

MINUTES
Council on Aging, June 1, 2022

With a quorum present, the meeting was called to order at 1:35 p.m. by Chair Mary Anne Easley

Members present: Alison Forsgren, Diane Flaherty, Jude Perkins, Nancy Swain, Mary Anne Easley

Members absent: Kendra Lockley, Suzi Spring, Linda Williams

Staff present: Jerico Mele

Staff absent: Laura Stewart

Minutes of May 4, 2022 meeting: Ms. Forsgren made a motion to approve. Ms. Perkins seconded the motion. Unanimous vote to approve.

Approval of agenda: Ms. Swain moved to approve; seconded by Ms. Perkins. Unanimous vote by roll call to approve.

Ms. Easley reported on the status of two current COA grants.

(1) Caregiver grant applications closed yesterday. There are 30 qualified applicants; we could have accepted 38. Applicants can choose a \$200 gift certificate from a list of local vendors. Nine chose Stop & Shop; 7 chose Bartlett's Farm; and rest were just one or two selections of hairdresser, nail salon, restaurants. Gift certificates are being purchased by Town Finance and most of them will be mailed. The COA has received several notes of appreciation from recipients. Mr. Mele suggested submitting information about this grant for possible inclusion in the Town Manager's newsletter.

(2) Safety home modifications grant started slowly but we now have 9 requests, mostly for grab bars, and 5 in process by our installer Steve Mailloux. Our contract is for 15 total and if we're successful the state will extend the grant for a second year. Referrals have come from Elder Services, PASCON, the Fire Dept. and the Saltmarsh. Mr. Mele reported on Human Services issues, including COVID-19 and behavioral health. Public Health Nurse Heather Francis is planning presentations at the Saltmarsh on health-related issues later this year.

Also, a plan is being developed for tech clinics at the Saltmarsh with help from the Town's IT Dept. and IT students from the schools.

There are numerous efforts under way for addressing behavioral health issues, some directed at seniors. A grant of \$70K has been received to address rural health equity.

Whenever possible, Mr. Mele said, they will encourage relationships between seniors and youth. Ms. Forsgren asked if any of this money can be used for off-island medical visits; Mr. Mele said no, those are not included.

Mr. Mele reported that COVID cases are up both on Nantucket and nationwide, but hospitalizations are zero on island and deaths are declining nationwide. There are currently about 5 cases per day on the island but data gathering is not reliable. Ms. Flaherty asked about the schools and Mr. Mele said their reporting, both public and private schools, is done differently so statistics are not readily available.

Ms. Forsgren was not able to attend the ESCCI meeting due to boats not running, but she suggested inviting Maryanne Ryan from the Cape Cod organization as a speaker at one of our meetings.

Ms. Easley reported that NCEA has received a grant of \$10K from the Landmark House that must be used for senior socialization. They are planning the following events:

June - Fathers Day brunch

July - Muffin Morning

August - Cookout

September - Ice cream social

NCEA has completed the facelift on the interior of the Saltmarsh and is now concentrating on the exterior landscaping.

Ms. Forsgren asked about the status of memory cafes. Ms. Easley agreed to contact Brian Lehane of the Community School, who is apparently initiating a memory cafe.

Ms. Easley suggested more visibility for the MA Walk Challenge for which only a few Nantucketers have signed up. The Walk is from May to October.

Ms. Easley reminded members to RSVP for the Senior Man and Woman of the Year luncheon coming up at the Faregrounds restaurant.

A vote was taken whether to continue COA meetings on Zoom or move to in-person meetings. A motion to remain on Zoom was made by Ms. Flaherty, seconded by Ms. Swain. The non-binding vote to remain on Zoom was unanimous.

Before adjourning the meeting at 2:30 p.m., members recognized Ms. Flaherty for her service as secretary and thanked her as she is leaving the COA.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Anne Easley, Chair