

Northfield Council on Aging  
Minutes for Tuesday, April 18, 2023

**Attending:** Debby Wiesen Kelly, Betty Whitcomb, Jim Whitcomb, Meg Livingstone, Colleen Letourneau, Deb Lanou, Chris Harris.

**Absent:** Pete Vearling

The meeting was called to order at 1:02 p.m.

**March minutes:** A motion was made by Betty Whitcomb to approve the minutes of the March 21, 2023 meeting, and seconded by Debby Wiesen Kelly; unanimously approved.

**Treasurer's Report:** Treasurer Betty Whitcomb reported that everything in the budget balances. Meg made a motion that we accept the financial report, Debby seconded the motion and all voted in favor of accepting the treasurer's report.

### **Chair's Report**

Chairperson Deb Lanou reminded members that Annual Town Meeting is May 1st and our by-laws are up to be formally approved. Deb urged members to join her at this meeting to help answer questions, if any, and provide outreach to townspeople. Members received the "Final Draft 2-21-2023" of the bylaws.

Also at the Annual Town Meeting, the Community Preservation Act Committee will be presenting the grants they are recommending. One of those is for us. If the CPA grants are approved by the town, funds are available immediately for our new shed and barbecue grill.

Outreach and Marketing Committee: Meeting pending. Betty agreed to join this committee, along with Jim Whitcomb, Meg Livingstone and Deb Lanou.

Update on "Hear, here, Northfield": The contract is being negotiated with the help of town administrator Andrea Llamas. Quotes for different parts of the job are still being reviewed.

Update on Shed/BBQ project: There was discussion on outdoor furniture for pavilion. The BBQ grill has not been purchased yet as we have to wait for the May 1st Annual Town Meeting. Same with the shed.

There was discussion about building the shed ourselves versus having it built on site.

COA Policy and Procedures: Nearly ready to send to the board.

Board members list: The list of board members and their contact info has been undated and will be sent out this afternoon.

Gaining new board members: Discussion included such techniques as chatting with neighbors in the grocery store or wherever we meet them to tell them about the COA and invite them to learn more about being on the board.

### **Director's Report**

Director Colleen Letourneau reported that the Mass. COA Walk Challenge kick-off event is set for Thursday, May 4, from 1 to 3 p.m. Carol Pike, Betty and Jim spruced up the pavilion over the weekend, power washing and trimming debris. Members are



encouraged to help with set-up starting at noon. It will be either inside, if it's raining, or in the pavilion if it's nice weather. After the presentation, the Fitbit will be raffled off and we will take a walk.

Happy Feet Walks: There will be two in May. The first one is going to be on May 8th at 10 a.m., at the Northfield Mountain Environmental and Recreation Center. Meet at the parking lot, near the yurt.

The second one is the Happy Little Feet Walk on Monday, May 22nd. Arrive at 9:30 a.m. at the Senior Center so we can walk up to the elementary school and bring the kindergartners back. A performer, Tim Van Egmond, is doing an intergenerational sing-along. Colleen has invited the Kindergarten class and their parents to join us.

May Brunch: There will be a brunch on May 11, to be served at the Senior Center starting at 11 a.m.

LifePath: LifePath has a new Executive Director, Gary Yuhas. He wants to come here to meet the Northfield Seniors. That will be in June sometime. But on Thursday, May 18, COA, Neighbors at Home, Friends of Northfield Seniors, anybody that works with elders, are invited to LifePath in Greenfield, to meet everyone and the new Executive Director: networking and sharing ideas. RSVPs requested by May 15.

Self-defense for Seniors: Went very well; we're doing it again in May, two more classes.

Memorial Day Parade: Parade starts on Monday, May 29, at 10 a.m. from the parking lot of the Trinitarian Congregational church. Arrive at 9:30 to line up and help Colleen. A head count is needed for those who need a golf cart ride. Both Happy Little Feet classes are invited.

Newsletter bio: Next up is Chris Harris for the June newsletter. Then, maybe Neighbors could contribute bios.

Legislation Committee Report: Colleen sent in two letters to State Sen. Jo Comerford and House Rep. Susannah Whipps in support of an MCOA suggestion to write to our legislators asking them to endorse various amendments to support local COAs in the state budget.

Neighbors at Home report: Betty reported that Neighbors is having a seed swap and coffee social tomorrow and they have a potluck and meeting scheduled for May 18 in the pavilion.

Saturday, June 10, at 10 a.m. is the annual meeting for members of Neighbors at Home, to be held at the Beech House at the Northfield Golf Club.

The 350th Anniversary is sponsoring a concert also on that day, at 3 p.m. at Trinitarian Congregational Church, followed by a barbecue at the church.

One more new program is with the Recreation department: Senior-only pickleball hour on Sundays from 1 to 2 p.m.

Friends of Northfield Seniors: Debby gave a financial report. In the account is \$1,869.25. There was discussion about a summer concert in the pavilion.

Community Preservation Committee report: Meg reported that the CPC has met. Their money articles, one of which pertains to the COA, are awaiting approval at the Annual Town Meeting.



Update on Senior Center Staff: Colleen reports that Linda Keech has turned in her resignation as COA Program Assistant, effective the end of June, leaving very big shoes to try to fill. Colleen has already scheduled the Volunteer Appreciation event for the week before, so it was agreed that this would be a good opportunity to thank Linda and showcase her contributions. Linda has rewritten her job description to better reflect her duties.

Members discussed reclassifying this position from a 19-hour-per-week unbenefited position to a 24-hour-per-week position with benefits. We have asked the town Administrator for an overlap period of one week so that Linda can introduce the new person to her duties.

Jim Whitcomb made the motion for the process to begin to upgrade the position from a non-benefitted to a benefitted, 24-hour position and a change of a grade. Deb seconded it. All voted in favor.

Screening Committee: To initially screen applicants a committee including Deb Lanou as chair, Debby Wiesen Kelly, Betty Whitcomb and Colleen Letourneau was established.

After their initial screening process, the qualified applicants will be asked to come in and the whole board will participate in these interviews. Then the final candidate goes before the select board and they get to ask questions.

Betty suggests that the Friends of Northfield Seniors might wish to rent a bus later in the summer and go to see the Worcester Red Sox.

Meg Livingstone made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Jim, and voted in favor at 2:30 p.m.

Approved Date: 5-16-2023

Approved By: Christine M. Harris