

Town of Harwich Council on Aging Board
Meeting Notes
Wednesday – September 20, 2023 10am

Harwich Community Center
100 Oak St. – Harwich, MA 02645
Channel 18 Studio

Meeting Attendance:

Present: Vice Chair – Carol Thayer, John Bathelt, Justin White, Ralph Smith, Angelina Chilaka
Director: Julie Witas, Executive Asst: Lauren Swift

Absent: Chair- Richard Waystack

Guests: None

1. **Call to Order:** Vice Chair Carol Thayer called the meeting to order at 10am
2. **Approval of August 2023 Minutes:** The board was asked to approve the August 2023 board minutes. Ralph Smith made the motion to approve the minutes and John Bathelt seconded the motion. Unanimous vote by the members to approve the minutes.
3. **Public Comment:** None
4. **Vice Chair – Carol Thayer Report:** Carol Thayer checked in with members. No comments by the Board were given at this time.
5. **COA Director – Julie Witas Report:**
 - a. Julie introduced the new Executive Assistant – Lauren Swift who began her new job on Monday – September 18, 2023. She is already actively working on projects. Lauren Swift stated she was happy to join the COA. The board welcomed her aboard.
 - b. Other Staffing Updates: **Gerry Golia** has retired from his position as half-time van driver. The COA Board would like to thank him for his service. The COA needs one more driver to replace Gerry. At the present time, we have two part-time drivers on staff. **Kevin Case**, per diem chef, has also retired. The COA Board wishes him well and thanks him for his service. At the present time, we only have Linda working in the cafeteria. We now have two staff members who are also Serve Safe Certified who will be able to help out until we can hire a replacement for Kevin. Andrea Sidoruk, Social Services Coordinator, passed her state social work licensure and is now a licensed certified social worker (LCSW). Congratulations!
 - c. Operations: Julie highlighted a program coming up next month, the next in our local author series Beyond the Book. Author Nicole Barrell will present her new book *The Sham* on October 20th and will also discuss her first novel, which had many great

reviews, *The Hollow*. It is an exciting thriller. Nicole is a graduate of Harwich High School, UMass Amherst, and Emerson College.

- d. Open Meeting Law Training: Julie announced that an Open Meeting Law training will be held at the Community Center, co-presented by our Town Clerk's office and our legal partner KP Law. It will be held on Thursday, Sept. 28 and there will be two sessions: one from 2-4pm and one from 5-7pm. Sign up with Jennifer Clarke at the Town Clerk's Office.
 - e. Enrollment for SHINE: Open enrollment starts on Oct. 15th and will run until Dec. 7th. To schedule an appointment, please call the COA starting on Tuesday – Oct. 3rd.
 - f. Volunteer Needs: We are well staffed at the moment with volunteers, but we will always accept new applications from interested constituents.
6. **Old Business:** Julie provided an update on the Volunteer Recognition Event. We have scheduled a brunch for Saturday, October 28th at 11am in the Multipurpose room. Linda will prepare a few things, and the rest will be catered. Friends of HCOA will help cover the cost. Ralph Smith also asked about table service vs buffet style. This time, we are trying something new, where food will be served buffet style, however, staff/volunteers will still have to serve the food vs having diners serve themselves. This was a Board of Health requirement.
- a. **New Business:** Julie discussed the impact of a new General Bylaw. At this year's ATM, Article 56: "Adopt a New General Bylaw – Plastic Reduction" was passed. Our Town Clerk has reported that our Bylaws have now been amended, and the effect is that as of September 1, 2024, the COA's lunch program will no longer be able to use any plastic containers, utensils, etc. We have begun exploring the transition to new materials and intend to experiment throughout the next year until we find suitable replacements. Julie is looking at the cost of paper and other forms of containers and utensils. Cost is still being assessed. There will likely be a small increase to the budget. Julie will continue to report back on the issue.

7. **Comments:**

Angelina Chilaka: Congratulations and Welcome to Lauren Swift

Ralph Smith: Men's Breakfast had a lower turnout last month but they are beating the Women's breakfast with donations. It is a great challenge for next month.

John Bathelt: None; Justin White: None; Carol Thayer: None

8. **Adjournment:**

John Bathelt made the motion to adjourn. Ralph Smith seconded the motion. It was a unanimous vote to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 10:34am.

The Next COA Board Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday – October 18th, 2023 at 10am.