

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Harwich Council on Aging Board of Directors**  
**Wednesday, March 3, 2021, 10 AM**  
**Remote Participation Only**

**Meeting Attendance:**

Board Members: Chair Richard Waystack, Vice Chair Carol Thayer, Angelina Raneo Chilaka, Joanne Lepore, James Mangan, Ralph Smith

COA Staff: Director Emily Mitchell

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Richard Waystack at 10:00 AM.

**II. Approval of Minutes**

Joanne Lepore made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 3, 2021 COA Board of Directors meeting. The motion was seconded by Carol Thayer. Votes in favor: Angelina Chilaka, Carol Thayer, Joanne Lepore, Ralph Smith, Richard Waystack. Abstained: James Mangan.

**III. Public Comment: None**

**IV. Chair's Comments (*R. Waystack*):**

Thank you to Vice Chair Carol Thayer for running the February 3, 2021 meeting of the COA Board of Directors. Check in with all members.

Reminder to complete the State Ethics Training – all Board members must complete the training by April 9, 2021. If someone is a member of multiple town boards or committees, they only have to complete the training one time.

**V. Director's Report (*E. Mitchell*)\*\***

**A. COVID-19 Vaccine – COA Role and Current Information.**

The state is in Phase 2, Stage 2 of its rollout plan. Residents age 65+ or age 16+ with 2 or more of certain medical conditions is eligible. With the expansion of eligibility, supply is far exceeding demand and it is difficult for many people to find available appointments.

COA role: Partnering with Outer Cape Health Services (OCHS) for two services. The first is providing vaccine access for homebound residents. OCHS is defining homebound more broadly than the state and is accommodating residents who leave the home only for essential medical appointments or religious observances. The COA is identifying residents, securing appropriate paperwork, and sharing that information with OCHS. Harwich EMS will administer the vaccine once it is received.

OCHS is also providing onsite vaccine clinics at Pine Oaks 1 and 2. Pine Oaks 3 held a clinic via the Federal Pharmacy Partnership Program in collaboration with CVS.

Ralph Smith inquired as to whether people need assistance with transportation in getting to vaccine appointments. Emily responded that residents in the above categories – homebound or residents of senior affordable housing – do not require transportation because they are being served onsite. More broadly, the COA still is not facilitating volunteer transportation in passenger vehicles for members of different households due to the inability to maintain appropriate distancing. Transportation will continue to be an issue that will require creative problem solving.

New standing vaccine site at Cape Cod Community College (CCCC) – opened in the first week of March, has capacity to administer approximately 750 doses/day, run primarily by Cape Cod Healthcare (CCH). CCH has reached out to local municipalities – COAs and Health Departments in particular – to help identify the most at risk residents. CCH has asked towns to prioritize residents age 75+ and who do not have access to internet or technology. The COA is taking names for residents who meet those criteria and submitting them regularly. CCH staff members are then contacting those people by phone to schedule appointments. Richard Waystack asked what vaccine brand is available at this site. Emily responded that it is likely to vary based on supply and that they are not guaranteeing a particular brand.

General Information: The COA continues to send robocalls to folks who opt in to share information about new sites that open with Barnstable County or any time there is a substantive policy updates in the rollout process. People have been thankful for this information.

Registration assistance – Emily has continued to advocate to have the COA provide assistance to residents in the registration process. This is being vetted by Administration and Town Counsel. The COA does not have authorization to offer this service yet.

## B. Overview of current and anticipated COA Operations

From the end of December through the middle of February, onsite programming had been canceled in light of post-holiday surges in case counts. In light of decreasing case counts and positive public health trends, the COA resumed 1:1 professional services and staff meetings beginning the third week of February.

New program: AARP Tax Aide Program which began in the first week of March. This is an annual program, but is operating differently this year in light of COVID restrictions. The program is offered in partnership with the Town of Chatham. Unlike prior years, it is being hosted in Harwich. This year, appointments are held outside. Residents have two separate 5-10 minute appointments with an AARP tax preparer to drop off their materials and then receive their completed returns. Appointments are already filled and the COA is running a short waitlist.

The van capacity is back up to 2 passengers/trip.

### C. Programming Updates

The regional collaborative of Cape COAS - COAST (Councils on Aging Serving Together) – is organizing remote programs. The programming collaborative works such that one member COA hosts a program, and older adults from all 15 Cape towns may participate in the program. All programs are free to participants. In March and April, 29 programs were offered as part of this collaborative. The Harwich COA is hosting two of them.

### D. COA Volunteer needs, recruitment, and training

Emily reported that the COA has filled its need for remote Friendly Visitor volunteers. The COA is still in need of 3-4 new volunteers to assist with SHINE (Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone) program.

Richard asked Emily to share a written description of the SHINE so the Board can share it within their circles.

### E. Joint Budget Hearings with Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee

Departments are presenting their proposed FY 22 budgets to joint meetings of the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee. Hearings will take place on March 8, 12, 13, and 15. The COA is scheduled to present on Friday, March 12, between 9 AM and 12 PM. No specific questions or information have been requested from departments at this time. Hearings will be held by remote participation using GoToMeeting.

Richard highlighted that the process will be different this year and requested that Emily share additional information as she receives it.

## VI. Old Business: None

## VII. New Business

A. Update from Elder Services Board Liaison (*J. Lepore*) – ESCCI is in the process of defining “homebound” relative to the homebound vaccination process. Fully coming back to personal services, improved since the fall. Currently have over 1100 volunteers, primarily Meals on Wheels drivers. CCRTA is developing a new SMART Dart program – an on demand ride calling service; currently operating with Barnstable and Yarmouth, but looking to expand Cape-wide by the end of the year.

Joanne reported that she has decided to step down from her role as liaison after the April Board meeting. She has enjoyed her service and will happily assist whomever comes on as the next liaison.

Richard asked Board members to consider whether they would be interested in serving as liaison. This topic will be discussed further at the April COA Board meeting.

## **VIII. Member Comments**

Comments expressing gratitude for the work of the COA staff. Further comments as to the quality and quantity of information available in the COA newsletter and its benefit to the community.

## **IX. Adjournment**

Joanne Lepore made the motion to adjourn at 10:35 AM. Motion was seconded by Carol Thayer. Unanimous roll call vote by members present to adjourn

**Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 7, 2021, 10 AM by remote participation only.**