

## **Minutes of COA Board Meeting Tuesday, September 9, 2025 – Via Zoom**

**Board Members Present:** Harriet Ahouse, Mary DeCoursey, Pearl Hines, Debra Mandel, Lily Owyang, Beverly Sealey, Joumathe Theodore

**Board Members Absent:** Eva Paddock

**Staff Present:** Alicia Johnson, Vincent McCarthy and Susan Pacheco

**Call to Order** – Meeting called to order at 9:40 a.m.

**Review/Acceptance of minutes:** June 2025 meeting minutes were approved. Motion made by Lily and seconded by Pearl. All in favor.

### **Executive Director – Susan Pacheco**

ED updated Board on happenings.

There has been much activity in the Centers and COA services throughout the summer.

~NCSC Director position is still open. Only 25 resumes have been received and most not eligible applicants. Continue to keep open, in the event of additional resumes. Staff have been rotating and maintaining coverage. The NCSC remained open for regular hours during this time.

~ COA Project and Activity Assistant ~ interviews are being conducted. Good candidates thus far. This person will be a direct report to Alicia. This staff person to assist with data collection; strategizing about expanding programming within the centers, as well as in other areas of the city.

~COA's new initiative: create programming in the western part of the city (Russell Youth and Community Center). This is in collaboration with other Human Services' colleagues through Recreation and Community Youth Program. More to report at the October meeting.

~There were questions from members about how federal funding is impacting COA. Currently, COA is not directly impacted.

~Board Members asked if creating programming outside of the center, would that mean less people coming to the center? It is not believed that less people will be accessing the center. Having programming outside of the center would increase programming through the COA at satellite locations. Board Member M. DeCoursey stated that Mt. Auburn Hospital has various health programs that could be facilitated at the Russell Center. ED to follow up on this suggestion. Ex. Health Literacy and Health Education

~ MA Senior Action Council invited ED; as well as staff from Somerville Cambridge Elder Services, CEOC, City's Housing Liaison and Somerville COA ED to discuss potential impacts of federal funding cuts.

### **Cambridge Senior Center – Alicia Johnson**

~September is National Senior Center Month. There has been publicity through City's web page highlighting the Senior Centers.

~Alicia updated Board on meals reservation systems. Overall, working very well. There are still many who reserve but who do not show. Food Service Manager has become a great "guesstimator" for meal prep. It is important to do this, to avoid meal waste.

~Increase in participation at the center. On average, there are 150-191 people per day visiting the center!

~Great programs on the horizon. A new Spanish class has started at the center. Other new programs: Quilting Workshop, Tai Chi Paradigm, Hand Building w/Clay, Pastel Workshop, Uplifting Black Voices, and many more.

~Town Meeting occurs on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month. It is an opportunity for participants to raise concerns or suggestions to staff.

~Comments shared by Alicia from participants. Participants love coming to the center – the center is a 2<sup>nd</sup> home.

~Alicia encouraged Board members to reach out to her if they have suggestions about programming.

~Save the Date: Senior Center's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration will be on Thursday, October 30<sup>th</sup>. Invitation to follow.

**North Cambridge Senior Center** – *No report, as Director position is vacant. Updates are reported through ED's report.*

**Client Services – Vincent McCarthy**

~There has been an increase of interventions regarding participants with mental health issues.

~Vincent acknowledged the great work being done by the Client Services Team: Maryellen McEleney and Dee Cannon.

~Advice to remember: "we cannot be working harder than the individual". They need to be committed to the process; committed and receptive to service.

~Discussion about situations faced in the Center. Calls made to 911 and Cambridge Care Team.

~Great collaboration with Police, Care Team, Multi Service Team, Protective Services Team.

~Shred Day scheduled for Sat., 9/13 and Monday, 9/29.

~Mall Shopping ~ Vincent and Jimmy (Driver) exploring different destinations each month.

~Meditation and Mandala; Men's Group; Film and Discussion continue to do well in attendance.

**Old Business:** None

**New Business:**

~Mary DeCoursey announced a new hire/position at Mt. Auburn ~ resource specialist. She will make connection with this person with COA Client Services.

~Mt. Auburn Hospital's Emergency Room is now SANE Certified Department ~ train the nurses and other staff to provide services to victims of sexual assault.

~Annual Public Community Needs Assessment will be presented on September 18<sup>th</sup> @ 3:30 in-person at the hospital. Mary will forward the link to register.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:43 a.m. Harriet motioned, and Deb seconded. All in favor.

Next meeting: Tuesday, October 14, 2025 @ 9:30 a.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by  
Susan Pacheco