

**COUNCIL ON AGING BOARD MEETING**  
**Minutes of the Council on Aging Board Meeting held on**  
**February 8, 2024**

**at the Community Center and via Zoom**

**Members Present:** Jeanne Genereux, William Byron, Ruth Delmonico, Charlie Aaronson, Al Arthur, George Nisotel, and Kathy O'Brien

**Associate Member Present:** Brian Burke

**Absent:** June Thall and Kate Hogan

**The Director of the COA,** Alyson Toole, was present.

**Stow citizen:** Jen Gero came to the meeting

**Brian O'Sullivan** will give his report in person and will give Kathleen's report as well.

**Chair,** Jeanne Genereux, opened the meeting at 10:05.

The **Minutes** of January 11, 2024 were reviewed and accepted after making several clarifications: In Kathleen's report, under Fuel Assistance, 18 applications were sent to **SMOC**; Under the Director's Report, the Massachusetts COA has **raised** its fees; the 20 passenger's glass **door** shattered; and the Boy Scouts want to put **two trailers** at the Community Center Parking lot.

**The Community Preservation Committee** - Charlie Aaronson

- There is nothing new to report.
- Al Arthur is interested in becoming a member of the CPC.

**Minuteman Senior Services** - Charlie Aaronson

February 27 is **Older Adult Lobby Day**. Members of COA's go into the State House and speak with legislators in small groups to promote their needs. Charlie plans to attend.

**Stow Social Worker** - Brian O'Sullivan

- Very busy, over 51 contacts
- People drop in without appointments. Yesterday, of the 7 people who came in only one had an appointment.
- Housing continues to be a critical issue. People, who are on fixed incomes, have difficulty when rent is raised or buildings are sold. There is usually a long wait to get into a subsidized apartment.
- There has been an increase in the number of people who need food.
- He and Kathleen work closely to address problems and situations. Brian works 15 hours a week and Kathleen works 19.5 hours.
- There have been many issues at Elizabeth Brook Apartments.
  1. Someone didn't have heat or hot water for 11 days!

2. There have been complaints about the temporary apartments not being clean.
3. Some residents complain to the COA staff, but are afraid to complain to the management, fear of retribution.
4. We can advocate for residents but we have no real power.
5. A suggestion was made to have a Board meeting at Elizabeth Brook Apartments with the residents.
6. The Men's Group has doubled in size, 12 people.

**Outreach Report - Kathleen's Report given by Brian**

- January was a very busy month with people coming in and calling. Phone calls to clients were up 10% and emails were 50% higher than December.
- People are calling for help finding caregivers, fuel assistance, SNAP, and case management.
- We also conducted a few well-being checks.
- SMOC has begun processing a handful of fuel assistance applications. They seem to have completed applications submitted in November. Kathleen strongly advocates for clients when reviewers at SMOC want additional documentation.
- Events: Lots of people in the building are taking advantage of classes and activities. The Poetry Workshop was positively received. A couple of events needed to be rescheduled, the Assabet Tech breakfast and Elvis Impersonator, both will take place in February.
- We're looking forward to hiring an Outreach Worker.

**Chair's Report - Jeanne Genereux**

- Jeanne asked about sending a thank you note to Michael Matatia for his service? Alyson said since he worked for Minuteman Senior Services it isn't necessary. Alyson also mentioned we will be sharing a Shine councilor with Boxboro keeping the same Monday schedule.
- The Town's Green Action Committee put a draft Climate Action Plan on the Town website and wants feedback from the public by February 9th.
- Discussion regarding honoring Jim Sauta. Alyson spoke to Denise who said there is no policy. There were a number of suggestions: a room, portrait, plaque, and bench. No action was taken. It will be addressed at a future meeting.

## **Director's Report - Alyson Toole**

- Alyson met with Denise and approved her budget as presented.
- We are changing Brian O'Sullivan's title to Town Social Worker.
- The 20 Passenger's door has been fixed and is almost ready to be installed and inspected
- Regarding the request from the Boy Scouts to put two trailers where the COA's had been parked, the Select Board did not make a decision. Alyson sent her opinion to Denise which stated only municipal departments should be considered not private groups, and the Community Center needs all the parking spaces.
- Erin Mulcahy is the new Assistant Town Administrator/Human Resources Director.
- There have been four interviews conducted for the Outreach Worker. There will be two second interviews next week.
- M.A.R.T. began its shuttle service on Monday.
- The "Stow Only" rule was addressed in February's newsletter. Bill Byron talked about people who moved having lived here for many years.
- The evening Open House was cancelled due to lack of interest. Alyson is thinking about having a talk entitled, "How do I know I can afford to retire" in the evening and introduce the COA and what it offers.
- We want to have more educational talks like Artificial Intelligence.
- A resident who went to the Culinary Institute will do a class in March.
- A grant we received from the Cultural Arts Group will pay for May event on baseball trivia.
- The Annual Report is due next week.
- Statistics for January 2024:  
Total People served - 2465 duplicated, 410 unduplicated  
% Female - 71.2%                      % Male - 28.8%  
Average # People signing in daily - 57  
Telephone calls - 783  
Most Popular Activities - Food, Exercise  
Interactions /Services provided by COA Staff 268 duplicated

Most provided service - transportation, general help, donations,  
fitness

Transportation - Rides - 358   Riders - 48

Volunteers and Tax Work-off - 210

No further business. The meeting adjourned at 11:58 AM.

The next meeting will be on March 14 at 10:00 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth A. Delmonico, secretary