

Harwich Council on Aging Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 8, 2020, 10:00 AM

Activity Room #3

Call to Order:

This meeting was called to order at 10 am by Carol Thayer.

Meeting attendance:

Board Members: Carol Thayer, Ralph Smith, Joanne Lepore, James Mangan,
Angelina Raneo Chilaka

COA Staff Member: Director Emily Mitchell

Approval of December 2019 Minutes:

Motion to approve the minutes – Ralph Smith

Second – Joanne Lepore

Unanimous vote to approve the December 4th, 2019 COA Board Meeting minutes.

Public Comments:

Ms. Kathleen Kelleher proposed a few suggestions. She suggested that the Harwich COA should go through the process of earning the designation as an AARP Age Friendly community. Sixty-six other Massachusetts towns have already earned this designation. It would show that we are an age friendly town and we would be eligible for other benefits.

Her second suggestion: Ms. Kelleher stated that she has experience in printing and writing newsletters and suggested that the Harwich COA revisit utilizing advertisement-supported printing to offset costs. She also indicated that some COAs utilize their associated Friends groups to sign newsletter printing contracts to minimize delays related to procurement processes. would be willing to help with our COA newsletter.

Emily and Carol Responded to her suggestions:

1. The COA is currently under contract with a vendor (Curley Direct) to provide newsletter printing and distribution services without advertisements. We must honor this for the remainder of the contract period.
2. The Council will revisit Ms. Kelleher's suggestion next year if the budget dictates this decision.

3. The COA pays for newsletter printing costs using grant funds, not town-appropriated funds.
4. They thanked her for her time and suggestions.

Chair's Comments: Presented by Emily Mitchell

1. Chairman Richard Waystack was absent from the meeting. He will report next month on the value and importance of COA Board members attending COA events.

Director's Report: Emily Mitchell

1. The part-time Wednesday van driver position has been vacant since September 2019 and has not yet been posted to be filled. Emily continues to work with Interim Town Administrator Joseph Powers to communicate the urgency of filling this position as quickly as possible. In recent meetings with Mr. Powers, he and Emily agreed to a posting and hiring timeline that would have the position filled in early March. However, the first task in the timeline has already been delayed by a week.
2. Carol suggested that the COA Board send a letter out to Mr. Powers encouraging adherence to the timeline as outlined. Emily suggested that we wait about a week to see if we get any feedback or forward movement from Mr. Powers.
3. The Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority training is scheduled for May and is required for all COA van drivers. It is imperative that a new driver be hired before that date, as the training is not offered again until October.
4. The revised COA Volunteer Medical Driver policy went into effect on January 1, 2020 and includes more stringent requirements for drivers and internal record keeping. The COA is in compliance with the revised policy. The Department of Public Works has assisted in completing the required volunteer driver vehicle checks. Thank you to DPW for their assistance. COA Program Specialist Julie Witas has played an essential role in coordinating compliance with the new policy requirements – thank you to Julie for accomplishing this.
5. Budget Planning Cycle: All department heads will present their proposed FY 2021 budget to a joint meeting of the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee. This meeting is scheduled for Saturday, February 8, 2020. Emily will present and justify the proposed FY 21 budget on this date, at a time still to be determined.
6. All Department Heads to be tasked by Administration to prepare a narrative on the impact of limiting departmental budget growth to 2% for FY 21. Due to negotiated collective bargaining agreements that govern staff salaries, restricting growth to 2% would functionally require a 6% reduction in the COA expenditures from FY 20 to FY 21. This would have a significantly harmful impact on the growing number of older adults, family members, and caregivers the COA is called to serve.
7. Thank you to all Board members who helped to deliver holiday packages to our homebound seniors in conjunction with the Be a Santa to a Senior program.

8. March Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon- Carol , Julie, Emily, and Angie will meet on Friday, January 17, 2020 plan for the next Volunteer Recognition event.

Old Business:

None

Board Members Comments:

1. Angie and Ralph - Richard Waystack did an outstanding job at the Men's and Women's breakfast explaining how many of our neediest seniors can get assistance in paying their taxes through senior tax credits, tax work-off programs, and other programs they may qualify for (Veterans, sight loss, etc.). He offered a variety of ways that this could be done.
2. Carol – The newsletter this month was excellent with a great deal of needed information concerning a variety of issues which impact our seniors.
3. Emily – New classes being offered.

Adjournment:

1. Carol brought the meeting to a close at 10:30am
2. Motion to adjourn - Joanne Lepore
3. Second – Ralph Smith
4. Unanimous vote to adjourn

Next COA Board Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 5, 2020 at 10 AM at the Harwich Community Center – Activity Room #3.