

MINUTES
MILLBURY COUNCIL ON AGING BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Date: September 15, 2021, 7:30 AM

Present: Stephen Walinsky, Richard Townsend, Edna LaPan, Christine Bott, Stuart Mulhane, Keven Higginbottom, Sarahbeth Persiani, COA Interim Director Kendra Faldetta and Friends Transportation Coordinator, Tom Weeks

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 AM by the Chairman, at the Senior Center.

VOUCHERS:

Vouchers were signed prior to the meeting by Christine Bott and were forwarded to the Finance Director as is customary practice. After discussion about the various signing options available to the Board, it was decided that for the time being, Christine will continue to sign vouchers as the sole representative of the Board. She agreed to record the type and amount of each voucher for review at the Board meeting.

MINUTES:

It was noted that no minutes were submitted or available for review from the previous June 2021 meeting.

RE-ORGANIZATION OF THE BOARD

Nominations for the new slate of officers:

Mr. Townsend nominated Steve Walinsky as Chairman. Mr. Walinsky accepted on a pro-tempore basis. Seconded by Sarahbeth Persiani. Vote- Unanimous.

There was discussion as to whether Ms. Persiani might have interest in the role of Chairperson or Clerk. Ms. Persiani politely declined, offering the current removal of the Executive Director without explanation as cause and concern as to whether she would be continuing on the Board for the long-term.

Mr. Walinsky nominated Richard Townsend as Vice Chairman. Seconded by Kevin Higginbottom. Vote- Unanimous.

Mr. Walinsky nominated Christine Bott as Clerk. Seconded by Kevin Higginbottom. Vote- Unanimous. The necessary reorganization report will be sent to the Town Clerk.

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CORRESPONDENCE:

Two letters were noted and held for discussion until later on the agenda with regard to “Friends” concerns about the absence of Mrs. O’Connor, the records and monies of the friends, and the misappropriation of mail.

STANDING REPORTS:

- A. Budget and Finance – Mr. Walinsky mentioned that he was provided with a copy of the current status of the COA budget from the Finance Director. It is imperative that there be close monitoring of budgeted expenditures. Also to see that proper re-imbursement to the Friends occurs for monies advanced by them for programs identified in the grant application pending receipt of the funds from the state.
- B. Personnel – There was a brief discussion as to the ideal number of COA Board members. The charter currently calls for eleven, but a reduction to nine or the current seven person roster might be more efficient.. Mr. Walinsky asked members to give it some thought for discussion at the next meeting.
- C. Nominating – Mr. Walinsky asked the Board to be mindful of community members who might be valuable additions to the Board. A larger Board allows for more diversity (age, gender, business experience, funding and grant connections, etc.)
- D. Legislative – No current House activity of note
- E. Senior Center Usage – The MA Council for the Blind used the Senior Center in the month of August for reading instruction purposes.
- F. Building Maintenance/Equipment – A water leak was repaired.

DIRECTORS REPORT –The Interim Director reported that the Town Manager was aware of the meeting, but was unable to attend. The ‘Council on Aging Statistics report for the month of August was distributed and reviewed. Ms. Persiani inquired as to the reason for the occasional but consistent increase in MOW from approx. 98 meals per day to 163. It was explained the spike was a periodic distribution of emergency ration type meals. Ms. Faldetta reported that she and a staff colleague have been certified to obtain source food from the Worcester Food Bank. There was discussion as to what the training entailed and she explained that it was on-line, as a result of Covid precautions.

CHAIRMANS REPORT – Mr. Walinsky will try to keep the board informed as appropriate as information is provided to him from the Town Manager regarding the investigation of Ms. O’Connor. Mr. Higginbottom expressed concern about the current lack of regard/information and inquired as to the role of the board as one having fiduciary responsibility or acting in an advisory capacity. Ms. Faldetta explained that as of July, she was placed in the role of Acting Director and similar to the Board, is in the same position of having no access or insight to

information. She then shared her understanding was that the investigation pertained to financial matters, as well as personnel. This came as news to the board.

OLD BUSINESS

Elder Services of Worcester/Nutrition Program – Meals on Wheels continues thanks to dedicated volunteers.

Intergenerational Programs/Friendly Visitor - Students from Millbury High School's National Honor society are interested in providing cell phone and computer skills training, and will work with Ms. Faldetta accordingly.

Elder Service Work-off Program – No discussion.

Report of the "Friends" – Transportation/Social Events/Food Pantry/ Fundraising – Mr. Walinsky read a letter submitted from Clerk, Donald Jalbert to inform that 1) John Marino is the President and Treasurer of the Friends of Millbury Seniors, Inc. and responsible for collecting all monies past and present, 2) Tom Weeks has been made Transportation Coordinator and will handle all scheduling, (specific to drivers and maintenance) van dispatch and transportation services during the routine work week and 3) all Friends related paperwork will be removed from the Senior Center to another location.

Mr. Walinsky read a second letter from President of the Friends, John Marino in which he expressed concern that eight weeks of mail addressed to the Friends had been improperly opened by the Acting Director. Mr. Marino reminded the legality of intentionally opening another person's mail and informed that he will be taking steps to issue a formal complaint. Ms. Faldetta explained it was not she, but the Town Manager who was responsible.

Upon prompting from the Chairman for any additional Old Business, Ms. Persiani asked if Ms. Faldetta could speak candidly about the day-to-day atmosphere at the Senior Center, morale etc. Ms. Faldetta shared positive news about activities that are well attended, that participants are grateful that the Tai Chi Instructor is back and commented on office workers who have stepped up and increased hours to ensure the smooth running of operations. An additional opinion was offered by the Transportation Coordinator who noted that town riders comment that they are 'not happy with the situation' and continually ask about the status and whereabouts of Ms. O'Connor. The absence of the Town Manager was noted.

NEW BUSINESS:

No new business.

OTHER BUSINESS:

No other business.


The chairman closed the meeting at 8:15 AM

Next Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 20th, 2021 at 7:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

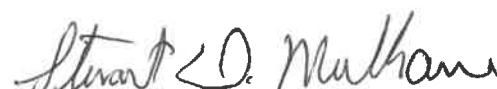
Sarahbeth Persiani, COA Board Member

~~Lucy Bott~~

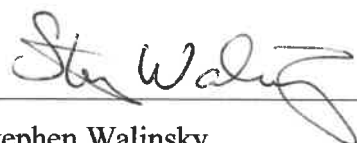

Christine Bott


Kevin Higginbottom


~~Maria Kosiba~~


Stuart Mulhane

~~Edna LaPan~~


Stephen Walinsky

~~Karen Potter~~


Sarahbeth Persiani


Richard Townsend