

MEETING MINUTES
Town of Heath
Council on Aging
Outside Community Hall/Senior Center
October 9, 2020

Called to Order at 10am with Eileen Lively, Gloria Fisher, Liz Scalzo and Victoria Burrington in attendance. Donna Hyttinen was unable to attend.

Review Agenda: Liz mentioned that the Council on Aging members are not listed in the Heath Herald under Boards and Committees and there are no minutes posted on the Heath Website. Liz will contact the Town Clerk to see how minutes can be posted, etc.

Review Minutes of September 4, 2020. Victoria motioned to approve the minutes as written with a second by Eileen. The motion carried unanimously.

Grab 'n Go Meals

Eileen started the discussion by saying we are not ready to begin this program next month since the buildings are closed, etc. In her opinion, it is just too hard at this point and others agreed. Victoria will make a request to the select Board to see if we could use the cafeteria and kitchen at 18 Jacobs Road since it is not being used and there are two exits. We would then not have to enter the main building used by students at the moment. Gloria mentioned that the Grab 'n Go Meals have been successful at the Shelburne Falls Senior Center. Other meals to consider would be a quiche with some fruit and dessert but for now, we will stick to a turkey sandwich. We will try to notify people by a call list, poster at Town Hall and the Town Website, once we have plans and location approval more finalized.

Wellness Calls

Eileen contacted the EMD (Emergency Management Director) who spoke with the BOH (Board of Health) Chair and they were fine with the COA taking over calling many of the seniors. Gloria will speak to those who currently call seniors to see who they would like to keep calling. Eileen will give Liz a copy of the list and she will transfer it onto a spreadsheet and send it out to the group. We can then assign contacts. Eileen said some prefer to only be called if there is a severe emergency and not be called on a regular basis. We can make those preferences known on the spreadsheet.

Sending Cards

Last year, Eileen did a successful project to Long Term Care Centers in Greenfield. She sent cards to many of the seniors and thought this may be a good idea for the COA to do for our seniors. Liz suggested sending out a photo card so our seniors would know who the COA members are. Gloria will check the budget to see what monies could be available. There are approximately 700 people in Heath with 60% being seniors (60 and older). We will discuss distribution and target groups at the next meeting once we know what resources we have available.

Needs Assessment Survey/Questionnaire

Eileen suggested that this survey should be separate from the cards and should include a self addressed stamped envelope. Eileen will get the EMD's list of questions. Again, Gloria will look at the money we have in the budget and Eileen said that we may be able to combine resources with the EMT (Emergency Management Team). We need to know what we are looking for and there is no sense in asking seniors what they would like, if we won't be able to provide that resource given the pandemic restrictions. Probably the best question that Gloria suggested is "What can we (the COA) do for you right now?" The survey should be for the present time, in this moment.

National Grid Assistance Program

Eileen received some information in her National Grid bill that may be helpful to our seniors with financial concerns. (See Attachment A). She plans to attend the web seminar as well as Victoria, to learn more about the financial assistance that is available. Victoria use to be a Loan Officer so she has a sense of comfort in helping seniors complete required forms, etc. Discussion ensued on fuel delivery requirements and issues of not having heat, emergency help options, etc. The COA can perhaps become a resource. Victoria also mentioned the other issue of our seniors reluctance to ask for help.

Entertainment

Eileen reviewed mail delivered to the COA mailbox. There is a folk singer/storyteller advertising his services. (Attachment B). This is something to consider in the future, but now right now. Eileen did say that when we are able to open up more, it should be slow, deliberate, and easy. We could start with a movie utilizing the new big screen TV that was purchased for the Senior Center. Food and socialization have been top priorities for seniors to gather in the past.

Next Meeting

Victoria will also include in her contact to the Select Board, permission to hold our next meeting inside the 18 Jacobs Road cafeteria. The next meeting will be planned for Friday, November 6, 2020 at 10:00am.

Other Business That Could Not be Anticipated at Least 48 hours in Advance

While Liz was reviewing last months meeting minutes, she noticed that the Foot Clinic had not been listed on today's agenda.

Foot Clinic

Eileen has tentatively scheduled the next foot clinic to be held on the 3rd Tuesday and Wednesday of November (17th and 18th) in the 18 Jacobs Road cafeteria, providing the foot clinic nurse agrees and we have permission from the Select Board. Victoria will also add that request to the other dates. Eileen also got a call from a senior in town who is restricted to travel due to oxygen requirements. The Foot Clinic RN has gone to his home to provide care, but the resident does not want to pay her fee. As with everything, the Foot Clinic RN's fees have increased. Since the resident could have this service provided by his primary care team, the COA members all agreed that no COA monies should be forwarded for this private home service.

Adjourn

With the next meeting planned for November 6 at 10:00, Victoria moved that we adjourn today's meeting with a second from Eileen. The vote was unanimous and the meeting adjourned at 11:00.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Scalzo
Secretary, Heath COA