

Minutes of COA Board Meeting February 8, 2022 – Via Zoom

Board Members Present: James Bennett, Stephanie Becker-Stone, Lois Carra, Jennifer Chisholm Kathy Dalton, Mary DeCoursey Pearl Hines, Lily Owyang and Eva Paddock (joined from England)

Absent: James Bennett and Beverly Sealey

Staff Present: Vincent McCarthy and Susan Pacheco

Call to Order – President Owyang called meeting to order at 9:36 a.m.

Review/Acceptance of minutes: Motion made by Lois Carra, seconded by Eva Paddock. Minutes unanimously approved.

Executive Director – Susan Pacheco

1. ED updated Board on operations of COA offices and Senior due to Omicron surge.

Effective Friday, January 31st through Friday, March 11th:

- All Cambridge Senior Center and North Cambridge Senior Center classes will be held online via Zoom (including those previously held in-person)
- All other in-person activities (Cards; Games; etc.) are cancelled. Have resumed Billiards and Bingo.
- The Cambridge Senior Center located, at 806 Massachusetts Avenue, will be open for Drop In; Computer Lab; and Grab-&-Go Lunches only. Masks are required at all times inside the building.
- The North Cambridge Senior Center, located at 2050 Massachusetts Avenue, will be closed and its “in-person” offerings will be offered via Zoom.

The Council on Aging staff continues to be available during regular business hours via phone, email and by appointment. For more information regarding our virtual offerings, please call 617-349-6220 or visit www.cambridgema.gov/DHSP/COA.

2. Rapid test kits and KF94 masks are available at the Cambridge Senior Center.
3. Cambridge Warming Center has been operating well. Twice per week stakeholder calls has increased communication, therefore addressing possible issues prior to happening.
4. ED is hosting Conversation and Connection session on Thursday, February 3rd at 12 noon. ED has not hosted since June 2021 and wanted to do a check in.
5. Healthy Aging and Cycling in Cambridge will begin its series in March. COA securing funds to co-sponsor with Community Development Department. More information will be shared by Alicia Johnson throughout the month.
6. ED will join Somerville Cambridge Elder Services staff: Norah Al-Wetaid and Dana Beguerie, as a panelist on February 11th. The presentation: Breaking Down Silos: Overview of Aging Resources for Behavioral Health Providers.

COA Activities Team – Alicia Johnson

- Ms. Johnson was not present during meeting.

Highlight of events for February:

2/22 @ 11:00 – Dr. Kady Goldlist – Heart Health

2/24 @ 1:00 – Black Heritage Trail (Virtual Tour)

2/28 @ 1:30 – MCPHS Discussion – Menopause, Menopausal Symptoms and Male Menopause

Client Services – Vincent McCarthy

- Update on open CM position:
The posting is up through Thursday 2/10.
Quite a few resumes have already been submitted and Vincent has started to review them.

- Upcoming virtual presentation MBTA Travel Training & RMV– 2/22 – 10am
- Student Shoveler List – We now have 63 students on the Student Shoveler List.
- Chromebook Program - 20 machines and hotspots – we will be able to lend out to interested seniors for 2 weeks with the option for 2 additional weeks. We just kicked off the program by lending some machines to 116 Norfolk Street, a building that is preparing to go through renovations. Residents used Chromebooks to attend a recent meeting with the Housing Authority. Vincent attended the meeting and the Chromebooks all worked well.

There was an informative discussion regarding “tech assist” resources available to seniors. SCES has a Tech Assist Volunteer Program. Living Well Network also provides tech assist sessions. CCTV offers specific programming.

Old Business: There was no new business to be discussed.

New Business:

- Mary DeCoursey thanked all who participated in the MAH Listening Sessions. Many key pieces of information were presented. There is interest to have Mary present at future board meeting of summary of needs. ED will schedule on future agenda.
- Pearl Hines announced the city meetings being held regarding the new City Manager search. ED informed the Board that Lily Owyang would participate in a session that Executive Search Firm would have with other City Boards and Commissions. Ms. Hines attended a meeting hosted by Councilor Simmons, in attendance the current City Manager. Ms. Hines raised concern of question raised to the current City Manager: “what is the city doing for seniors and what activities are being offered to occupy their time”? Also, Ms. Hines mentioned that there was question as to why the Senior Center was empty?
ED responded: It is unclear as to the question posed to the current City Manager? The group meeting was to receive input on characteristics for leadership profile of future City Manager. The COA has undergone many efforts to engage seniors in activities, whether in-person or virtually. There are many offerings and outreach of events is always needed. The COA recognizes that it does not reach all seniors and more effort to reach underserved seniors is needed.
To address the question of an empty Senior Center? Due to current COVID safety measures, the emptiness is a product of such measures. Once COVID safety measures are lifted, the Center will once again be a hub of activity.

Jennifer Chisholm and Lois Carra motioned to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m. (3:30 p.m. England time).

Next meeting: Tuesday, March 8, 2022 @ 9:30 a.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Susan Pacheco.