

Bedford Council on Aging Board

Minutes

January 10, 2023

10:30 am on Zoom

Board members present: Allan Morgan--Chair, Cindy Tulimieri, Gene Kalb, Tom Kinzer, Sandra Hackman, Virginia Wang, Marilou Barsam, Bobbie Ennis, Lew Putney

Other participants: Alison Cservenschi, COA director; Bopha Malone, Select Board; Susan Schwartz, Board of Health chair; Pam Bruno, resident

Call to Order/Welcome and Chair's Remarks

Chair Morgan called the meeting to order at 10:38, read a statement regarding remote participation per state legislation, and called the roll. Alison Cservenschi recorded the meeting via Zoom.

Minutes of November 10, 2022

Mr. Kalb moved to accept the November 10 minutes as submitted, and Ms. Tulimieri seconded.

Vote: 8-0-1, minutes accepted; (Mr. Putney abstained because he was absent from the meeting).

Minutes of December 13, 2022

Ms. Hackman asked to correct reference to the Taxation Aid Committee in the December 13 minutes, and other board members also requested a few changes. Ms. Hackman moved to accept the minutes as amended. Ms. Barsam seconded.

Vote: 7-0-2 (Mr. Putney abstained because he was absent from the meeting; Ms. Wang also abstained)

Ms. Malone temporarily left the meeting at 10:57.

Report of the COA Director

Ms. Cservenschi said she was working on several annual reports, such as the Carleton-Willard Wheels of Life grant for medical transportation. She is also revisiting the cost to participants in the exercise programs, to ensure that the programs are financially sustainable.

She met with the consultant on the Town's space study to consider current and future needs for the Senior Center. She also reported that she is applying to Minuteman Senior Services (MSS) for a ARPA grant on hoarding and on training librarians in working with residents with dementia. MMSS is bringing back in-person evidence-based programs, including one for caregivers.

Board of Health Gun Safety Campaign

Ms. Schwartz gave an overview of a new initiative by the Bedford BOH to support safety in the home among residents who own guns. Homes with guns have higher rates of suicide and lethal domestic violence. The awareness and education initiative--called the Bedford Safe Campaign and promoted by the Police Department--will include an expanded gun buyback program, a town wide mailing on gun safety, an offering of safety locks, and a public forum hosted by representatives from the MGH Center for Gun Violence Prevention on March 1.

The BOH is seeking endorsement of the campaign by Town boards and committees as well as other local organizations. The Bedford Chamber of Commerce, Bedford Embraces Diversity, and the Domestic Violence Safety Network have already done so.

Mr. Putney noted that he believes penalties for gun-involved crimes should be strengthened.

Ms. Hackman moved to endorse the campaign and Ms. Barsam seconded.

Vote: 9-0 in favor.

Dementia-Friendly and Age-Friendly Certifications

Ms. Tulimieri outlined the criteria for becoming certified under those two programs--the former through Dementia Friendly America/Massachusetts, the latter through AARP. She recommended pursuing dementia-friendly certification because it is much more doable while also supporting a more age-friendly Town. Ms. Tulimieri reported that Bedford meets the four criteria for a dementia friendly community and ready to establish such a program.

Steps to becoming dementia friendly include combatting stigma in the community, supporting caregivers, and educating the business community about how to work

with residents with dementia. Specific steps could involve training librarians and expanding the COA's existing Memory Café. Dementia Friendly Massachusetts provides training videos and other resources. Mr. Morgan, as MSS liaison, noted that MSS will be offering a program entitled Powerful Tools for Caregivers in February and March. The goal is to allow residents with dementia to live in the community as long as they are able.

Ms. Barsam suggested targeting smaller groups of constituents to start, such as people with dementia identified by the COA, and also seeking info on the extent of dementia in Bedford and resources from the Board of Health. Ms. Csevenschi said that Tufts Health Plan has some data available, but it includes only those with a diagnosis and is several years old. Ms. Tulimieri stated that the next step would be to gather a team of people to create an action plan. Ms. Tulimieri asked board members interested in working on the initiative to contact her.

On a side note, Mr. Putney reported that COA Bedford Pool group was undefeated in its successful quest to win the World Series.

Liaisons

Ms. Malone who rejoined the meeting at 11:20 updated the board regarding th Brian DeVellis housing development proposed for Carlisle Rd. The proposal would provide options for seniors. There will be public meetings on January 24 and February 14. She encouraged board members to attend.

She also reported that the town manager and Select Board are seeking a FY24 budget increase somewhat higher than the Finance Committee guideline of 3.5 percent.

Adjourn

Mr. Putney moved to adjourn the meeting and Ms. Ennis seconded.

Vote: 9-0 in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 11:52. The next meeting will occur on Zoom on February 14, 2023, at 10:30am.

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Hackman, acting clerk.

Minutes for meetings on November 10, 2022, and December 13, 2022.

January COA director's report on COA activities

Monthly report on COA finances

Overview of the Bedford Safe Campaign

PowerPoint on age-friendly and dementia-friendly initiatives