



Council on Aging

December 10, 2015 - **Minutes**
181 Hillman Street, Building 9

Board Members Present:

Bruce Duarte, Chair
Virginia Morrison, Secretary
Joan Halter
Inez Mello
Stanley Oceisa
Jane Stott
Mary Sullivan

Also Present:

Debra Lee, COA Director
Cynthia Wallquist, Community Services Director
George Smith, Mass Senior Action Council
Barbara Cooke, Mass Senior Action Council

Excused:

Patricia Costa, Vice Chair
Esperanza Alejandro-Berube

The meeting was called to order at 9:04AM 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.

A motion to approve the minutes from the November 12, 2015 meeting was made by Ms. Swain seconded by Ms Stott. The motion was unanimously approved.

Appearances

George Smith, Mass Senior Action Council Bristol County Chapter President-

Mr. Duarte introduced Mr. Smith as a well respected man of the city of New Bedford who has been involved with city politics for several decades.

Mr. Smith thanked the board for being invited to the meeting. Mr. Smith is the Bristol County Chapter President of Mass Senior Action. Mr. Smith has been involved with Mass Senior Action for over four years. Mass Senior Action council meets every fourth Thursday of the month from 1-3pm at St. George's church. They discuss topics of housing, social security, Medicare, transportation and other issues which affect seniors. Mr. Smith spoke about transportation issues with MBTA in Boston. Mr. Smith spoke about working with Senator Warren on various senior issues. Mr. Smith introduced Ms. Cooke who is the outreach worker for Mass Senior Action Council. Mass Senior Action has over 1,200 Massachusetts participants.

Barbara Cooke, Mass Senior Action Council Outreach Worker-

Ms. Cooke introduced herself to the board. Ms. Cooke used to be a nurse, but now is devoted to Mass Senior Action. She is very dedicated to seniors' needs. Ms. Cooke stated Medicare is always a main issue. She explained about Medicare. Every September CMS (Center of Medicare Services) reviews the costs of Medicare. CMS makes the decision of whether Medicare costs are lower or higher. She spoke about the COLA

(Cost of Living increase). If seniors didn't receive a COLA, and have their Medicare premium deducted from their social security then their Medicare premiums will remain at \$104.90. Anyone who does not pay Medicare out of social security or are new to Medicare then premium will be \$121.80. Ms. Cooke stated the cost of healthcare is what troubles seniors most. Mass Senior Action motto "is just don't take it, take charge". Find out what will work and let elected officials know and see what we can do and change it. Mass Senior Action educates themselves on how to best deal with politicians and how to change legislation that would hurt seniors. Seniors are usually the first to be hurt when cuts are made by the government.

Old Business

SNAP-

Ms. Lee stated she and other COA employees have helped over 335 seniors apply for SNAP assistance. They are 165 applications away from reaching their 500 quota by May 2016.

Clerk/Typist

Mark Quintal, COA new clerk/typist, was introduced to the advisory board.

SRTA Van-

Ms. Lee reported that the loaned SRTA van is being cleaned and painted. It is a 16 passenger vehicle and will assist in bringing seniors to shopping, personal or medical trips.

New Business

Turkey Giveaway-

Ms. Lee reported that Tufts Senior Care Options and Ms. Amaral-Lema worked on a Thanksgiving turkey giveaway. Ms. Amaral-Lema and Ms. Andre, Community Relations Manager for Tufts, gave away 50 turkeys on November 23, 2016 at Buttonwood Senior Center. Ms. Amaral-Lema delivered five turkeys to homebound seniors.

Chairman's Report

Mr. Duarte spoke about a meeting that he, Ms. Lee, Ms. Amaral-Lema, Ms. Arsenault had with Councilor Ribeiro in regards to reaching out to seniors in the downtown area since the closing of the downtown senior center. Councilor Ribeiro will let Debra and the Board know if there are any future needs on this issue.

Mr. Duarte asked Ms. Lee about any pending grants. Ms. Lee reported Friendly Cities Initiative in the amount of \$2,000 to be used in the planning process of New Bedford being age friendly designation. Ms. Lee spoke about A.R.A.W grant in the amount of \$27,000 (\$10,000-outreach staffing, \$7,000- discretionary fund and \$10,000 in potential social day funding).

A motion to accept the Chairman's report was made by Mr. Oceisa and seconded by Ms. Sullivan. The motion was unanimously approved.

Director's Report-

Ms. Lee reported to the board that COA was approved for \$7,500 from the Coastline Title III grant. This grant

helps fund the salary of drivers. Community Development Block grant funds the salaries of the senior center coordinators. Executive Office of Elder Affairs grant funds the most of the administrative staff, drivers and outreach workers.

Ms. Lee informed the board that many seniors are signing up for the Christmas Dinner sponsored by the Jewish Federation.

A motion to approve the Director's report was made by Ms. Swain and seconded by Ms. Sullivan. The motion was unanimously approved.

The next meeting will be January 14, 2016.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Ms. Swain and seconded by Ms. Sullivan, all affirmatively approved.