

## Northfield, Mass. Council on Aging

Meeting Minutes: Oct. 24, 2023

**Attendance:** Deb Lanou, Debby Wiesen Kelly, Elizabeth Whitcomb, Colleen Letourneau, Meg Livingstone, James Whitcomb, Christine Harris, Peter Vearling

**Absent:** None.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Deb Lanou at 1:10 p.m. at the Northfield Senior Center in the Town Hall.

**Minutes:** Based on a review of the minutes for Sept. 19, 2023, a motion to approve was made by Betty, seconded by Debby and approved unanimously.

**Treasurer's Report:** A motion was made by Debby Wiesen Kelly to accept the Treasurer's Report and seconded by Meg Livingstone; approved unanimously.

### *Chair's Report*

**Report from Greenfield Senior Center's Memory Cafe:** Attended by Betty, Chris and Peter. Things learned include:

- The people who attend often attend similar events in other towns, so we should coordinate the day and the week of ours, so it doesn't conflict with other towns' memory cafes.
- Publicize all area memory cafes with a hand-out at each one. Find out their schedules.
- Look for local businesses as lunch sponsors and give them a write-up in our newsletter. Make a list.
- Make a list of possible entertainers and prices. (Meg, Chris and Betty to put together a list.)
- Debby Wiesen Kelly and Colleen will meet Nov. 1st to complete a state grant due Nov. 9th.

**Update/clarifications about contributions** to the Friends of Northfield Seniors: Because we are a town organization, we have to separate what's fundraising versus individual philanthropy. Members of the COA board cannot fundraise; however, individual donations by board members to the Friends of Northfield Seniors is always OK. The question arose, can board members approach potential sponsors to our memory cafe? Is getting sponsorships the same thing as fundraising? What if there is no exchange of money, but of goods (like a raffle basket donation)? Debby Wiesen Kelly will bring that up to the Friends of Northfield Seniors and Deb Lanou will look into this, too.

**Report on MCOA (Mass. Council on Aging) annual Fall conference** in Danvers: Deb Lanou and Colleen Letourneau reported the following: It was a very busy couple of days and they went to at least four workshops each day. Deb said she went to a number of age and dementia-friendly workshops and listened to ideas about finding money and time to do this. Every workshop talked about the link between hearing loss and dementia. Deb said she went to one session about the science behind new treatments for Alzheimer's and reported there is positive movement on some of the medications. Colleen said that because of our "Hear, here Northfield" hearing loop, this would be a plus for our memory cafe. Deb reported on a workshop on quick ideas that don't cost a lot of money and it was about supporting vision issues, like painting doors a different color than the walls. Colleen went to a workshop on new trends in elder law such as estate planning, solo aging, ambiguous loss such as losing your license. Deb went to a workshop on creating a voluntary registry of people who might wander. Another workshop was on how to connect with libraries. There was a workshop on setting up a podcast. Deb and Colleen provided various handouts from the conference. Everything is also on the MCOA website.



**Director's Annual Performance Review Process:** Colleen said there are three ways to go about evaluating the director: 1) Everyone evaluates; 2) Open it up to the public; or, 3) Let the chair write up the performance review. The board talked about the process. It was moved and seconded that the board allow Deb Lanou to complete the evaluation of Colleen; all voted in favor of this plan. Deb's report is available for review.

**Expiration of board members' appointments:** According to the bylaws, board members can serve two full three-year terms in succession (plus any portion of an unfilled term), with a one-year hiatus in the case of additional terms. Appointments roll over unless the member resigns.

### *Director's Report*

**Senior Center Updates:** Colleen reported that Robin continues to do a great job, including revamping the newsletter. The 350th parade was a hit — our float came in second place. The next coffee hour (Nov. 6) will continue to be about scams. Betty and Jim suggested we resurrect the cribbage games.

**RSVP (Retired Seniors Volunteer Program) Recognition Event:** Colleen, Betty and Peter attended and reported.

**Shed Volunteers Appreciation BBQ:** Happened today; Colleen and Robin put on a wonderful event.

### *Around town*

**Legislative update:** Nothing pertinent from the Beacon Hill Roll Call in The Recorder. Deb Lanou noted that MCOA has a lot of political clout, so if we're asked to send an email or postcard, it's important to do this. Go to MCOA website and sign up for its daily email.

**Neighbors at Home:** Betty reported on discussion about how to generate more volunteers, especially younger ones (40s, 50s).

**Friends of Northfield Seniors:** Debby Wiesen Kelly reported that the Friends did a raffle on Sept. 30th and it was very successful. There were 4 or 5 items and they made \$335. The Friends had to get a permit from the state, which is good for one year. It was suggested that Friends consider sponsoring trips.

**CPC (Community Preservation Act Committee):** Meg reported that the CPC has set a public informational forum for Thursday, Nov. 9. Also, they will have a regular meeting the night before.

**Motion to adjourn:** Betty made a motion to adjourn, Jim seconded. Meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m. The next meeting is Nov. 21 at 1 p.m.

Approved date: 11-21-2023

Approved by: Christine M. Harris

Christine Harris, recording secretary.