

NEWBURYPORT COUNCIL ON AGING
March 17, 2022

The Board of Directors of the Newburyport Council on Aging met on this date at the Newburyport Senior/Community Center, 332 High Street, Newburyport, MA 01950

President Terry Rooney called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

Members Present:

Terry Rooney	Rosemary Decie	Richard Eaton	John Green
Annie Maurer	Yvonne McQuilkin	Cynthia Muir	Elaine Paglia
Erin Sheehey			

Staff Present:

Paula Burke
Mary Kelly

Guest:

Greg Jingress

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Having reviewed the Secretary's minutes for the previous meeting, it was moved, seconded, and

Voted: To accept the Secretary's report of the Board of Directors meeting of February 17, 2022.

ACTIVITIES REPORT: Mary Kelly

- Mary and members of the transportation subcommittee attended the opening ceremonies for free MVRTA bus rides. It was thought that the Board riding a bus on the Newburyport route after a meeting and having the paper publicize it would help inform seniors of the new free rides.
- School art is on display and people can write a card praising the work. The school also sponsored an intergenerational art program.
- People are beginning to stay for Grab and Go meals and there weren't enough on March? 16.
- The COA used to have a van in the Yankee Homecoming parade, Mary would like to make it more exciting this year. She will talk about it at our next meeting.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Paula Burke

- The AARP tax program will serve 300 this year including high school students. Most are from Newburyport. On March 26 there will be a program to help students understand the tax laws.

- The COA is looking for a per diem bus driver who is a Newburyport resident with experience driving.
- There will be a presentation April 7 on the SCC Terrace regarding our application for CPA funds. Paula met with the group to review the plans. It falls under recreation funding so can be maintained mainly by the DPS.
- The paperwork for the EOEA Formula Grant Disbursement (\$51,132) has been sent in. The allotment will be the same as last year and helps pay for Cindy (hospitality) after she works off her tax hours. It could also pay for the per diem bus driver. The Senior population has almost doubled since the 2010 census so we need to look into why the disbursement hasn't been adjusted. The COA? budget was submitted March? 16. The COA is looking for an outreach person. It's been suggested adding 25% for fuel reimbursement^[TR1].
- Volunteer recognition during Yankee Homecoming is August 4. The next day will be the Senior Information Fair and we will participate with information about the center and its services and programs.
- Dracut shared a graphic they had created with information about seniors in their city. We will work off it to create one about Newburyport seniors.

BOARD BUSINESS

- ONT's Food Security Advisory Group (FSAG) met at the SCC on March 1. The group's goal is to end food insecurity in Essex County by 2029. Accessibility, causes, etc. are all being looked at. One suggestion was that the COA become more involved in informing seniors about how to access SNAP and other benefits. Terry suggested possibly having a SNAP sign-up day at the COA and that we work with Our Neighbor's Table to see how we can support them in getting more eligible seniors signed up.
- The Data Subcommittee met and looked at My Senior software to see what the data tracking feature tells us.
- Transportation Subcommittee attended the opening of the free rides on MVRTA buses and spoke to Congressman Seth Moulton about transportation needs for seniors. On the Earth Day rally people will be able to take a free bus loop ride through Newburyport. Signage and shelters continue to be a big issue, but we need to see what the MVRTA is doing to make sure we don't undermine support of it and its efforts. The committee will reach out to Andrew Levine who is leading the city's Transportation Task Force.
- Elaine reported that the FONCOA had its membership drive and enrolled 260 members and raised \$6000, an increase from last year. The book bins, previously at Cushing Park, are now at the Middle School on N. Atkinson St.
- Elaine will resend information on the BU behavioral science course on challenges facing seniors.
- Yvonne has taken the COA/SCC newsletter to the Anna Jaques pulmonary clinic where it has been well received.
- The low vision support group meets with Sarah and grant money is available to pay for equipment, etc.

- Next month's agenda should include time for a discussion of providing an ombudsman type help for seniors with navigating their healthcare and Terry will look into whether other COAs have similar programs in place that we could study.

Having concluded the Board's business, it was moved, seconded, and **VOTED** to adjourn at 10:15 a.m.

The next meeting of the Newburyport Council on Aging will be on April 21 at 9:00 a.m.

Annie Maurer, Secretary