Hope Health discussing depression during the holidays. Ms. Lee invited the board members to attend the special luncheon on the last day of the Aging Mastery Program on Tuesday, December 16<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Lee stated there is a core group of seniors among the Aging Mastery Program who are still interested in meeting on a weekly basis to discuss topics and concerns regarding aging well.

**Electronic Tracking System-** Ms. Lee stated the transportation component of the system is going well. The staff are able to book appointments months and even years in advance. At Buttonwood and Hazelwood senior centers the program has been running well and everyone seems to enjoy the new system. Ms. Lee stated there is an automatic birthday calling system that can be set up to call each senior automatically in the month of their birthday. The automatic system is also an important piece because it can be programmed to inform seniors and instructors of the senior centers being closed due to bad/inclement weather.

### **New Business**

**National Depression Screening-** Ms. Lee will be receiving a depression screening kit from the National Depression Association to be held at each of the centers during January and February.

### **Chairman's Report- Mr. Duarte**

Mr. Duarte announced his retirement from the Housing Authority after 22 ½ years of employment. Board members wished Mr. Duarte a healthy retirement and recommended him to stay as busy and active as possible. Mr. Duarte stated with his time availability he is willing to attend any events and assist if needed.

Mr. Duarte stated he is pleased with the reaction from seniors regarding the electronic tracking system. Mr. Duarte stated he is impressed with all of the new programs offered at the senior centers and especially the senior support center. Mr. Duarte stated he would like the senior center coordinators to attend on a monthly basis to keep the board aware of programming at the centers.

**Motion to approve the Chairman's report was made by Mr. Ocies and seconded by Ms. Swain. It was unanimously approved.**

### **Director's Report- Ms. Lee**

Ms. Lee stated in the last two weeks she was able to acquire \$27,000 in grants for the Council on Aging. The EOEI incentive grant was in the amount of \$10,000 along with the \$10,000 from A.R.A.W to total \$20,000 to be used for an outreach position. A.R.A.W. also granted the New Bedford Council on Aging \$7,000 in which half will be used in a necessity fund to help aged women with a one-time assistance of gift cards to the grocery store and the other half will help fund slots in the Clear Path program.

Ms. Lee reported she was able to acquire a van from SRTA. It is a retired demand response van that will aide with medical transportation. SRTA takes vehicles off the road once they reach a certain mileage, but the vehicles are still in good condition. After the inspection and insurance paperwork is settled the van will have the city seal and New Bedford Council on Aging painted on the van. Once the van is no longer running it will be return to SRTA.

Ms. Lee spoke about the Mental Health & Aging training session that was held in November by Boston University. Most of the New Bedford Council on Aging staff will take the online training to receive a certificate of completion.

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

### **Director of Community Services Report- Ms. Wallquist**

Ms. Wallquist spoke about the Clear Path Program offered through the Department of Community Services which helps seniors and disabled homeowners with snow removal. There are 60 slots available with first priority given to individuals who need chemotherapy, radiation treatments, and dialysis along with others needing home health care assistance.

Ms. Wallquist stated the senior activities have been going well at all of the senior centers. The exercise programs are well attended. She also reported there will be a music program starting at the Buttonwood Senior Center.

**Motion to approve the Director of Community Services report was made Ms. Mello and seconded by Mr. Sylvia. It was unanimously approved.**

### **Correspondence**

The next Council on Aging advisory board meeting will be held on Thursday, January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014 at 9AM.

**Motion to adjourn this meeting was made by Ms. Stott and seconded by Ms. Swain. It was unanimously approved.**