

DREWEY DARNELL, Chair  
Liane Pueschel SECRETARY

LESLIE HENNESSEY, Director

SOUTH HADLEY COUNCIL ON AGING  
Virtual Board of Directors Meeting—April 12, 2021  
Minutes

Call to order: Meeting called to order at 4:30pm by Chair Drewey Darnell

Roll Call: Drewey Darnell, Mary Boulais, Carol Constant, Linda Young, Liane Pueschel, Rita Starzyk, Robert Pueschel, Marsha Chappel

Present: Leslie Hennesey, Director

Guests: Melina Bourdeau (Town Reminder), Janet Stawasz, Kim Prough

Open Forum: Marsha Chappel's last name is incorrectly spelled on the Town of South Hadley website for the COA. This will be addressed.

Approval of March Minutes: Several amendments to the minutes—Change plant sale dates for May, correct the spelling of Sarah's last name, add Sarah's former position as Assistant Town Clerk for the Town of South Hadley to the minutes, and correct the adjournment time. Motion by Linda Young to approve the minutes as amended. Seconded by Carol Constant. All were in favor. Minutes approved.

New Business:

- The Chronicle has a new look. The COA wanted a change, so the publisher provided several templates to choose from in the redesigning process. Very satisfied with the result.
- A question was raised as to whether Fibersonic would be used for internet service in the new Center. Presently, Fibersonic is only in limited parts of the town. The Town ultimately decides the contract for internet access.

Old Business:

- a. Vaccine Updates—Still some difficulty in making appointments. The COA has scheduled over 311 appointments, provided info, and secured vaccine for 46 homebound seniors. There is a daily Hot Line to help with scheduling. Presently, only 13% of the population in Massachusetts has been vaccinated.
  - i. Site Locations—The Knights of Columbus in Chicopee is close to opening as a vaccine site, but this is dependent on the amount of vaccine made available.  
Baystate Health (Whitney Ave) is open for walk-ins this week for the J&J vaccine.
  - ii. VA Options—Appointments for vaccines have been backed up due to low vaccine supplies.  
Planning to open up to caregivers and families of veterans on 4/19.

b. New Senior Center Project

The Board was presented with a slide show so they could witness the status of the construction. Questionable whether the Center will be completely ready for June, although work is progressing nicely. A

letter will be sent to St. Theresa's Church requesting an extension of the lease until June 30<sup>th</sup>, should the church space be needed a little longer.

96 parking spaces at the new Center with 2-way driving. Minibuses will enter on Fulton and exit on Dayton.

Down one minibus. The Gerry Bernard minibus was housed at the DPW for the winter and was there when the fire broke out at the DPW. It will be returned once it is cleaned.

Grant received for the installation of a 2-car electric charging station. This will cover the cost of the equipment and installation. There will be a usage fee.

? if SHELD would allow free use of the station for a year since they wouldn't have to subsidize the project. Also, it is believed that since the Center would be the first in town to have a charging station, a reward could be forthcoming from SHELD. The COA will follow-up.

There have been instances of back orders on furniture, but it is anticipated that the order for the Center will be available when needed.

c. Friends of the South Hadley Seniors Update

April 15<sup>th</sup> is the official date of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Friends. Will be seeking history of the organization through contact with folks who have been longtime residents of the town.

275 meals were provided for the St. Patrick's Day lunch

27 residents attended the movie at The Towers last week—adequate spacing, assigned seating, vaccination cards and face masks are required. 3 movies remaining.

May—Plant sale at St. Theresa's

June—Calendar Raffle and '40 Days of Prizes' to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary

Regarding the sign for the new Center—It doesn't appear that there will be an unobstructed view on the corner by Peoples Bank due to their landscaping. Looking for ideas on where it could be placed.

The Town Reminder will be doing PR for the new COA South Hadley Senior Connections. Also hoping to recruit volunteers through the publication.

Director's Report

i. Programs, services, events

The COA has initiated 9 in-person outdoor activities (book club, knitting, crafting, paint 'n sip, writing, yoga standing/sitting, VA support group, social strollers). Protocols have been developed for COVID safety.

80 seniors have signed up for the Pansies and Pastry giveaway.

Stay Home/Stay Safe Bags were provided to approximately 100 seniors this past month.

In March, the COA provided 70 rides to 38 seniors, brought 6 seniors to vaccine appointments, and made 27 deliveries.

The COA will provide transportation to the Food Pantry on Wednesdays from 12-2:30 (2 people at a time). This will eliminate the cost to seniors for using PVTA.

Seeking certification as an Age Friendly Community through AARP. We have already attained Dementia Friendly Certification for the town. Will be using the Master Plan Update as the format moving forward. Indicating intention to obtain designation is what counts. We must show that the town is working towards goals (walking paths, housing, access to transportation, benches near bus stops, etc.).

Application has been made for a Medical Transportation Grant, and for a Technology Instructor (5hours/week) to teach basic skills at the COA (banking, shopping, TeleMed, etc.).

Grant of \$9000 was received from the DOT to fund a driver for the 2<sup>nd</sup> minibus.

Will not seek a grant for the Alzheimer's Caregivers Support Group. A generous donation to the Gift Fund was received and will be used to support the group and hire a facilitator.

ii. Official Opening

The COA, Board of Health, and MCOA are working on a re-opening plan. This will be done in stages. In the process of reaching out to volunteers to determine if they plan to return to their duties when the COA reopens. New volunteer duties will also be available. Everyone (former and new volunteers) will require a CORI.

iii. AARP Tax Clinic—Ended 4/7

iv. iPad Loan Program

Going well. 6 seniors have requested applications. The 1<sup>st</sup> tier of the program followed strict financial guidelines. The 2<sup>nd</sup> tier has been extended to July and will continue to be for low income seniors, but with less stringent guidelines.

Next meeting: May 10, 2021

Motion to adjourn by Mary Boulais and seconded by Robert Pueschel

Meeting adjourned @5:35pm

Respectfully submitted,

Liane Pueschel  
Secretary