

TOWN OF SUDBURY
COUNCIL ON AGING
MINUTES OF MEETING

May 9, 2022

3:30 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: Anna Newberg, Pat Tabloski, Bob Lieberman, , Peg Espinola, Pat Lewis Carmine Gentile and Don Sherman (joined at 4:40)

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 3:45 PM

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

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

Director's Report: (Debra Galloway): Annual Town Meeting update noting that Article 14 Funding of Go Sudbury! Taxi and Uber Transportation Programs for FY 2023 in the amount of \$100,000 for funding from free cash flow passed. In addition Article 22 Fairbanks Community Center Audio-Visual Equipment Funding in the amount of \$300,000 and Article 23 Fairbanks Community Center Furniture, Fixtures Equipment Funding in the amount of \$200,000 for funding from free cash flow passed as well. The focus group initiative as part of the market research project was completed with a total of five separate group meetings via Zoom. Next steps include the analysis of the data collected which included but were not limited to 1) new programs, 2) evening hours, 3) Saturday scheduling 4) group trips and 5) recreational activities. This data will be incorporated into a market research presentation scheduled for the June 27, 2022 COA BOD meeting. Discussion turned to upcoming programs and events that are scheduled for the May/June time frame

BayPath Elder Services report (Pat Tabloski): An update on the merger between Springwell and Bay Path was presented. Discussion included reasons for the merger as there continues to be a strain to meet the needs of the service. Shortages of home care aids and workers continue. Efforts to explore grants and funding opportunities are ongoing.

Board of Health (Pat Lewis): Concerns continue with regard to seniors and instances of isolation and not leaving their homes. Major issue identified relates to the increased

financial impact on seniors and affordability of housing and increased costs of groceries. The Council will explore charities that might be available for funding relief.

Commission on Disability (Peg Espinola): State representatives Carmine Gentile and State Senator Jamie Eldridge were guest speakers at the commission's monthly meeting. Funds have been appropriated for audio visual equipment which continues to be a critical area of concern. Funds in the amount of \$200,000 have been approved for the project which identified non-compliant facilities in town and the deficiencies observed in their structures. Follow up to discussion from the COA meeting of April 11, 2022 concerning accessibility statements as they relate to the Fairbanks Community Center in support of and to accompany the request for proposal for construction projects. A letter from the COA to support the concept of including an accessibility statement was submitted to the Permanent Building Committee, Select Board and Town Manager. Please see Appendix A for details

State Legislative Update (Carmine Gentile): Fiscal year 2023 budget passed in the House, will be sent to the Senate in May and to be finalized in July. With respect to seniors, it was reported that there were across the board increases in funding including 1) a community based service rate adjustment for home health care workers going forward 2) line item support for senior housing increased as \$1.6 million was restored to the budget which was previously cut by the governor. 3) case management ASAPs increased \$8 million over FY 22 and 4) Mass Health senior care is now up to \$3.7billion in FY 23. Last year the service rate adjustment for home health care workers was not paid timely as they took twelve months and allocated it into nine months. The higher pay rate is in effect for the entire twelve months effectively resulting in a 40% increase vs last year's increase. There remain thousands of seniors and people with disabilities waiting for home care services. The state has a surplus in excess of \$6 billion and unallocated ARPA funds in excess of \$2 billion yet to be allocated for distribution in needed areas,

Market Research Plan (Bob Lieberman); No further updates were presented as matters were covered previously in the Directors report.

Transportation Committee Report (Bob Lieberman) Dan Carty Select Board member and Transportation Committee chair presented an article at Annual Town Meeting to address funding options. This funding tranche will allow for an estimated additional fiscal year of operations. (See Directors report for additional information.).

Nominating Committee (Bob Lieberman): Order of business to nominate Bob Lieberman to a second term. A motion was raised by Peg Espinola and a second by Carmine Gentile to approve the nomination for a second term. The COA unanimously approved by roll call vote. Chairperson Levine expressed the counsel's appreciation to Peg Espinola for her service to the COA as her term has expired effective June 1, 2022. Discussion continued with regard to two candidates Colin Warwick and Marilyn Tromer. Bob reviewed their backgrounds and qualifications to become board members on the COA. A motion was raised by Bob Lieberman and a second by Pat Tabloski to approve the nomination of Colin Warwick. The COA unanimously approved by roll call vote. A second motion was raised by

Carmine Gentile and a second by Pat Lewis to approve the nomination of Marilyn Tromer. The COA unanimously approved by roll call vote. Discussion turned to the election of officers for the next fiscal year beginning June 1, 2022. Candidates included Pat Lewis for Vice Chair, Jeff Levine as Chair and Bob Lieberman as Secretary. A motion was raised by Jeff Levine and a second by Pat Lewis to approve the nominations as noted. The COA unanimously approved by roll call vote.

Fairbanks Project Update (Debra Galloway): The two articles presented at the Annual Town Meeting for Fairbanks Community Center Audio-Visual Equipment Funding in the amount of \$300,000 and Article 23 Fairbanks Community Center Furniture, Fixtures Equipment Funding in the amount of \$200,000 passed. Construction bids are due the week of May 9th with evaluations and determination how close they are to budget. The A/V equipment is already in the budget for the entire building. A grant from the Cummings Foundation has been applied for with regard to the kitchen equipment costs. Kay Bell, chairperson for the Commission On Disability was recognized. Discussion commenced concerning questions on A/V equipment and potential review for adequacy. It was noted that The Friends of the Sudbury Senior Citizens have committed sizable funds to the Senior Center buildout. Anticipated soft opening for the new community center is scheduled for the early fall of 2023.

Motion was made by Carmine Gentile to adjourn. Second by Don Sherman Unanimously approved by roll-call vote. Adjourned at 4:46PM.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for June 27, 2022 at 3:30PM via zoom. Viewable later on Sudbury TV (SudburyTV.org).

Respectfully submitted by
Robert Lieberman
COA Secretary

Appendix A

To the Permanent Building Committee, Select Board, and Town Manager Henry Hayes:

The Council on Aging has become aware of the request by the Commission on Disability (COD) to have an Accessibility Statement sent out with the Request for Proposal (RFP) to qualified bidders on the Fairbank Community Center project. Given that in the course of our lives a large percentage of people over sixty will acquire temporary or permanent disabilities that will impact on our enjoyment of activities we once took for granted, it is appropriate that the Council on Aging weigh in on the COD's request.

The Council has discussed the issue at its regular February and March meetings, and again at a special meeting on March 24. We have considered the issue both from the point of view of the COD and of the Permanent Building Committee, as put forth in correspondence between the COD and the Committee.

We were impressed by the argument that despite the intention of the Town to abide by the letter and spirit of the Americans with Disability Act, as well as by state and federal standards regarding accessibility, hundreds of instances of "inaccessible items" were found in the Town's buildings and grounds by the Institute for Human Centered Design and spelled out in their Transition Plan for Sudbury. Remediation of these deficits will cost the Town considerable money over time.

At the same time we understand that "qualified bidders" for the job of actually constructing a project like the Fairbank Community Center have to follow the designs that they have been given. The ultimate responsibility for making sure that the design and execution of such projects result in buildings that are fully compliant with the letter and spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act falls on architects and project managers, rather than the contractors who build the buildings. It would seem, therefore, that in the future an Accessibility Statement similar to the one proposed by the COD for contractors should be sent out during the hiring process for architects and project managers.

It is also clear that representatives of all users, including those represented by the Commission on Disability and the Council on Aging, should be included from the very beginning and throughout the design process for new construction and renovation projects.

Kindly let us know how the Town intends to assure residents that ADA compliance will be a top priority for new Town capital projects.

For the Council on Aging:

Jeff Levine, Chairman