

**Billerica Council on Aging  
25 Concord Road, Billerica MA  
Board Meeting Minutes  
March 14, 2022, 5:30 pm**

Present: Jean Patel Bushnell, Dan Burns, Richard Carroll, Phil Doiron, Bill Neeb, John Pellegrino, Mary Riley, Mike Rosa, and Stephen Strykowski.

Absent: Barbara Flaherty

The Zoom meeting was called to order at 5:35 PM by Chair Mary Riley, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence for the sick and departed.

A motion was made to accept the Minutes of the February meeting. M/Phil Doiron S/John Pellegrino. Motion passed.

Director Jean Bushnell presented an update on COA operations including:

- EARMARK CONTRACT: Schematics approved and contractors are being recruited to move Outreach and Transportation, Conference, and Art Room.
- CAPITAL FACILITIES PROJECT: Discussions continue on a joint intergenerational building.
- COMPANION PROGRAM: Enterprise Bank has funded our buck slips.
- FY2023 BUDGET: The Director presents to Fincom on March 15<sup>th</sup>.
- AARP TAX PROGRAM: Successful free tax return preparation program managed by Bill Neeb
- Several programs in place including Lobby Library, Travelling Chef, History Lecture, Atty James Haroutunian, new computer installations.
- The Quilting group created over 110 handmade mug rests to go out to our Meals on Wheels Program.
- 180 disposable Covid test kits received from AgeSpan for distribution.
- 38 new members added
- Partnership with Billerica Community Farmers Market
- TENT for summer programs / Community Fund Grant applied to support \$5,000 cost of tent
- Adult Day Care Options presented for Social Care, Health Care, and Alzheimer's and Dementia
- A chart summarizing COA funding was presented.
- A history of the Friends of Billerica COA was given as well as a history of program funding

- Senior Centers in general facing changing needs.
- A history of the growth of the Billerica COA facilities was presented
- Billerica COA currently lacks sufficient space for programming, Social Services, Kitchen, Reading room, Health wing, full fitness center, open space, sufficient knitting and quilting space, parking.

Director Jean Bushnell expressed her appreciation for the dedication of Selectman Dan Burns as he leaves the Board of Selectmen.

Chair Mary Riley made a motion that the Board send a letter of thanks to Dan Burns for his participation on the Board of the COA S/John Pellegrino Motion passed.

Discussion opened on the COA Board desires for proposed intergenerational facility. Positive energy, benefit of mixing seniors and youths. Current mindset is a building with the COA on one side, Recreation on the other side, and some common space in the middle.

Selectman Dan Burns offered that he has met with John Curran, Jean Bushnell, Dave Grubb, and Clancy Main to discuss the status and concerns about the plans.

Stephen Strykowski expressed concern for the new facility have access to public transportation

Selectman Mike Rosa offered that the architectural firm has missed the mark and needs to do better. Mr. Rosa made a suggestion that the Board meets to discuss a thoughtful plan, and make suggestions and recommendations to bring back to the Town Manager and designers.

Vice Chair Rich Carroll outlined the need to hear what the town residents' desires and needs are as they are the ones who are paying for this facility. We should also be planning on what we need to look at if the plans don't materialize.

A consensus of agreement was that a meeting should be held by the COA Board to focus on the plans.

A meeting was scheduled for March 23<sup>rd</sup> at 5:30pm at the COA

Member Stephen Strykowski made a point that the Massachusetts Disability commission offers grants twice per year to assist with handicap accessibility.

Member Stephen Strykowski presented census data provided by Community Teamwork. The numbers suggest that plans should address long range needs. He also raised the opportunity of incorporating other community groups to provide services to homebound residents. Ms. Bushnell responded that the COA refers these organizations to anyone in need of their assistance. Mr. Rosa stated that the Town of Billerica recently hired Bethany Hatch to the Board of Health who is compiling a list of local, state and federal services which will be accessible via the Town website. Access to the list has been moved on the website from the Board of Health to the home page.

Motion to Adjourn, John Pellegrino S/Phil Doiron

Next meeting, April 13<sup>th</sup>

Respectfully Submitted

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "William Neeb".

William Neeb, Recoding Secretary