

COUNCIL ON AGING
Room 118, 18 Jacobs Road
Meeting Minutes Thursday, September 9, 2021

Present: Victoria Burrington, Margaret Freeman, Donna Hyytinen, Sue Lively, Cathy Tallen; Guests: Meg Ryan (FRCOG), Nour Elkhattaby Strauch (Life Path)

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. Items on the agenda were moved to accommodate the visitors.

Age-Friendly Community update: Meg Ryan introduced herself as the newly appointed nurse with FRCOG's Cooperative Public Health Service. Nour Elkhattaby Strauch thanked the Council for inviting him and described the Age-Friendly Community program with a powerpoint presentation and commitment letter template (in "Files" on COA town website). Questions raised concerned fees (none), resources available for dementia-friendly initiative, need for assistance in finding resources and grants, training possibilities, small town experience, collaboration with neighboring towns, clarification of services provided by both Public Health and Life Plan, and time frame for the application process. The major advantages for Heath's joining the program appeared to be having access to resource information, training, and availability of help in applying for grants. Pointing out that Heath's COA is at ground zero-minus 5 in starting up, it was decided to defer application to a future date.

M/S/P Sue, Donna, unanimous: to approve the 8/26 minutes as written.

Report on Meals for Wheels Program: The program is managed through Life Path for 60+ homebound seniors. Heath currently has two volunteers who also assess residents' well-being when visiting. Deliveries will be increased from 3 to 5 days a week. Cathy agreed to find out more details concerning the process of how residents contact Life Path to sign up and how COA might facilitate it.

With concern about whether the program's meals were appropriate for the medically challenged, discussion then moved to the question of how quickly COA might start providing grab&go meals during the pandemic, how to get the word out, and the need for adequate surveys to find out exactly what Heath's senior needs are. Heath could start creating meals with the availability of the JR cafeteria kitchen. Donna described Colrain's grab&go program. On recognition that it would take time to create and distribute a survey while vulnerable people are in need now, Victoria noted that COA's money situation is still unclear. COA could present itself as a new committee working to find out what the needs are. Margaret offered to get the full list of seniors and addresses and bring a workable way of reaching them by word-of-mouth to the next meeting. It was agreed to move discussion to the next meeting.

Senior Coordinator Job Description: Sue distributed a draft copy of the job description reflecting the changes COA recommended and agreed to send Margaret the digital version to upload to Slack for review and vote at the next meeting.

MCOA conference: All agreed that we are at a too early stage of our organization to take advantage of the workshops being offered.

Grant opportunities: The question was raised as to how we could find a grant if we haven't already decided on what it is we need. Some grants need specific details for expenditure. Massachusettsgrantwatch.com lists 45 different grants that would need review for our purposes. All agreed that COA needs to develop a slush fund for minor purchases. We still cannot get accurate figures on what monies COA actually has. Victoria estimated that we may have \$4,375.08, not counting the Wells grant for \$1000 (which seems to be missing). The grant for the foot clinic has exhausted funds this year because of the extra costs of COVID, and extra will be needed to cover the September visits before the new grant kicks in.

M/S/P Margaret/Cathy/unanimous: to appropriate \$1000 for the September foot clinic. With the comment that the foot clinic has a current amount of \$1,039.69 in donations, the motion was amended:

M/S/P Sue/Margaret/unanimous: to appropriate \$1000 for the September foot clinic from the foot clinic donations.

Information on other organizations' and towns' COA activities: Greenfield's links and resources for seniors and caregivers and the Ashfield-Buckland-Shelburne newsletter were distributed. Life Path's Good Life workshops are open to all Franklin County residents. Cathy agreed to investigate the program offered for grocery shopping and delivery for those in Heath who might need it. It was noted that for seniors it is often a matter of pride in not accepting help.

Other business: Sue distributed a check sheet for creating a survey for older adults (in "Files" on COA town website). Victoria is contacting Life Path for help with writing and funding a Heath survey. Items for the survey: what to have on it and how to distribute it will be put on next week's agenda.

Next meetings: Thursday, September 16, 30, October 7 at 2:00 p.m. at 18 Jacobs Road (tentative).

M/S/P Margaret/ Donna/unanimous: to adjourn at 4:02 p.m.