

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Harwich Council on Aging Board of Directors**  
**Wednesday, April 7, 2021, 10 AM**  
**Remote Participation Only**

**Meeting Attendance:**

Board Members: Chair Richard Waystack, Angelina Raneo Chilaka, Joanne Lepore, Ralph Smith, Justin White

COA Staff: Director Emily Mitchell

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Richard Waystack at 10:02 AM.

**II. Approval of Minutes**

Joanne Lepore made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 3, 2021 COA Board of Directors meeting. The motion was seconded Ralph Smith. Unanimous vote to approve by members present.

**III. Public Comment: None**

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

Chairman checked in with all members and reminded members to complete the mandatory state ethics training and to provide Emily with a copy of their completion certificate.

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

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

As of Monday, April 5, 2021, vaccine eligibility in Massachusetts expanded to include people age 55+, anyone age 16+ with one or more of certain medical conditions, and an expanded list of certain workers. On Monday, April 19<sup>th</sup>, the state intends to open eligibility to all people age 16+. Each time the state has opened a new phase of the vaccine rollout process, there has been a period of increased difficulty in finding an available appointment. Happy to report that over 90% of Harwich residents age 75+ have received at least one dose of the vaccine.

On April 5<sup>th</sup>, the Town completed its first round of homebound vaccinations. This was coordinated in partnership with the COA, Health Department, EMS, and Outer Cape Health Services. EMS administered 55 shots during this first round. The COA and Health Department continue to take names for a next round of homebound vaccinations – the process is ongoing.

The COA also assisted in vaccination clinics with the senior affordable housing sites – all sites (Pine Oaks 1, 2, and 3) have all had onsite clinics to date.

Cape Cod Community College is an ongoing, standing regional site open 5 days per week. It is operated jointly by Cape Cod Healthcare and Barnstable County. Cape Cod Healthcare is partnering with Cape towns, through the COAs and Health Departments, to identify priority lists to serve at this site. To date, the COA has assisted approximately 300 residents in securing appointments through this priority list partnership.

The COA continues to provide general information, robo-calls, and assistance with regards to vaccine rollout.

#### B. Overview of current and anticipated COA operations

No major substantive changes to onsite operations – continuing 1:1 onsite services. Van capacity remains at 2 passengers/trip. Continuing community-based services in full swing.

The COA is considering a number of options for scaling up onsite operations in light of expanded reopening at the state level and improving public health data. There are no immediate plans to change onsite operations. Staff are working through the myriad of safety, liability, planning, and physical space factors relevant to the reopening process. The COA is considering expanded onsite services for July at the earliest. Also anticipating additional guidance from Massachusetts Councils on Aging (MCOA) and the Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

#### C. Volunteer Needs

The COA is hoping to bring on one additional reception volunteer – someone who is comfortable working onsite, answering phones, coordinating program sign ups and check ins. Staff will provide thorough training for new volunteers.

Still seeking additional SHINE (Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone) counselor volunteers. This is a larger time commitment, but eager to bring in dedicated volunteers to assist Harwich residents.

Ralph asked about the time commitment for the reception volunteer. Emily indicated that shifts are approximately 3 hours long and the goal is to bring on a volunteer willing and able to commit to 2-3 shifts per week.

#### D. New CCRTA Leased Vehicle

In 2019, the COA had requested a new 14-passenger van from Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority through their Mobility Assistance Program. The process was delayed due to COVID, but Emily was notified in February that the new vehicle is ready for COA use. The COA has picked it up and it has been registered and inspected. Emily will be working with Administration to finalize the lease agreement prior to putting the new vehicle on the road. The 14-passenger is larger than two vehicles currently in use (an 8-passenger and a 12-passenger). This is the largest vehicle a driver can operate without a special license. Emily is

excited about the opportunity to expand capacity with the larger vehicle, especially in light of the impact of COVID restrictions on transportation services.

Richard asked what will happen to the other vehicles. Emily answered the 8-passenger is also leased from CCRTA and will remain on the road. The 12-passenger was gifted to the COA from Cape Destinations after an older CCRTA-leased 12-passenger vehicle had to be taken off the road in October 2019 after reaching the end of its useful life. The COA does plan to return the larger vehicle to Cape Destinations. Both Richard and Emily expressed their gratitude to Cape Destinations for their generosity in support of COA transportation.

## **VI. Old Business**

- A. Discussion and possible vote to appoint new liaison to the Elder Services of Cape Cod and the Islands Board of Directors

Joanne has served as the liaison for three years and will be stepping down after the April meeting. Richard asked if anyone was interested in serving as the new liaison. No members in attendance expressed interest. Decision to hold further discussion until the May COA Board meeting when all members are present.

## **VII. New Business**

- A. Update from Elder Services Board Liaison (*J. Lepore*) – Elder Services usually has an annual meeting in May, but will not this year. They do plan to put out a booklet providing an overview of the year. Elder Services is also working to assist older adults in securing vaccine appointments. Office personnel are at 50% capacity. Next meeting is scheduled for April 27, 2021.

Richard thanked Joanne for her service as liaison and for all of her services to the COA, COA Board, and the town overall.

## **VIII. Member Comments**

Comments expressing gratitude for the work of the COA staff and excitement about the older adult vaccination rate in town.

Emily also reminded members about the Annual Town Meeting scheduled for Saturday, May 8, 2021 at 10 AM at Monomoy Regional High School Stadium Field, with a rain date of Saturday, May 15, 2021.

Richard made an additional reminder about the request for additional reception volunteer support.

## **IX. Adjournment**

Joanne Lepore made the motion to adjourn at 10:27 AM. Motion was seconded by Ralph Smith. Unanimous roll call vote by members present to adjourn.

**Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 5, 2021, 10 AM by remote participation only.**

Approved by HCOA Board of Directors on May 5, 2021