

Harvard Council on Aging
Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, March 15, 2016
Minutes

Present: Deb Thomson, Bruce Dolimount, Hank Fitek, Katie Petrossi, Suzanne Roberts, Beth Williams

Absent: Fran Nickerson, Pam Frederick, Sue Guswa

Other attendees: Selectmen liaison Lucy Wallace, FCOA liaison Doug Lee, Connie Larrabee, recorder

Co-Chairwoman Deb Thomson called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

The minutes of the February 23, 2016 meeting were approved as drafted.

The treasurer's report was accepted as submitted. Bruce reported the current balances as follows:

Revolving Funds \$12,451.60

Gift Account \$20,585.39

Formula Grant \$6,148.54 (must be spent by the end of the fiscal year June 30.)
Expenses are tracking on target.

MART van

The board had a lengthy discussion about ongoing problems with the MART van. Selectman Stu Sklar has suggested buying a used van with funding from the Rantoul Trust, and having the DPW maintain it. But MART also trains and pays the drivers and a portion of the administrative assistant-van dispatcher's salary, which the town would have to absorb if we had our own van. The possible use of volunteer van drivers was also raised. Board members agreed that the MART question should be on the agenda for the April meeting, when Debbie can provide an update, including data on clients' unmet transportation needs.

Directors Report

The outreach department has now been in contact with 529 residents over the age of 60 since July 1, describing our services and determining unmet needs. We continue to work with a number of clients who need more services than we can provide, and have filed another protective order this month.

At the St. Patrick's Day lunch on March 17, police detective Daniele Fortunato will do a presentation about how seniors can protect themselves from scams.

Assistant Town Administrator Marie Sobalvarro will be the contact person in coordinating the move to the old library during Hildreth House construction. Marie needs a list of the items to be moved so she can determine moving costs. We need to determine what will be declared surplus, discarded, moved to the old library, or stored at Hildreth House,

Upcoming events:

Thursday, March 17 – St. Patrick’s Day lunch at St. Theresa’s

Friday, March 18 – Trips – Paradise City

Thursday, March 31 – FCOA annual dinner, 6:30 at UU Fellowship Building

April 11 – Lunch and learn: Village model of aging

April 13 – Tour of Channel 5 WCVB

April 20 – Teas in Time – historical presentation

April 21 – Senator Jamie Eldridge conference – van available

April 23 – Live your Life Well workshop, 10 -3

April 28 – Joint COA-FCOA meeting 4 pm

COA offices are closed Monday, April 18 for Patriots Day

Hildreth House Building Project Update

Windows: Twenty-three windows and screens have been installed so far. The volunteer crew has been working most Saturday mornings and will continue until the project is done. Eleven volunteers have participated at one time or another: Wade Holtzman, Tom Garfield, Keith Cheveralls, Jack Spero, Ron Ricci, Ken Swanton, Brint Ferguson, Bob Jarratt, Pablo Carbonell, Pat Jennings, and Connie Larrabee. Members agreed that we should have a thank-you event for these volunteers.

Phase 1: Consultation with Building Inspector Gabe Vallente has confirmed a number of required access improvements, including wider doorways upstairs, new door hardware, and modified railings on the front stairway. The existing kitchen sink and stove will also have to be replaced unless we can get a variance from the Architectural Access Board. According to Debbie’s calculations, \$10,000 has already been donated for kitchen improvements. Katie volunteered to spearhead an effort to research code requirements and get appliances donated if that becomes necessary. Deb T suggested that we have a group to work on the kitchen issues.. Doug said the FCOA is willing to help with kitchen improvements.

Heating Upgrade: The proposed upgrade of the Hildreth House heating system with a clean energy grant seems unlikely to proceed due to time constraints. Work on the system must be complete before the Hildreth House building project begins, which is now estimated to be in early June. A contract has been negotiated but there is no confirmation that the contractor can comply with the scheduling deadline.

Committee Reports

Housing:

The next COA – LWV housing event is a Lunch and Learn program about the village model of senior housing options on Monday, April 11 at noon at the Congregational Church. There will be at least three speakers representing peer-led grassroots organizations that are either planning or operating such “villages.” Although she will be off the board next year, Katie volunteered to spearhead an effort to enable such a village in Harvard if there is sufficient interest.

Lucy reported that the selectmen are not pursuing their proposed warrant article requesting funding for a study of senior housing on the Hildreth property. The Capital Planning Committee and the Finance Committee did not support the article, which came in too late, they said, to be considered.

It seems there is enough sewage capacity for 20 housing units on the property. Lucy said the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust is sending a letter to the Planning Board about zoning constraints. The board agreed on the need to do a new survey with a housing component. A discussion of survey goals will be on the April agenda. Program Committee:

Katie suggested a series of programs next year aimed at seniors who have lost a spouse and are living alone. Called Suddenly Single, program topics could include money management, home maintenance, grief support and maybe a combined book group – support group. Katie also suggested that a number of new board committees be formed, including advocacy, Village implementation, and Devens services committees..

Relocation during construction

Katie and Deb T will meet with Debbie and prepare a list of tasks and a timeline for sorting, packing, storing, and/or moving Hildreth House contents. The board agreed the last two weeks in May will require a huge effort with all hands on deck.

New Business - Devens Services

Lucy has been pursuing the topic of providing COA services to Devens. She said there are 23 Devens residents over the age of 60 and 17 over the age of 70, and there are no COA services for them. She is aware of one person there who needs help and suggested an arrangement whereby a social worker would be paid by the hour to serve Devens seniors under Debbie's direction.

Katie suggested checking to see what the arrangement is between Mass Development and the Shirley COA and use it as a model.

FCOA Update

The FCOA annual meeting is scheduled for March 31 from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at the Unitarian Church. .

A joint COA-FCOA meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 28 at 5 p.m.

The next Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 19, 2016 from 4 to 5:30 p.m. at Hildreth House.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Connie Larrabee, recorder

