

## **Bedford Council on Aging Board**

### **Minutes**

**June 14, 2022**

**11 am on Zoom**

**Board members present:** Sandra Hackman--Chair, Richard Rosen, Gene Kalb, Lew Putney via phone, Cindy Tulimieri, Tom Kinzer, Marilou Barsam--arrived at 11:24 am, Bobbie Ennis, Allan Morgan

**Other participants:** Alison Cservenschi, COA director; Bopha Malone, Select Board liaison; Susan Schwartz, Board of Health liaison, Virginia Wang, COA Board applicant; other guests included Joan Paul, Don Hunt, Noah Southard, and Gary Feldman.

#### **Call to order/welcome and chair's remarks**

Chair Hackman called the meeting to order at 11:03, read a statement regarding remote participation per 2022 state legislation, and called the roll. Alison Cservenschi recorded the meeting.

#### **Chair's remarks**

Ms. Hackman noted that Virginia Wang was on the call and an applicant for the open COA Board position. Mr. Putney will be applying for a new term. Ms. Ennis's application for another term was approved.

Ms. Hackman thanked Mr. Rosen, who is not reupping for another term on the board, for his numerous important contributions. During his six years as a board member, Mr. Rosen advanced several senior housing initiatives, including a voluntary property tax relief fund, a more affordable property tax deferral program, and expanded provisions for accessory dwelling units. Ms. Hackman reported that both she and Director Cservenschi relied extensively on his excellent suggestions and wise advice. Mr. Rosen hopes to continue to serve Bedford seniors as a member of the committee overseeing the new tax relief fund.

Ms. Hackman reported that she was able to get on the agenda of the Community Preservation Committee meeting on Wednesday, June 22, at 7pm. She will discuss various possibilities for funding senior housing as well as recreation.

One participant calling in by phone noted that Ashby Place's laundry facilities are in a separate building, making them inaccessible to most residents. Another participant requested that future senior housing have bedrooms and kitchen on the first floor.

Ms. Hackman noted that although the board cannot hold hybrid meetings at this time, it can meet in person, with one or two people calling in if they have good reason and the chair's permission.

(A quorum of the board must be present in person.) The board agreed to revisit whether to meet in person at its September meeting, which will be online.

### **Approval of minutes**

Mr. Rosen moved to approve the May 2022 minutes with corrections, and Ms. Ennis seconded.

Vote of the Board: 8-0

### **Report of the Nominating Committee**

Mr. Rosen reported that he and Mr. Morgan, as the Nominating Committee, recommend Allan Morgan as chair and Cindy Tulimieri as vice chair for the fiscal year beginning July 1.

The clerk position is still open, and Ms. Hackman recommended rotating responsibility for taking minutes among several board members. Ms. Hackman thanked Ms. Tulimieri for her dedicated service as clerk for the past year.

Ms. Hackman asked for further nominations, and none were forthcoming. Mr. Putney moved to approve the Nominating Committee's recommendation, and Mr. Kinzer seconded.

Motion approved 9-0

Re liaisons to other boards and committees, Ms. Hackman said she cannot attend Select Board meetings because of a standing Monday night commitment, but she could listen to the recordings. She suggested that Ms. Tulimieri report regularly to the board on progress of the action team working on making Bedford dementia friendly.

Mr. Rosen, in turn, thanked Ms. Hackman for her service as chair.

### **Director's remarks**

In-person participation in Senior Center activities has risen to 65 people per day, according to Ms. Cservenschi. She is preparing for the LBGTQ+ Cafe on Wednesday, June 15, at 1:30pm.

The number of Food Bank recipients is growing, which means more responsibility for COA staff. Board members noted the need to increase the food bank staff, to avoid relying too heavily on COA staff, who are already stretched thin.

Ms. Cservenschi noted that Hayley Williams, part-time program coordinator, has left for a full-time position elsewhere. The 15-hour-a-week position is still open, and filling it is very difficult, according to Ms. Cservenschi, especially when competition for employees is tight, given that it does not include benefits.

Ms. Cservenchi reported that she presented a program on the COA and Senior Center at the Library, as part of the Talk of the Town grant. New COA brochures—available in several languages--have been popular and are available at the library.

### **Board and staff accomplishments for FY22 and topics for FY23**

The board's meeting package included a list of accomplishments for the past year as well as suggested topics for next year's board meetings. As Ms. Hackman noted, the former include investigating creation of a home-share program, beginning a dialogue on making Bedford dementia friendly, and co-hosting, with Bedford Embraces Diversity, the first intergenerational LBGTQ+ Café.

Possible future topics include advocating for a full-time program director, supporting the extension of the Minuteman Bikeway, collaborating with the Disability Commission, becoming an AARP-certified age-friendly community, encouraging senior volunteer opportunities, and winning national certification for the director and Senior Center.

Mr. Morgan, incoming chair, asked board members to send suggested goals and topics to him for review.

### **Liaison reports**

Board members asked Ms. Malone how to proceed with gaining approval for a full-time COA program coordinator. Ms. Malone responded that she would bring this issue back to the Select Board, and that she will let the COA Board know when the topic is on the agenda, to allow members to participate.

Ms. Balsam reported that Bedford Embraces Diversity is working with the COA to prepare for the LBGTQ+ Café.

Ms. Ennis, president of the Friends of the Bedford COA, reported that the FBCOA continues to support monthly COA exercise programs, snacks at the Senior Center, and the monthly Memory Cafe.

Mr. Rosen confirmed that the committee overseeing the new voluntary fund to reduce property taxes for seniors and disabled individuals is in the process of forming.

Susan Schwartz, chair of the Board of Health, reiterated that the number of clients of the Bedford Food Bank is rising. In response, the Town is using grant funds to post a new part-time position of food bank coordinator.

Ms. Schwartz said she would inform the Board of Health of the COA's request for a full-time program coordinator to meet the full range of needs of Bedford residents age 60 and older, who account for one-quarter of Town residents. She would ask the Board of Health to support the COA's request.

Ms. Hackman thanked Ms. Schwartz for her support and suggested that the COA Board, in turn, designate a liaison to the BOH. She asked Mr. Kinzer--a former member of the BOH--whether he might assume that role, and he indicated that might be possible.

Ms. Tulimieri left the meeting at 12:15pm.

**Next meeting and adjourn**

The next COA Board meeting will occur on September 13. Mr. Putney moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:32, and Mr. Kinzer seconded.

Vote of the board: 8-0

**Documents for the meeting**

Draft minutes for the May board meeting

Director's monthly report

Monthly budget report

Board and staff accomplishments for FY22

Possible topics and projects for FY23