

Bedford Council on Aging Board
Minutes
June 13, 2023
10:30 am on Zoom

Board members present: Allan Morgan--Chair, Cindy Tulimieri- acting clerk, Lew Putney, Bobbie Ennis, Sandra Hackman, Thomas Kinzer.

Board members absent: Gene Kalb and Marilou Barsam

Other participants: Alison Cservenschi, COA Director; Susan Schwartz, Board of Health; Rick Rosen, Taxation Aid Committee

Call to Order/Welcome and Chair's Remarks

Chair Morgan called the meeting to order at 10:36 am, read a statement regarding remote participation per 2022 state legislation and called the roll; quorum present. Ms. Cservenschi recorded the meeting.

Chair's Remarks:

Mr. Morgan made two comments:

1. He asked if the COA Board would be interested in changing to in-person meetings in September.

Vote of the board: 6-0-0

Ms. Cservenschi noted Board Members can call in to the meeting, as previously allowed, as long as there is a quorum present in person.

2. Mr. Morgan is looking for summaries of all of the presentations over the past year to add to the Annual Report.

Approval of Minutes:

Ms. Ennis moves to approve as amended. Ms. Hackman seconded.

Vote of the board: 6-0-0

Barbara Purchia from Bedford POPS

Ms. Purchia comes to the COA Board seeking a letter of support for the Bedford POPS (outdoor structure for events of all kinds). She presented a pdf with pictures of what it would look like, benefits to the community and ideas for its use. Multiple other groups in Bedford have written a letter of support. Location appears to be the biggest challenge.

Questions from board members included:

1. Who would be in charge of this facility and its maintenance? Answer: Town Manager or Recreation Department. However, the Recreation Department has already agreed to manage this facility if it is approved by the Select Board.
2. Will there be a charge to use the facility? Answer: This would be up to the town.

3. What is the cost of building it and maintaining it? Answer: The POPS Committee is looking at grants, community preservation money and other fundraising to defray any costs to the taxpayer.
4. What is the timing? Answer: The goal is to have it before the Select Board for FY25.

Ms. Tulimieri moved to have the COA Board write a letter of support for the Bedford POPS initiative. Ms. Ennis seconded.

Vote of the board: 6-0-0

Mr. Morgan will formalize the letter on behalf of the Board. Ms. Purchia thanked the board for its support.

Nominating Committee:

Mr. Morgan and Ms. Hackman nominated Cindy Tulimieri as Chair and Sandra Hackman as Vice Chair. There were no nominations for Clerk. This position will rotate.

Marilou moved to approve the nominations, and Ms. Ennis seconded.

Vote of the board: 6-0-0

Governance Report

Ms. Cservenchi reviewed the COA's mission and vision statements, core values, the completed SWOT analysis. Mr. Morgan reviewed the initiatives that have been presented by the board and discussed over the year. Mr. Morgan reviewed the information various board members had presented on key topics of transportation, housing, dementia friendly initiative, diversity and inclusion, and reviewed next steps.

Liaison Reports

Bopha Malone, Select Board chair, thanked the board for its work and dedication to making a positive impact on seniors. She reported that the Select Board had appointed David Santos as a new member of the board.

The Select Board has relied on a survey and community forum to assist in finding a new Town Manager, as well as residents reaching out to the Select Board directly. Residents were invited to say what they would like to see in the next Town Manager, and Ms. Malone encouraged the community to continue to participate in this process. The process will extend over the summer, with the new Town Manager hopefully in place by October.

Visitors

As a member of the new Taxation Aid Committee, Rick Rosen reported that several at-large members have been appointed to committee, and that it has held a couple of meetings. The committee has one more volunteer opening and he encouraged participation.

The committee is working on guidelines for program eligibility and an application for recipients of the aid. The committee aims to have a check box inserted onto tax bills for 2024 to enable

residents to voluntarily donate to this fund. These donations will be used to pay overdue real estate taxes for those who apply.

On a related front, Town Meeting approved Clause 41c, which allows property tax exemptions for qualified individuals under strict asset guidelines. The Board of Assessors is considering recommending that Bedford adopt Clause 41c ½, which would remove the asset requirement and raise the allowable income level. This Clause would match the state Senior Circuit Breaker and save the applicant approximately \$6,400.00 per year. However, 41c ½ would allow many more people to apply for the programs, and the assessors are concerned that this could increase the financial burden on other taxpayers.

Mr. Rosen suggested that a COA Board member attend Board of Assessors meetings to track discussion of these programs.

Liaisons

Susan Schwartz, Board of Health liaison, reported that two gun buyback events were successful, and thanked the COA Board for their endorsement of the program. The department has approved 4 goats as pets. The Board of Health is now reviewing how the Health and Human Services and Board of Health handled the pandemic, to lay groundwork for a better response if needed in the future.

As a member of the Transportation Advisory Committee, Ms. Hackman has requested bike racks at Town Center, and hoped that Ms. Schwartz would support that request at Healthy Bedford meetings.

Next meeting and adjourn:

The next COA Board meeting will be on September 12, in person in the Senior Center Computer Room. Mr. Putney moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:03pm, and Ms. Ennis seconded.

Vote of the board: 6-0-0

Documents used in the meeting:

Agenda

Draft May minutes

Director's monthly report

Monthly budget report

Link to Recording of the board meeting:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/Dn3Jl2a7ZGrSCCFN4DspzGmhmyGn68SHc6_HjRAVLZO6LizkIltjB8oXgokyUCmH.nP5Rkg86K1PPGpyP

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