

Council on Aging of Williamsburg and Haydenville

Minutes of the Meeting of January 17, 2024

Present: Daria D'Arienzo, Maureen O'Brien, Dianne Martin. Staff: Joy Cross Moore, Carole Hendrickson. Director Melissa Wilson. Guest: Chris Flory. Quorum was met. Meeting called to order at 12:17 p.m.

Minutes: Motion to accept the Minutes of the Meeting of November 15, 2023 as distributed (Seconded).

Welcome to Chris Flory, Planning Board Member, and welcome back to Director Melissa Wilson.

Director's Report:

- Director and staff considered a possible timeline for the next twelve months.
- Some regularly scheduled events will continue to be offered (e.g. Multigenerational gathering, the Elder Law clinic, etc.)
- February 26, 2024 Town of Williamsburg Comprehensive Plan : Town Planning Board members will attend a meeting from 12:30-1:30 to gather input from seniors on the town's future needs. Seniors currently make up 40% of the Town's population. Publicity will include posters, a newsletter announcement and personal outreach. Board members are encouraged to attend.
- A springtime spirit-nourishing event will be held on April 25th, 2024 in the community room. A grant to Elder Trust Fund for \$600 would provide food, entertainment and a token gift. Patrick Callinen has been contacted. A raffle for participants' gifts was suggested.
- The Senior Center budget is due in February or early March. The Director is considering funding for a part time assistant to support the in-house prepared communal lunches on Monday and Thursday, which have new numbers of elders attending. Funding will come out of the Formula Grant.

Old Business:

- Newsletter funding is again up in the air. Discussion centered on continuing need for some rural seniors and alternatives to mailings such as printing on demand and selective personal delivery.
- New C.O.A. Board Members: There is a continued need for diverse members, and for finding a new liaison for Highland Valley Elder Services (HVES).
- Medical Rides Update: Rides to Boston remain a challenge to provide.
- Seniors have difficulty hiring help for housework, medical support, and shoveling, etc. because there are not enough workers available.

New Business:

Northern Hilltown Consortium Technology Grant: Peg Whelan headed up the Digital Divide \$300,000. It provides connectivity, devices, tech support and training sessions to elders in seven Western Massachusetts' rural communities. A suggestion was made to collaborate with Meekins Library for some training sessions. Cutting the cable was one potential issue up for discussion. Melissa will contact Peg Whelan and Bev Bullock, Director of Meekins Library.

Williamsburg Comprehensive Plan Listening Sessions:

- Attendance at pre planning sessions has been robust so far. Board members are encouraged to attend one or more future meetings.
- Transportation and Town Services on Thursday, **January 25th 6-8** in the ATD school. The Board discussed local and regional needs, for example curb-to-curb service for seniors, especially in a rural setting.
- Housing: Thurs. February 8, 2024 ATD
- Economic Opportunities: Thurs. February 22, 2024. ATD
- Seniors' Input: (**Senior Center 12:30-1:30**) **February 26, 2024.**
- **General Community Meeting: Sat. March 23, 2024 ATD (Time TBA)**

Motion to adjourn. (Seconded). The meeting was adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

The next meeting of the Williamsburg-Haydenville Council on Aging Board will be held at **12:15 on Weds. February 21st, 2024 at the Town Offices in Haydenville, MA.**