

MEETING MINUTES

Town of Heath  
Council on Aging  
Conference Call  
February 5, 2021

**Called to Order at 3pm** by Gloria Fisher with Eileen Lively, Donna Hyytinen, Victoria Burrington and Liz Scalzo in attendance. Tim Lively joined in the telephone conference near the end of the meeting for vaccine information clarification.

**Review Agenda:** No other agenda items were added.

**Review Minutes of January 8, 2021:** Gloria added a couple of clarifications to the minutes. Eileen then made the motion to approve the minutes as amended with a second from Victoria. The motion carried unanimously.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Grab 'n Go Meals** Victoria has not put in the request yet as the Building Use Committee (BUC) has been finalizing their protocols. After this coming Monday (the 11<sup>th</sup>), Victoria will contact the BUC and request use of the cafeteria at 18 Jacobs Road for March 24<sup>th</sup>. We will need the range and oven for the making of bread and soup. Donna will make bars as a dessert at home. Eileen and Victoria will be in the kitchen with Donna, Gloria and Liz packing and distributing the meals. We need to establish how to let the Heath seniors know about this event. Eileen said this would be a good segue way into making the neighbor to neighbor phone calls. Once we have permission, then we could begin calling all Heath seniors (age 60 and older by Mass COA definition). We could also put up a poster, perhaps put a sign up outside the town hall and also let the town nurse know to pass along the information. Eileen will attempt to get phone numbers for our seniors and we could also look them up in the phone book. Victoria suggested waiting on specifics until we get approval. We will have a special meeting, similar to the holiday card distribution, just to talk about the specifics. Eileen has established a COA account with WB Mason. Unfortunately, they have closed their Greenfield location; the nearest one is in Brattleboro, VT but they will deliver to Shelburne Falls which shouldn't be a problem. All orders are done on the website and orders arrive in a couple of days. Eileen will pass along the website and password information to the COA members so we can see items available. Donna asked if we could get small snack bags, etc. Discussion will continue at the next abbreviated meeting.

**Neighbor to Neighbor (Wellness) calls - Follow up and Assignments** Eileen stated that this would be a great way to introduce yourself as a COA member and to let all seniors know about the Grab n Go Meal. Each COA member can then establish whether the senior would enjoy regular follow up calls, etc. Currently, we have a list of residents 65 and older. Since 60 is the MA COA definition of "senior", Eileen will obtain the remaining list of those residents age 60 to 65 and we will add them to the current roster. Donna has called a few seniors she knows; she mentioned how much they enjoyed hearing from her and loved to talk. Eileen has sent out letters to a few seniors as well. A formal thank you and acknowledgement was made to both individuals for their outreach to our seniors.

**Sending Cards/Note Cards to Heath Seniors** Eileen received few more thank you notes from the cards mailed out in December and read one letter from Ken and Joan Horr. There are 62 stamps left from the Holiday cards. Gloria briefly discussed the finances and said we should have enough money to send out another card. Eileen has reached out to a few artists and has a couple of samples. She will email us those samples for our opinion. Victoria had 2 cards printed on 8 ½ X 11 paper and then cut in ½. As mentioned at the last meeting, we could include the card in the Grab 'n Go meal and then mail the others.

**Communicating with Heath Seniors – Needs Assessment Survey/Questionnaire** Gloria has not put together a questionnaire yet and it was discussed that we could ask seniors their thoughts when we do the initial phone call. Victoria suggested that we should really have something in writing from our seniors, something tangible. Would seniors like to eventually get together at 18 Jacobs Road or at the Senior Center? If we want this information, then we should include a self-addressed stamped envelope along with a questionnaire. Gloria asked about availability and if that would even be possible this year. All agreed that a good starting question could be "What can the COA do for you right now?"

**Discussion of Future Plans and Finance** The \$6,000 Formula Grant was mentioned by Gloria. This amount comes yearly from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs and typically needs to be spent by June 30<sup>th</sup>. We can use the money for furniture, etc. but not for a newsletter. Gloria suggested providing the Senior Center Director with a small salary each month as there is so much behind the scenes work done, especially when the Senior Center is opened. We will discuss this and other ideas at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Currently, we have \$110 available for the COA; \$513.98 in the COA Grant Fund and \$500 in the Senior Center operating expenses.

**Donation to Good Neighbors – Food Pantry in Charlemont** Eileen spoke with Sheila Litchfield regarding a monetary donation. What she would actually like is getting fresh vegetables/fruit or sandwich bread. Whatever is donated, it should come in groups of 60. The next food distribution is on the 16<sup>th</sup> of February and she would need it by that Monday. Gloria would like for us to look into a donation more thoroughly. Eileen spoke to David Fierro, our town accountant who saw no reason for not donating. There are a lot of Heath residents going to the food pantry. Donna was concerned that this money may not be just going to Heath Seniors and does not want to misappropriate the funds. Our funds should not be directed to the general public. This topic was tabled until the next meeting.

**Town Website** Liz has not heard from the Town Clerk yet regarding the posting of minutes on the town website. Gloria wanted to ensure that everyone knew a copy of the minutes could be provided to anyone who asked.

**Vaccine Support** Eileen attended a webinar on 29 Jan; 533 were on the zoom meeting! Vaccines are available for distribution but the distribution is changing on a daily basis. The vaccine is free and at no time should a credit card be used; that would be a scam and should be reported. To make an appointment one may be asked for their insurance card information for tracking purposes only. Where ever you go to get your first shot, you will need to return there for the 2<sup>nd</sup> shot and an appointment will be made at that time. Currently, vaccines are offered to those 75 and older. Eileen gets updates daily. The Veterans Affairs Office is contacting veterans; their number is 413-584-4040. One should go to the Mass.Gov website for additional information. Help will be coming but it is a challenge at the moment. They are also looking for support to those who are housebound. As of noontime, one can call Life Path at 413-829-9285, ext 2375 or dial 2-1-1 for the State Information Line. Gloria stated that the websites are not user friendly and one needs to have an email and cell phone! Valley Medical is giving vaccinations as well as the Eastfield Mall.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

The Formula Grant was discussed above, but we should look at the relationship between the Senior Center and the COA. Gloria read the mission statement for the COA. How can we make this work? Eileen agreed that this should be a joint venture, not two different entities. In some places, the COA is an advisory board and in other places, it's a place for seniors to go to. It should be a whole and it's strange that it's separated. We will table this discussion until the next full meeting.

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

## **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be scheduled for Friday, March 5, 2021 at 3:00pm via a conference call. Victoria will email the COA members about a specific meeting for just the Grab n Go Meal and Senior Cards distribution.

## **Adjourn**

Eileen moved to adjourn the meeting with a second from Donna. The vote was unanimous and the meeting adjourned at 4:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Scalzo  
Secretary, Heath COA