

**Billerica Council on Aging
25 Concord Road, Billerica MA
Board Meeting Minutes**

April 12, 2023, 5:30 pm

Present: Jean Patel Bushnell, Richard Carroll, , Barbara Flaherty, Mary Jones, Gerald Johnson, Marguerite Massey, Bill Neeb, John Pellegrino, Mary Riley, and Mike Riley.

Absent: Kim Conway, Phil Doiron

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 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 March 8, 2023 meeting.
M/Phil John Pellegrino S/Richard Carroll. Motion passed.

COA Director Jean Bushnell reported on the Following Activities and events.

We have seen some successful early evening connections events.

- Movies March 13th and March 15th – both began at 4.30 PM

Shine Educational session

March 21, 5.30 – 7.30 PM, some 23 older adults gathered to have basic and complex questions answered by Regional SHINE Program Director, Lisa Rose and Counselor for us, Carlton Chin, and David Lamore

The Quilting Workshop – could become quarterly.

20+ participants work on a range of projects on March 17th,

The Friends Organization

- Paula McDonald has been added to the Board.
- Approved program support March: \$800, April \$600
- Highly successful Black Tie Bingo

New Center Planning

- Meeting with town leadership on Friday April 7th to review square Footage for new center. The COA was measured on the same day showing 7,500 square feet of usable space. Roughly 2,000 square feet of the current center is electrical, mechanical room, bathrooms, elevators, etc. In the proposed 2-floor new plan there is roughly 14,000 square feet with 2,000 square feet for bathrooms, elevators, mechanicals, etc. The new building would therefore have 12,000 of usable space. This would be an increase of 4,500 square feet in usable space from what we have now or a 60 % increase.

Operations/Staffing

Work has begun by the Town facilities Dept to add the first floor meeting room and update the transportation section.

- The complexity of cases increased with a homeless case on March 31st ably handled by Jeanne Teehan and others.

- We are beginning to acquire interest and candidates for our Companion program in the added communities of Bedford and Burlington.
- David Burque is the BCOA's newest Van Driver.

LRTA Update

- We have been notified by the LRTA that once we receive vans from the state we need to support the mobility needs of BOTH seniors and ADA below the age of 60 This was news to us triggered by past Board member's complaints about us not taking ADA resident on trips.

Fire Alarm Update

- For the past four or so years Senior Center leadership has been dealing with an overheating sensor in our boiler room that causes the Alarm in our vestibule to be triggered. We have moved from Protection One (town's Alarm contractor) to ADT and as early as this week the alarm in the foyer was going off without reason, causing us to clear the building. Bob Sallesse is now completely holding ADT responsible for fixing the problem.

Noteworthy

- Ruby Murphy, Director of Constituent Services from Seth Moulton's office will deliver a session on Medicare and Social Security to our patrons on Friday April 21st.
- On April 10th and 24th we are piloting the return of Reiki, a Japanese stress reduction technique.
- The Fire Fighter Union is cooking hotdogs and hamburgers for our seniors again on May 19th at the Billerica Elks for 200 patrons. They cover all costs except entertainment which we are asking the FCOA to pick up.
- On Friday March 24th, visiting case managers from Singapore's TTSH detailed current and evolving strategies to prevent hospital readmissions among older patients..
- Director kicked off the Legislative Breakfast with CEO of AgeSpan, Joan Hatem Roy, on Friday April 7th at AgeSpan's HQ in Lawrence.

Exploring

- Hosting a prescription Drug Take Back Day Event with Police and Substance Abuse.

Community Funds

A discussion was raised regarding the use of community funds. It was reported that the COA has used community funds from E-Ink for fresh fruits and vegetables.

Capital Facilities Update

Selectman Mike Riley provided an update from the Capital Facilities meeting. He would like to see the square footage raised to 14,000 square feet. There is a concern about the cost of demo that would have to be included in the scope of

this project. There has been some discussion about a basement for the COA. Many would like to continue to have a presence in the Town Center.

Discussion ensued above the concern of voters supporting recreation department over the COA. It is imperative that the COA and the recreation department capital funding remain as one article. The concern being if separated as two warrant articles, only the recreation department would be approved by voters. There has been a history of articles being separated in the past. This action must be prevented at all cost when going for a town meeting vote for this project. This is similar to the town of Marshfield who presented their COA, Police department, and DPW as one article which was approved by voters.

It is the directors desire that the Recreation Department, Boys and Girls Club, and the COA are kept in close proximity to enhance the combination of activities.

Black Tie Bingo. The black tie fundraiser what is success in both participation and financially. The financial results will be provided by the friends board tomorrow at their next meeting. The event has been so successful that it is anticipated that it could grow to 100 participants within the next couple of years. The friends board appreciated the strong support of the COA staff and that's board of directors.

Next meeting, May 10, 2023, at 5:30 pm

Motion to Adjourn made by Jerry Johnson S/John Pelligrino

M/Passed Meeting adjourned at 7 pm.

Respectfully Submitted

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William J. Neeb". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

William Neeb, Recording Secretary