

**Harwich Council on Aging Board of Directors**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday – July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2022 – 10am**

**Harwich Community Center – Channel 18 Studio**

**100 Oak St. – Harwich, MA 02645**

**Meeting Attendance:**

Board Members: Chair Richard Waystack, John Bathelt, Ralph Smith, Angelina Raneo Chilaka

COA Staff: Newly Appointed Director- Julie Witas

Guest: Chair of Friends of COA – Jim Knickman

**1. Call to Order**

Richard Waystack called the meeting to order at 10am.

**2. Welcome by Chair Richard Waystack:**

Congratulations to Julie Witas for being officially named the new director of the Harwich COA at last night's Board of Selectmen meeting.

Welcome Friends of the COA chair Jim Knickman for coming in to share some ideas. A special thank you to our beloved Jack Brown who recently passed away. He was a vital force and true gentleman in our town. Jack was involved in so many committees such as the finance committee, community conservation committee, COA, and his special love - the Friends of the COA. Thank you to Jack and his family.

**3. Approval of Minutes:**

John Bathlet made a motion to approve the June 29, 2022 notes on the Council on Aging Board of Director's meeting. The motion was seconded by Ralph Smith. Unanimous vote by members present to approve.

**4. Public Comment: None**

**5. COA Director Report: Julie Witas**

a. Operations:

1. Most programs at the COA have opened in July and August with most programs full or half full. Popular programs such as Balance Boosters, Tai Chi, and Jill's workout program filled up very quickly. The new sailing program is full and there is a wait list.

2. Ladies Social Hour will resume on the last Wednesday of the month from 1pm – 2:30pm. It is a great way to socialize with new friends.
  3. August 18<sup>th</sup> – An osteoporosis presentation will be held.
  4. August 19<sup>th</sup> – Movie Day will focus on Family Friendly Movies so grandparents can bring their family.
  5. On September 15, the COA will co-host a pre planning seminar and luncheon with Robin Kelly, Cemetery Administrator.
  6. In October, a Brain Longevity Course will also be offered. This course was very popular when last offered in February. Seniors can sign up now.
- b. Volunteer Needs:
1. The reception desk volunteers is now fully staffed with volunteers.
  2. We need Friendly visitors - They keep in contact socially with our elders.
  3. We also need more volunteer medical drivers. There is a fee to reimburse you for gas. John Bathelt clarified that you would be driving between Hyannis and Orleans getting the elders to medical appointments. You would only need to donate 1 -2 hours per week, and it is a fun job.
  4. We also need another 1 or 2 volunteers to help with the luncheon shift check in.

## 6 Old Business:

1. The COA is considering the possibility of resuming Men and Women's breakfasts once they are fully staffed.
  2. Board was directed to think of future goals and needs for the next meeting.
  3. One priority goal is to bring back the Volunteers Recognition program.
  4. Julie Witas will be bringing to the next meeting her goals.
  5. Due to inflation, many seniors will be needing financial assistance, so the COA will need to reach out and provide all necessary information of what is available. This past Spring, Julie hosted a program at the COA to inform residents of what benefits and resources are available to them. It was suggested that we plan a TV program in the Fall to repeat this information – we could list and discuss all the programs in our town and region that can assist our elders such as: Tax exemption programs, food assistance programs such as SNAP and the Family Pantry, Fuel Assistance and other utility benefits, etc.
    - a. Jim Knickman ( Friends COA) suggested that the Friends could fundraise to help with many of the elders expenses.
    - b. Ralph Smith also stressed the availability of the Family Pantry for many items besides food.
6. **Chair of Friends of COA – Jim Knickman:**
- a. Jim stressed that the purpose of the Friends of COA is to assist the COA.
  - b. He discussed the Retreat that was held last year bringing together experts across the Cape of assisting seniors. He felt we need to utilize these services but transportation is an issue. He would like to coordinate services with the Friends

Van, but would need to recruit more drivers. He is now working with the Harwich Newcomers to see if any of them would like to become drivers. One group that he felt was worth reaching out to is Nauset Neighbors.

- c. He stated we need more respite care available in our area such as Adult Day Care and Alzheimer's Respite Care.
  - d. Jim is also reaching out for volunteers to join the Friends of the COA Board. He is looking for folks who like working with seniors and someone who has expertise in fundraising.
7. Board Members Comments: Chair Richard Waystack
- a. Ralph Smith – Advocated for the men's and women's breakfast. Also pointed out there is one more opening on the COA Board.
  - b. John Bathelt – Emphasized the need for more medical drivers. You will be compensated for gas.
  - c. Angie Raneo Chilaka – Thank you to Julie Witas and John Bathelt for helping a senior get an AC set up in her home in a very short time.
  - d. Jim Knickman – Encouraging people to volunteer for the Friend of COA and join the group.
  - e. Director Julie Witas - Thank you to everyone and she expressed gratitude at being appointed as the new director.

**8. Adjournment:**

Ralph Smith made the motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by John Bathelt. Unanimous vote by members present to adjourn the meeting at 10:35am.

**Next Meeting is scheduled for August 17, 2022.**