

MEETING MINUTES

Town of Heath
Council on Aging
Conference Call
November 20, 2020

Called to Order at 3pm by Gloria Fisher with Eileen Lively, Donna Hyytinen, Victoria Burrington and Liz Scalzo in attendance. No others joined in the telephone conference.

Review Agenda: No changes were noted.

Review Minutes of October 9, 2020. Victoria motioned to approve the minutes as written with a second by Eileen. The motion carried unanimously. Liz has attempted to contact Hilma to post minutes and agendas. Hilma will be showing her how to do this in the not to distant future.

Grab 'n Go Meals

Victoria questioned whether we should attempt to do this in 2020 or revisit this activity after the first of the year. Donna said the turnout for a Grab'n Go Meal at the Shelburne Falls Community Center was low. Gloria said the participation at the Senior Center in Shelburne Falls however was quite good. The COA is unable to use the school kitchen per the Select Board as 18 Jacobs Road is currently used for educational purposes only. Liz moved to revisit this activity until after the New Year which was seconded by Donna. Eileen felt very strongly that we should be doing something for our seniors and will continue to look into doing something personally for this holiday season. Perhaps people could put together goodie bags and distribute them on a monthly basis. She said that seniors who have received them in the past, really enjoyed being thought of. Victoria will resubmit a request to the Select Board to see if the COA could use the kitchen at 18 Jacobs Road so something could be done in the future. The motion passed with one abstention and this will be placed on the 2021 agenda.

Sending Cards

Victoria started the discussion by saying she and Fred would like to donate the holiday cards this year and use a scene from Heath Center. She wants to make sure however, that no one thinks they are receiving any monetary advantage. The COA has money for postage and envelopes. Gloria stated the year end expense report is still pending so the exact amount of money is not available but there should be plenty of funds for this activity. All agreed that the COA should pay for the printing, envelopes and postage. Eileen has the list for seniors and will purchase the stamps. There are 38 seniors in Heath who are 80 years and older. There are about 80 in total who are 75 years and older and there are 202 who are 65 years of age and older. Eileen wants to make sure we handwrite each card as it gives a more personal touch. Donna moved to send cards to all those who are 65 and older and Victoria seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Discussion ensued on what to write on the cards... The final outcome was "The Heath Council on Aging is wishing you health and happiness in the new year", and list our full names. We will plan to meet soon, strictly for the coordination of sending out these cards.

Wellness Calls

Eileen provided Liz the contact list from the Emergency Management Director (EMD) that was transferred onto a spreadsheet and distributed to the COA members. Send contact assignment requests to Eileen. Eileen motioned that contact assignments be tabled until the next meeting; Victoria seconded and this agenda item postponement was passed unanimously.

Needs Assessment Survey/Questionnaire

Eileen received the new 2020 special needs survey from the EMD. After reading the survey to the COA, it was agreed that was not an appropriate avenue for the COA. The COA will work on their own survey. Liz still likes the question from the last meeting... "What can we (the COA) do for you right now?" Victoria also suggested, "Where would you feel most comfortable in having senior meals?" She also suggested taking reservations once senior meals are available. In the past, the senior meals would have others from outside of Heath attend which had some Heath seniors turned away due to lack of space. In the future, we will have to figure out how to do senior meals. If COA members have questions they would like to submit, Gloria will collect them and we will discuss them in the future.

National Grid Assistance Program/RMV Hours

Eileen said the RMV has special hours for seniors (especially 75 and older) and have listed ways and other resources to get RMV needs accomplished. There are also special centers you can go to including AAA if one is a member. Information is posted on websites but if our seniors do not have computers, we need to figure out how to pass along this information. (See Attachment A)

Eileen also attended the web seminar from National Grid that she said was excellent. She received an informative 44 page PDF. (Attachment B provides some of that relevant information.) Basically she said that NO ONE should have their electricity or heat turned off this winter. The main issue is, how do we get this information to Heath residents? Eileen spoke to Hilma sharing with her the resources that are out there. We need to figure out how to disseminate this information. Victoria suggested sending out a postcard in January with a "Did you know?" and call the COA if you have questions. (See Attachment B)

Foot Clinic

Eileen announced that this past Tuesday and Wednesday, the foot clinic provided care to 22 people at the 18 Jacobs Road cafeteria. The building use committee has a well established sign in/out system. There were no problems with any interactions with students, etc. In fact a nice event occurred; 2 long time Heath friends were able to see each other in passing. They got to say hello while maintaining social distance. Eileen intentionally booked their appointments in hope of them seeing each other. It was a very positive experience. Eileen is not sure if another foot clinic will be conducted in the next two months.

SHINE Appointments (Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone) (Medicare Counseling Program)

Gloria stated that no in person SHINE Appointments are possible at this time due to Life Path rules, but telephone appointments are possible. However, when a telephone appointment is done, there are several requirements; both need to have computers available and the counselor needs to have Medicare access. Seniors need to be computer savvy. These appointments are tricky but possible. No one knew if there was any interest from Cathy Tallen.

Construction at Senior Center/Community Hall

Gloria is not sure when construction will begin on the buildings; nothing seems to be happening in the near future. The Select Board says the Community Center will not be used except for the Town Nurse. Apparently a wifi booster had been purchased but the booster stopped working after the windstorm. The Town Nurse has been working from home when internet access is needed. Gloria has no idea when the building will be used. This agenda item is closed.

Review of this Meeting Via Phone

All in attendance felt the meeting went well and the COA will continue with this modality. Thanks to Gloria for getting this telephone access.

Other Business that Could Not Be Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance None

Next Meeting

The COA will schedule a very brief meeting to review and coordinate the mailing of holiday cards. This will be held on Wednesday, December 2, 2020 at 3pm. The full next meeting will be planned for Friday, January 8, 2021 at 3:00pm. Again, all meetings will be done via a conference call.

Adjourn

Eileen moved to adjourn the meeting with a second from Donna. The vote was unanimous and the meeting adjourned at 4:19 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Scalzo
Secretary, Heath COA