Sudbury Council on Aging

Minutes 10/19/2026

Paul Marotta, Chair

Jon Harding, MD, recorder

In Person Attendees: Paul Marotta, Lisa Kouchakdjian, Patricia Tabloski, Mary McLaughlin, Jane Keilty, Mary Brauer, Louis Petrovic, Patsy Maxon, Jon Harding, Jill Dube.

Virtual attendees: none

Absent: Carmine Gentile, Joel Bauman, Nickole Boardman

Meeting convened at 3:30

1. Review of minutes of September meeting:

Mary asked if Kristen Drummy was going to attend a future meeting to inform the COA of the additional information about Camp Sewataro she mentioned in her comments at the September meeting. Paul stated he invited her, but she declined to attend.

Patricia moved to accept minutes as written. The COA voted unanimously to do so.

2. The strategic plan
    a. Paul had assigned each COA member to 3 strategic plan committees. Some work had begun. The board addressed concerns about Open Meeting Law compliance regarding the strategic plan committee's work if done via e mail. Members discussed the applicability of the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law to the strategic plan subcommittees. Lisa noted that subcommittee meetings must comply with applicable requirements, including advance public notice, public access, and preparation of meeting minutes. Members discussed holding meetings at the Senior Center, with remote participation where appropriate for community members or if COA members are travelling. Members of the public could attend in person or on Zoom. Participants noted that in-person meetings can help engage younger community members and provide more transparency. Since the Senior Center rooms are often all full, the meetings must be scheduled in advance.
    b. COA discussed a survey designed to assess community needs.
        i. The group reviewed a draft survey created by Mary B to gather data on transportation, socialization, and other factors affecting senior center participation.
        ii. The board debated whether the survey approach would effectively measure progress on their established strategic goals. The Council discussed whether the proposed survey would provide information useful for measuring progress toward the strategic plan's goals. Paul emphasized the importance of developing measurable indicators for each initiative. Members agreed that these metrics should be established as the subcommittees formally develop their initiatives. There was agreement that this needed to be done but could not be done yet until the subcommittees met formally and designed their initiatives. Committee chairs were reminded to develop metrics at the same meeting as they design their initiatives.
        iii. Agreement to keep the survey as short as possible to improve survey completion rates.

iv. Discussion about loneliness and isolation. Members discussed loneliness and social isolation as distinct but related public health concerns, both associated with increased mortality risk. Loneliness is a subjective experience, whereas social isolation can be assessed through objective measures such as frequency of social contact. They can occur together or independently.
v. Survey distribution method is not yet known. Mail distribution requires a budget for materials and volunteers to put stickers on envelopes. E-mail distribution is cheaper, Members questioned whether email addresses were available for all older residents. We could buy e mail lists commercially but that also requires a budget.
vi. Questions were raised about how the survey results would specifically align with each strategic initiative. Paul and others discussed their individual efforts to develop specific initiatives so far, and how the survey would inform ongoing planning.

c. Strategic initiatives: one of our initiatives should be to expand volunteer opportunities. Volunteerism helps the volunteers with socialization and purpose, but while many people want to volunteer, there are limited meaningful opportunities available. Another initiative mentioned was defensive driving courses.
d. ACTIONS on Strategic plan including the survey:
i. Mary to check with the Town Clerk re: getting demographics so we don't need the age band question (1).
ii. Mary B to rewrite question 2, related to working status, rather asking "when can you participate in programs?"
iii. Q3 amend for clarity: live with family OTHER THAN PARTNER.
iv. For question 4, focus on loneliness rather than isolation.
v. For question 5-7, combine into one question
vi. Mary to ask Town Clerk what distribution methods are possible.
vii. Mary will incorporate all this input into next draft
viii. Jill will ask Nickole to send out second draft in advance of November meeting but there will be no deliberation until that meeting.
ix. Consider how to expand volunteer opportunities at a future meeting.

3. Select Board Report: Lisa
a. Lisa mentioned Holiday Village at Fairbank on 12/5/2026.
b. Policy Committee is now reviewing financial policies.
c. Select Board is awaiting Liberty Ledge committee report.
d. Select Board is considering how to increase attendance at Town Meeting including considering a Saturday town meeting.

4. Chair Report: Paul
a. Liberty Ledge meeting. Paul reported that discussions at the Liberty Ledge Committee indicated limited support for developing senior housing on the property. Alternatives discussed included continued camp operations, expanded public recreational access, accessibility improvements, and further property evaluation. The group reviewed short-term, midterm, and long-term goals for the property, with limited support for senior housing other than converting an existing house on Haynes Road to moderate-income, not necessarily senior, housing.
b. Meals program at the Senior Center has been successful so far. Both breakfast and lunch programs have experienced demand exceeding available capacity.

c. Paul reminded the group of the meeting rules training the town had put on last month. Several of us attended. Discussion about how to work effectively within those rules.
d. Visibility of COA members to the community: Paul is planning an event, possibly in January, hosting a community gathering with refreshments, followed by a question-and-answer session. He also is considering a plaque honoring past COA chairpersons.
e. Paul reports the Friends of the Senior Center has 3 new openings.

5. Senior Center Director's report by Jill
    a. A new Parkinson's program started with 5 participants, expected to grow.
    b. Sudbury Eats now has a waiting list.

6. Liaison reports
    a. Transportation Committee: Mary Brauer
        i. Uber Voucher program set up to provide rides if other options, e.g. town van, are not available. Mostly for doctor visits.
        ii. Looking to expand van access to Maynard and Nobscot in Framingham.
        iii. Special Needs program launched but not accessed yet.
        iv. Working on a Flash Vote survey re: transportation needs.
        v. Food pantry is on the route but the van can't wait for the riders to pick up their food. Food Pantry is coming up with solutions whereby the riders can wait indoors for the next trip and/or schedule pantry visits so the food is waiting.
        vi. Catch Connect Van hours M-F 8 am to 6 pm.
    b. Health Dept.: Pat reported 2 flu shot clinics were held. Using high dose vaccine for seniors.
    c. Library: Lou reported he met with the library's director. They discussed opportunities for cross-promotion through the Library and Senior Center newsletters.
    d. Disability Committee: Jane reported an accessible Trick or Treat event is planned.
    e. Diversity Committee: Jon reported most of the discussion was about school religious holidays.
        i. ACTION: The group discussed domestic violence and elder abuse issues. The group decided to add safety-related questions to a future survey.
    f. Friends of the Senior Center: Paul reports the Friends are sponsoring bus trips. They have cancelled the annual appeal in favor of a Spring fundraising event. Members discussed whether the Friends could help fund survey distribution. The Friends are also working to bring New England Conservatory back to the Senior Center.
        i. ACTION: Patricia will ask what the Friends can and cannot fund, and what proposals would they consider.

7. Adjournment
    a. Next meeting scheduled 11/9/2026 3:30 pm at the Senior Center.
    b. Jane moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 5:10 pm

8. Summary of Actions

Responsible	Action Item	Target
Mary B	Consult Town Clerk regarding availability of demographic data to determine whether survey Question 1 is necessary.	Before next survey draft
Mary B	Revise Question 2 to ask when respondents are available to participate in programs, rather than employment status.	Next survey draft
Mary B	Clarify Question 3 to distinguish living with a partner from living with other family members.	Next survey draft
Mary B	Revise Question 4 to focus on loneliness rather than social isolation.	Next survey draft
Mary B	Combine Questions 5–7 into a single question.	Next survey draft
Mary B	Consult Town Clerk regarding possible survey distribution methods.	Before November meeting
Mary B	Incorporate COA feedback into revised survey.	Before November meeting
Nickole	Distribute revised survey to COA members in advance of November meeting. No deliberation by email.	Before November 9
Strategic plan subcommittees	Schedule in-person meetings of the subcommittee for deliberation, take minutes.	Next 90 days
	Develop specific initiatives and corresponding metrics for measuring progress.	
COA	Revisit opportunities to expand meaningful volunteer activities for older residents.	Future meeting
COA	Consider adding questions about personal safety, domestic violence, and elder abuse to a future survey.	Future survey
Patricia	Ask Friends of the Senior Center what expenses they can fund, including potential support for survey distribution.	Follow-up