

Minutes of COA Board Meeting Tuesday, February 10, 2026 – Via Zoom

Board Members Present: Harriet Ahouse, Pearl Hines, Debra Mandel, Lily Owyang, Eva Paddock, Beverly Sealey and Joumathe Theodore

Board Members Absent: Mary DeCoursey

Staff Present: Chris Kowaleski, Vincent McCarthy and Susan Pacheco

Call to Order – Meeting called to order at 9:32 a.m.

Review/Acceptance of minutes: Motion made by Eva and seconded by Deb to accept January 2026 minutes with necessary corrections. All in favor.

Executive Director – Susan Pacheco

ED updated Board on happenings.

- Joseph Corazzini, Assistant City Manager for Human Services, effective February 2nd. Joseph visited and met with COA staff on February 4th.
- ED discussed the successes of the Russell Youth & Community Center. There are 81 NEW registrants for Russell. Other attendees were already existing participants of COA Programming.
- As more program requests come through the COA, Alicia, Chris and I will review and determine who will follow up and determine if program fits our needs/interests and if so, where it will be hosted.
- There is much happening in Food Services. An offer has been made to final candidate for Food Service Manager. Additional changes: as of January 30th, ~ SCES has closed the meal site at North Cambridge Senior Center. There will be significant changes at the Cambridge Senior Center. There will be further information shared at the March meeting.
- Preliminary budget presentation has occurred. Within the next month, the budget book narrative will be reviewed and initiatives and performance measures submitted for the City's budget book.
- Suggestion from members that Joseph Corazzini visit different programs at the 3 COA/Senior Center sites.
- Question regarding congregate meals ~ if it is Title III funding ~ yes.
- Board asked about Music Jam Sessions and would it return. Yes, it will return in March – June. Unsure if there will be sessions in the new fiscal year.

Cambridge Senior Center – Alicia Johnson

- Alicia was out of office but submitted the following. ED presented.

Team Vision/Planning Meeting

In January 2026, the Cambridge Senior Center Activities Team, COA Executive Director Susan Pacheco, and North Cambridge Senior Center Director Chris Kowaleski, joined me for a two-part planning meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to align our vision and goals for programming and activities at the Council on Aging for 2026. To ensure we are upholding the Council on Aging's mission, vision and values of serving older adults in the Cambridge community.

During the meeting, we looked at all our flyers (as a visual queue) and did an exercise of what we see and what we didn't see. During the discussion, we realized most of our classes are for the able bodied, active older adult. We also realized our class flyers lack any indication of an activity level (beginners or intermediate). The activities team is actively reviewing meeting notes to plan for our next steps in program planning.

Solo Aging

During our planning meeting, the team also discussed Solo Aging. This led to a thoughtful discussion of what it means to be a solo ager and how someone's socio-economic status affects one's experiences and outcomes (health, financial, social, etc.). Supporting and providing resources for solo agers is ongoing at the Council on Aging.

Upcoming Events in February 2026

- **February 11th** Lunar New Year Celebration ~ Welcoming the Year of the Horse
- **February 17th** Day to the Foundry
- **February 24th** Celebrating Black Films for Black History Month ~ Film & Discussion
Movie: *Fatherhood*
- **February 26th** Sarasa Music Ensemble ~ Baroque Musical Performance

Upcoming Events in March 2026

- **March 5th, 19th, 26th** Genealogy Workshop Series – Collaboration with the Cambridge Public Library
- **March 10th** Mindfulness for Everyday Well-Being - Collaboration with Mass General Hospital Center for Health Outcomes and Interdisciplinary Research (CHOIR)
- **March 10th, 24th, April 7th** Creative Dance Workshop Series -Collaboration with Black History in Action Cambridgeport

North Cambridge Senior Center – Chris Kowaleski

- Somerville Cambridge Elder Services has made the decision to stop congregate meal service at the NCSC site. Last day of meal service was on Friday, January 30th.
- Currently examining how to utilize the dining room space to maximize room usage and add additional events and programs in a small group format in hopes of increasing NCSC participant numbers. Work with Alicia to see what organizations and programs have reached out to her to see if any would be a good fit for the NCSC.
- Chris attended the January 20th, Cambridge Community History Workshop at the Russell Youth and Community Center. Plans to attend the January 27th rescheduled class on Tuesday, February 10th.
- NCSC is excited to start adding additional events and programs in February (and future months).
 - Friday, February 6th = Coffee or Tea with the new Director from 9:00am to 10:00am
 - Wednesday, February 11th = Valentine's Day Tea from 1:30pm to 3:00pm
 - Wednesday, February 18th = Movie and Popcorn "Julie & Julia"
- Ethiopian Hour returns on Tuesday, February 24th from 9:30am to 12:00pm and will meet every other week.
- ESOL will return on February 24th from 10:00am to 11:00am and will meet every Tuesday. New teacher has been hired. Welcome Stephen Wu!
- NCSC is working with Bridget Martin to update and create any new NCSC flyers in the approved format.
- NCSC is working with Adam to streamline MySeniorCenter templates.

- Chris attended the Equity and Inclusion Department Domestic and Sexual Violence 101 training on January 28th
- During the month of January, **148 unduplicated** individuals walked through the NCSC doors to participate in classes/programs, seek services, ask questions and have lunch.

Client Services – Vincent McCarthy

- LGBTQ+ Film Series: working more closely with the new Director of the Cambridge LGBTQ+ Commission, Shameka Gregory. He has been attending the monthly Film Series and has been co-facilitating the follow-up discussion. Film is on the 1st Tuesday of each month. This month’s movie was “The Wedding Banquet”.
- Meditation & Mandala – Friday, February 13th
- Men’s Group meeting Tuesday, February 17th
- Film & Discussion – February & March Outreach Case Manager Dee Cannon has organized a 2-part series called “Celebrating Black Films” Tuesday, February 24th – Fatherhood and Tuesday, March 24th – Sarah’s Oil.
- The Client Services Team meet each Monday. We often meet with community partners and will be meeting with representatives from City departments that we work very closely with, including: The Multi Service Center Team, Cambridge Inspectional Services, Cambridge Care Team.
- Busy month for the Team fielding snow removal calls, due to recent storms.

Old Business:

- ED stated that she had something that was both Old and New Business. She spoke about the work that has recently been done to develop “Community Guidelines” focusing on class etiquette. ED shared the new one-page guidelines that will be posted throughout both Senior Centers. These guidelines will also be translated into other languages.

New Business:

- Board member asked about participants who care for grandchildren and if there were any concerns regarding ICE. ED told the Board that Cambridge City Manager Yi-An Huang has passed an Executive Order creating safe zones in municipal buildings, including schools and public housing. City does have a protocol for this type of situation.
- Joumathe asked if the COA would consider hosting a “Friends & Family Day” to encourage people of all ages to come to the Senior Center and learn more. ED stated that we had never done anything like that but would investigate the possibilities of organizing this type of event in the future.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:01 a.m. Deb motioned, and Joumathe seconded. All in favor.

Next meeting: Tuesday, March 10, 2026 @ 9:30 a.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by
Susan Pacheco