

Minutes of COA Board Meeting Tuesday, April 8, 2025 – Via Zoom

Board Members Present: Harriet Ahouse, Mary DeCoursey, Pearl Hines, Debra Mandel, Lily Owyang, Eva Paddock, Joumathe Theodore

Board Members Absent: Debra Mandel, Beverly Sealey

Staff Present: Alicia Johnson, Geoff Kotowski, and Susan Pacheco

Call to Order – Meeting called to order at 9:38 a.m.

Review/Acceptance of minutes: March 2025 meeting minutes were approved. Motion made by Eva and seconded by Harriet. All in favor.

Executive Director – Susan Pacheco

- Increase COA Formula Grant by \$1/Elder. This is an ask from \$15 to \$16/elder. \$1.7M increase. The Formula Grant are funds distributed to each COA in every city and town in the state based on the number of elders living in the municipalities. This is the core funding for every COA to provide services and staff. MA Councils on Aging are urging the Legislature to increase.
- Navigating Loss Group's last session occurred on April 7th. There has been an ask to resume group in the future. We will explore again in the fall. Mary shared that Mt. Auburn has an ongoing Grief Support Group.
- Human Services Budget City Council hearing is scheduled for May 14th. Ellen Semonoff, Sue Walsh, Janice Alger and Phil DeGuglielmo will meet with COA staff on April 16th for COA budget discussion.
- Eva will be guest facilitator for this month's movie screening: One Life ~ April 22nd @ 1:00 pm.
- COA in collaboration with Cambridge Public Library and Living Well Network for movie screening and discussion of: The Age of Love. Movie will be screened at main library on May 15th @ 4:00 pm.

Cambridge Senior Center – Alicia Johnson

- Alicia updated Board on successful past programs: Revolutionary Encounter and Scams Workshop in collaboration with Somerville Cambridge Elder Services. Future programming includes Healthy Aging Group Ride. 34 registrants thus far. This is in collaboration with the Community Development Department.
- Meals – the program continues to grow. As a result, we will be moving to a reservation system starting in May. Reservation procedures have been announced and written. All procedures have been written in plain language and have been translated into 9 languages. Staff will ensure that all receive a meal. If participant has reserved the hot meal option will be served. If participant has not reserved, must wait until all reservations are taken or can opt for a cold meal option.

North Cambridge Senior Center – Geoff Kotowski

- Geoff updated the Board on program highlights. The Ethiopian Older Adult Group has been going well. There is an ESOL component to the meet up. There is a feeling of connection, learning and inclusiveness.
- The AI event went very well. Well attended. Participants learned how to create songs and explored various sounds. Some commented that "they now had a new hobby."
- Geoff has enjoyed working on news stories with the department's Communications Director, Bridget Martin. Publicity has yielded new registrants to the Center.
- Photos taken by participants of the Documentary Photography class will be displayed at Porter Square Books. Please check out the display in person or see the write up on our website.
- Several trips scheduled: Wrentham Outlets, Castle Island, The Arboretum, Gloucester and the Titanic exhibit.
- Geoff did share that meals program at the Center currently has about 4-5 attendees. The meals are pre-packaged. Participants attending programs at the Center are usually there prior to lunch or after lunch. Most do not express interest. Board members suggested doing a story for Daily City update. Also suggested, perhaps a Lunch and Learn event would attract people to come for lunch and stay for program.

Client Services – Vincent McCarthy

~ no report as Vincent was on vacation.

Old Business: None

New Business: None

The meeting was adjourned at 10:52 a.m.

Next meeting: Tuesday, May 13, 2025 @ 9:30 a.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by
Susan Pacheco