

Harvard Council on Aging
Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, April 19, 2016
Minutes

Present: Sue Guswa, Hank Fitek, Pam Frederick Deb Thomson, Suzanne Roberts, Beth Williams, COA Director Debbie Thompson
Absent: Bruce Dolimount Fran Nickerson, Katie Petrossi
Other attendees: Town Hall and Hildreth House Construction Committee Chairman Rick Maiore, TH-HH committee member Al Combs, FCOA liaison Willie Wickman, Connie Larrabee, recorder

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

The minutes of the March 15, 2016 meeting were approved as drafted.

In Bruce Dolimounts's absence, Debbie Thompson gave the treasurer's report. The current balances are as follows:

Revolving Funds \$11,675.99

Gift Account \$19,646.19 (at least \$11,0000 earmarked for kitchen improvements)

Formula Grant \$4,427.17 (must be spent by the end of the fiscal year June 30.)

Routine expenses are tracking on target.

Building Project Report

Rick Maiore gave an update on the current status of the project. The most recent (4/8/2016) cost estimate is \$227,000 lower than the previous estimate and \$132,591 lower than last year's estimate. This reduction is mostly the result of cutting the rear vestibule from the project, along with about \$50,000 in site cost reductions. The building committee has directed the architect to proceed with final design and bid documents and expects to go out to bid in early May.

The schedule calls for subcontractor bids to be due May 19 and general contractor bids May 26. The bids are then reviewed by the construction committee and the owners project manager and if they do not exceed the budgeted amount, the selectmen can sign a contract with the selected bidder.

If all of the bids exceed the amount budgeted, the selectmen have at least two options to cover the shortfall. They could call a town meeting to appropriate the money from free cash, or use some of the Rantoul Trust funds.

Civil engineer Cal Goldsmith of GPR will meet with the Planning Board April 25 to discuss the site plan, including the driveway, which would require a variance to stay under the current budget. Rick Maiore and TH-HH committee member Jack Guswa will also attend.

Al Combs assured board members that the building committee will see that the project gets done on time and under budget, making whatever trade-offs are necessary to make that happen.

Debbie Thompson asked who would pay for moving COA file cabinets and other large items to the old library. There is no money in the project budget for relocation expenses. Rick said he would get an answer but several board members suggested that volunteers could be recruited to move large items, possibly with help from the DPW.

The move is expected to be in early-to-mid June, with construction starting in early July. The project should be completed by late November. The discussion then turned to Phase 2 renovation and expansion, and the possibility of building senior housing on the Hildreth property. Sue Guswa expressed her frustration with an apparent gridlock in attempts to move forward with moderate-priced housing for senior residents. And Willie Wickman wondered how to speed up the process for getting Phase 2 underway. In both cases, Rick Maiore recommended getting “a group of smart people” together to put pressure on the selectmen, and also working with the Planning Board on the housing issue. As for timing, Al Combs recommended waiting until after the Phase 1 contract is signed before ramping up the Phase 2 effort.

Sue Guswa will work with Katie, Willie, and Lucy to plan a way forward.

Directors Report

The outreach department is still sending letters with follow-up calls to Harvard seniors, which has produced a noticeable increase in participation in the lunch program and other activities.

COA programs are now regularly shown on cable TV and more programs are planned. Sue G. suggested that COA programs be broadcast at regularly scheduled times to increase viewership.

Assistant Town Administrator Marie Sobalvarro will help facilitate the move to the old library during Hildreth House construction. With help from Debbie and Deb T., Katie has created a spreadsheet of items to be moved or declared surplus and tasks to be accomplished.

Upcoming events:

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 5 pm, followed by potluck

April 29 – Volunteer appreciation luncheon

May 18-25 – Town Hall closed for move from old library

Heating Upgrade: The proposed upgrade of the Hildreth House heating system with a clean energy grant is complete. The new system is operational and performing well.

Back patio

Hank will look into the possibility of moving the stones and bricks in the back patio to a nearby spot where they can be saved for reuse. He will check to see if the DPW could help with that.

New Business: Attorney referrals

Deb T. suggested that the COA develop a list of qualified elder-law attorneys in the area for referrals. Debbie already has a list of three elder-law attorneys but board members agreed it would be a good idea to expand the list. Suzanne thought Minuteman Home Services might already have such a list and Pam will check with Minuteman.

New Board members

Three board members' terms are up this year: Sue Guswa, Fran Nickerson, and Suzanne Roberts. Fran has served two terms so she will be leaving the board, as will Suzanne Roberts, who might be moving away. Sue Guswa will stay on the board for another term. Board members were encouraged to think about suitable candidates to fill the two vacancies.

FCOA Update

A joint COA-FCOA meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 28 at 5 p.m. The FCOA will provide pizza, and COA board members are asked to bring salad or drinks.

The next Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 17, 2016 from 4 to 5:30 p.m. at Hildreth House.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Connie Larrabee, recorder