

TOWN OF SUDBURY
COUNCIL ON AGING
MINUTES OF MEETING

February 8, 2022

4:00 PM

ALL COA MEETINGS ARE NOW RECORDED AND
AVAILABLE ON SUDBURYTV.ORG

**COA meetings done over Town Zoom video
Conference Account**

WEBSITE: <http://sudbury.ma.us/departments/CouncilOnAging/>
Meeting Conducted Via Zoom

Present: Chairman: Jeff Levine

Members Present: Sandy Lasky, Anna Newberg, Pat Tabloski, Don Sherman, Peg Espinola, Pat Lewis and Carmine Gentile

Members Absent: Bob Lieberman

Also Attending: Debra Galloway Director of Sr. Center

Guests via Video: Lynn Puorro (Sudbury TV resource), Kay Bell (Chair, Sudbury Commission on Disability)

Meeting called to order by Chairman Jeff Levine at 4:03 PM

Attendance by all those members above confirmed by roll-call affirmation.

Approval of Minutes from Meeting of January 11, 2022 –The COA unanimously approved by roll-call vote as submitted with amendments.

BayPath Elder Services report (Pat Tabloski): Work continues on the merger details with Springwell. Reopening plan for home care visits was reviewed as well as preparing a list of individuals waiting for services. There was a problem with respect to home care workers getting paid and amounts in arrears six to eight weeks. The hourly rate for services paid to agencies was increased to \$35.72 per hour and discussion followed on the percentage agencies retained and amount passed on to workers Please see Appendix A for details.

Director's Report: (Debra Galloway): In person activity levels remain low as people remain cautious while smaller groups are meeting. The AARP tax return preparation program has opened with appointments being made commencing on March 7th. The Dementia Friendly team will host an event in the April-May timeframe focusing on caregivers, legal issues and resources available. Updated population numbers released show that there are 4,747 Sudbury residents over the age of 60 or approximately 25% of the total population.

Board of Health (Pat Lewis): Sudbury relief applications are available although with inadequate funding to meet the current needs and program will subsidize a percentage of rent and utility costs. Sara Devins Trust has a grant opportunity for those residents over 73 years of age who's annual income is less than \$30,000. The

program would provide funding for medical needs up to \$2,500 per month. Funds have been allocated for a new mental health counselor's position. Discussion continued relative to what the Council on Aging could do to advocate for utilization of this resource. Will seek the technical knowledge of the Towns' IT department for assistance,

Commission on Disability (Peg Espinola): Frustration expressed on the lack of involvement they have had with respect to the new Fairbanks Community Center. The proposed accountability statement from the builders with regards to ADA compliance and oversight was denied by the Permanent Building Commission..

State Legislative Update (Carmine Gentile): Work continues on proposed legislation to clarify rate setting processes for home health and home care services for seniors and disable persons so that rates would be reviewed at least every two years and workers would be paid enough to stay on the job.

People with very substantial disabilities who are served by the Department of Disability Services (DDS) sometimes choose to self-direct their care rather than have DDS orchestrate it. Those individuals often experience much better health outcomes at substantially (as much as one third) less cost than the majority of DDS clients (whose care is not self-directed). Carmine is working to have DDS be more responsive to the financial needs of self-directed care people to allow them to continue without their families incurring (in one example) \$16,000 out-of-pocket expense while saving the state almost \$100,000. Both the Massachusetts House and Senate continue to have remote virtual meetings, both formal and informal, and hearings (with a small number of persons actually in the State House).

Fairbanks Project Update (Jeff Levine): Meeting held with architect and project team to review interior finishes. Agreement on materials to be used and bid packages will go out. Audio visual question still open with regard to equipment that will be installed, but infrastructure design and installation has been agreed to. The Select Board is considering an article for the upcoming Town Warrant to utilize an incremental five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) of free cash to fund a) three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) for audio visual equipment and b) two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) for furniture.

ARPA Funds (Jeff Levine): Approximately three million dollars (\$3,000,000) remains unallocated with the Fairbanks Community Center and the new Sudbury Firehouse as two shovel ready projects that could use some of that money. The audio visual equipment mentioned in the Fairbanks update above would allow for Zoom/ Hybrid meetings to continue and the potential for new presenters for programs. The ARPA consultant will review the qualifications for the application of the appropriation of funds received with the caveat that they be used for municipal purposes. A project to move a water main currently under the Fairbanks parking lot that would be under the new community center building if not relocated, in the

amount of four hundred thousand dollars (\$400,000), has been approved for ARPA funding.

Transportation (Sandy Lasky): Annual report of the Transportation Committee has been submitted to the Town. Local municipalities including but not limited to Hudson, Concord, and Lincoln are working together to explore optional grant monies available. An article will be considered for the upcoming Town Warrant if other resources for funding do not materialize. A survey will be conducted to explore copay options for taxi and Uber rides Current ridership includes between 130-150 Uber rides and 60-80 taxi rides per month.

Nominating Committee (Jeff Levine): Discussion will be deferred until next meeting.

Other Thought/Comments: (Jeff Levine) Floor was open to discussion concerning the date and time of the Council on Aging monthly board meetings. After deliberations it was unanimously agreed to that going forward the monthly board meetings would be held on the second Monday of each month at 3:30 PM

Mission Statement and Goals (Carmin Gentile): Spoke to a majority of the members of the COA for their input on whether there should be separate mission statements for the Senior Center and the COA or one combined statement. Consensus was to develop one joint message. Directive that the COA is a policy board and the Senior Center staff works as the operating function and our message will then be aligned.

Market Research Plan (Sandy Lasky); Continued discussion about market research plan and objectives including who to speak with, what will be discussed and the specifics around focus groups. Reviewed methodology to explore attitudes, perceptions and behaviors. Discussed age groups, discussion guide, groups who utilize the Senior Center and those that do not. Also discussed likes, dislikes, what is missing in offerings and what types of programs or services would attract someone to utilize the Senior Center. Recruitment for groups is paramount to a successful project.

Communications Plan: Debra Galloway to follow up with Sudbury Town Hall personnel with regard to social networking, available platforms and other modes including written articles and letters to the editor

Motion was made by Anna Newberg to adjourn. Second by Pat Lewis Unanimously approved by roll-call vote. Adjourned at 5:27pm.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for March 14,, 2022 at 3:30PM using the Hybrid meeting approach of In Person at the Fairbanks Community Center and via zoom. Viewable later on Sudbury TV (SudburyTV.org).

Respectfully submitted by
Robert Lieberman
COA Secretary

Appendix A



AMERICAN RECOVER PLAN ACT GRANTS TO COUNCILS ON AGING

BayPath Elder Services received several applications for ARPA funded projects for transportation, caregiver supports, and healthy aging. We will make award announcements in late February. BayPath would like to support the excellent work of the Senior Centers in any way we can. If you have ideas for a project or program and are seeking funding, please reach out to Fran Bakstran, Assistant Director of the Area Agency on Aging. BayPath will be issuing another Request for Proposals in the spring. We have revised the application process to simplify it as much as possible, and we are happy to provide technical support.

HOME CARE PROGRAM UPDATE

The Home Care Aide Workforce shortage continues. BayPath is doing everything we can address the crisis and provide to consumers alternatives to homemaker and personal care. We are currently paying to homemaker providers an hourly rate of \$35.72, and we hope that this will result in enhanced wages and an increase in staffing. In addition, we are able to offer variety of other services, including stair lifts, ramps, and other accessibility modifications.

COVID-19

During the holiday season and the spike in cases due to the omicron variant, it was very difficult for older adults to access needed health services such as booster shots and tests. BayPath employees will be reaching out to those we serve to assist them with scheduling and transportation for boosters, as well as assisting with ordering test kits. The state is continuing its home vaccination program, which includes the booster shot. All three vaccine types are available.