

NEWBURYPORT COUNCIL ON AGING
January 20, 2022

The Board of Directors of the Newburyport Council on Aging met on this date at the Newburyport Senior/Community Center, 331 High Street, Newburyport, MA 01950.

Board Chair Theresa Rooney called the meeting to order at 9:00.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Theresa Rooney	Rosemary Decie	Richard Eaton	John Green
Annie Maurer	Yvonne McQuilkin	Elain Paglia	Erin Sheehy

MEMBERS ABSENT

Cynthia Muir

STAFF PRESENT

Paula Burke: Director, Newburyport Council on Aging
Mary Kelly: Activities Coordinator

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Having reviewed the Secretary's minutes of the previous meeting, it was moved, seconded, and CARRIED WITHOUT OBJECTION: To accept the Secretary's report of the Board of Directors Meeting of December 16, 2021.

ACTIVITIES REPORT: Mary Kelly

- In response to the Omicron surge, the Center's programming has shut down but activities continue with programs moving to Zoom.
- Proof of vaccination is becoming more common. The Center is not currently looking for proof of vaccination from instructors. Mary reported that a majority of instructors are happy that in person programming has been suspended through 2/1/22.
- It was decided to send a letter to the new city administration asking for guidance from the health department around vaccination and other COVID protocols especially given the vulnerability of our population and absence of a vaccine mandate for municipal employees.

It was moved, seconded and

VOTED: To seek advice specific to the Senior Center from the city administration around determining COVID protocols that will balance safety while facilitating a return to in person programming.

NOMINATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE: Elain Paglia

- There are two positions available and the nominating committee will now contact the new mayor's office to post positions and reiterate the nominating process.

- Terry suggested the bylaws may need to be updated to include emeritus position and verification is needed that terms have been reduced to three years before posting. Terry will follow up with Councilor Khan.

FRIENDS OF THE COUNCIL ON AGING: Elaine Paglia

- The friends are looking at capital expenditures and needs and reviewing investments to see if they are the best use of money.
- They have agreed to pick up the cost of the Grab and Go lunches for January.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Paula Burke

- Paula followed up with Joanne Carroll after Charlie's death to communicate the Center's appreciation for his long service and sorrow at his passing.
- Numbers are pretty good compared to pre COVID participation.
- There will be a vote next month on creating a multi-purpose area outside the Center. We are looking for a counselor to advocate for it.
- The Center is up and running except for programming. The Community Days have been put on hold for two months because they bring large numbers of people into the Center.

BOARD BUSINESS: Terry Rooney

- The plan is to establish Board sub-committees to investigate the status of seniors in the city to better serve them
- Proposed subcommittees include: Data Analysis: Transportation: and Food Insecurity, including helping seniors take advantage of benefits such as SNAP.
- Terry will send out an email describing committees and what their goals are for the year and people can sign up.
- Yvonne offered to film the difficulties getting around town on public transport.
- Terry will send a draft of the letter asking for advice about determining vaccination status.
- Considering the number of seniors who are house rich and cash poor or who have trouble accessing affordable housing in Newburyport, it makes sense to reach out to the Affordable Housing Committee and partner with them when possible.
- The Newburyport COA sent rapid tests and KN95 masks to those affected by the recent fire in Salisbury.
- Elaine will deliver a sympathy card from the Board to Charlie's wife, Joanne.
- John asked if it would be possible to find a way to help people navigate the healthcare system and perhaps provide an ombudsman to help them get through when they need to deal with it.
- Board members are encouraged to join in the question and answer session with the new mayor next Thursday.

The Board's business being concluded, It was moved, seconded, and CARRIED WITHOUT OBJECTION: To adjourn the meeting at 10:17.

The next meeting of the Newburyport Council on Aging will be on February 17, 2022.

Annie Maurer, Secretary