

Bedford Council on Aging
April 11, 2023;
10:30am to 12 noon on Zoom

Board members present: Allan Morgan--Chair, Gene Kalb, Tom Kinzer, Sandra Hackman, Lew Putney, Cindy Tulumieri, Bobbie Ennis,

Absent: Marilou Barsam, Bopha Malone--Select Board liaison

Other participants: Alison Cservenschi, COA director

Call to Order/Welcome and Chair's Remarks

Mr. Morgan called the meeting to order at 10:35am and read the statement regarding remote Zoom participation. Roll was taken and a quorum was present.

Mr. Morgan announced that it is time to begin thinking about nominating officers for next year. Sandra Hackman and Mr. Morgan will act as the nominating committee. Under the Board's rules the Nominating Committee will present to the Board a slate of candidates at least two weeks before the June 13, 2023, board meeting. Mr. Morgan asked Board members to contact Ms. Hackman or himself if they have an interest in being an officer for next year.

Mr. Morgan asked presenters of the various work groups to briefly summarize what they presented this year. This should include what activities or supports the COA currently has available and to identify next steps for the next 1 to 3 years. These reports will assist in creating the Annual Town Report as well as the report to the Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA).

Approval of Minutes. Because of the quick turn around the March 28, 2023, Board minutes were not completed. They should be ready for the May board meeting.

Director's Remarks

Director Cservenschi gave a brief overview of the March activities indicating that participation at the senior center was up to 80 people per day last month, almost to the pre Covid levels. She reported the Jacob Wren Throckmorton Art Show, on Saturday April 8th, was well attended. She mentioned that there will be a new ukulele class starting up with funding from the art show this year. Ms. Cservenschi also stated the Holi celebration lunch and education provided by the Friends of the Indian Senior Citizens Organization, was well attended and a good time was had by all. She also explained how the Bedford COA will participate in the Walk Massachusetts challenge, encouraging people to walk track their steps and win prizes. This program seeks to get people out and moving and will go hand in hand with the COA's new walkie talkie program that encourages seniors to get out, walk and socialize.

The main topic of the day was Transportation Options in Bedford.

Mr. Putney and Mr. Kinzer presented an overview of the current transportation options available both locally and regionally. Outline of the presentation attached.

Mr. Morgan noted that while most elders prefer to drive their own cars, there will come a time when that option is no longer available because of safety concerns or physical limitations. Mr. Kinzer suggested that when that occurs it might be time for “The Talk” driving issues for older residents. Mr. Kinzer suggested that the COA might have a speaker come to talk about new car technology that could be helpful to older drivers. Further discussion of public transportation options, although numerous, would take planning ahead by the rider and take more time than when one drives her/his own vehicle. Mr. Kalb suggested reminding people of how much money they could save by not owning a car. That could be a good reminder to consider the cost of alternatives to driving.

The discussion then turned to use of the 62/76 MBTA bus from the Bedford VA to Alewife station. There are 68 stops on that route. Ms. Hackman pointed out that the bus only stops when there are people waiting and that the trip is only about 45 minutes on average. Ms Hackman stated that she takes the bus and believes it is quite efficient. Ms. Cservenschi pointed out that the COA can book and pay for limited cab service to medical appointments for those who are eligible.

Ms. Tulimieri pointed out that there are adaptations available on cars that may help seniors keep driving. Mr. Kalb pointed out that Uber and Lyft do have options for handicapped accessible cars as well as cars that accommodate pets. Mr. Kalb also mentioned that he is working with Bedford TV and is planning on doing a series of “How To” videos on various topics including transportation. Ms. Cservenschi pointed out the MBTA has extensive travel training and will even bring out a bus for a group, if requested, to let people get familiar with the procedure or getting on and off the bus. Ms. Ennis pointed out that there used to be a network of volunteer drivers. A brief discussion about some of the problems with volunteer drivers including potential liability was raised. That suggestion would need further study.

Bedford POPS

Ms. Ennis was approached by some residents who wish to create an outdoor performance venue. After some discussion a representative of the group will be invited to attend the May Board meeting to respond to questions about the project.

Close

- A. Next Meeting: May 9, 2023, at 10:30 am, on Zoom
- B. Adjourn

Mr. Putney moved to adjourn. Ms. Ennis seconded. Roll was called and all members voted in favor. Vote: 7-0-0

Meeting adjourned at 12:04

Respectfully submitted by Gene Kalb, Acting Clerk