

Northfield, Mass. Council on Aging
Meeting Minutes: March 26, 2024

Meeting called to order at 1:03 p.m. by Chair Deb Lanou at the Northfield Senior Center in the lower level of the Town Hall. Members signed a thank-you card to "Bobby C" Campbell and TRIAD for Easter hams donated to our senior center's Brown Bag recipients. Members also signed a thank-you card to Friends of Northfield Seniors for buying us a new prep table for our kitchen, among other things.

Attendance: Chair Deb Lanou, Director Colleen Letourneau, Treasurer Betty Whitcomb, Secretary Chris Harris, Pete Vearling, Meg Livingstone

Absent: Jim Whitcomb

Minutes: Based on a review of the minutes for Feb. 20, 2024, a motion to accept was made by Meg, seconded by Betty and approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Betty reported that everything balances. She started a new line for the Memory Cafe start-up grant, which comes from the Mass. Council on Aging and the Executive Office of Elder Affairs. Betty and Colleen clarified that the grant will pay for Colleen's and Robin's salaries for 4 hours per month. The grant stops at the end of June. Deb moved to accept the treasurer's report and Meg seconded that; all approved.

Chair Deb Lanou's Report

Outreach: An "elevator speech" is to come: A member suggested we man a table at Annual Town Meeting. Brochures could be placed at local churches' coffee hours. We need to create a brochure or table tent for these purposes. Erving is having a wellness fair on May 14 at their senior center; maybe we could have a table there. Colleen to get in touch with Paula Betters.

Volunteering: Board members are asked to sign up in advance for volunteering at breakfasts, lunches and memory cafes. A template has been created to sign up volunteers. Especially needed is help after the meal, such as dishwashing, and set-up. It would be nice to bring new people in as volunteers.

Update on room divider for Senior Center: A room divider would allow us to offer some new games such as cribbage or dominoes, just to get a little more traffic. There are many different options at various prices. Some are acoustic, some are sound-absorbing but not acoustic. Deb will inform the Friends of Northfield Seniors of our needs. She has talked to the bridge players about this plan for a room divider as this will be used during card games. Another idea is to offer a Ladies Tea for a new activity.

Deb praised Colleen and Robin for bringing and enabling so many programs and activities in this Senior Center.

Director Colleen Letourneau's Report

Fred W. Wells Trust: Colleen reported on the status of the Fred W. Wells Trust health grant application. She submitted the grant several weeks ago but has not yet heard the results. We are seeking \$2,000 to support the 60+ yoga program.

Fundraising Goals update: The Friends of Northfield Seniors want to know exactly what they are fundraising for. Colleen said she will ask them for general operational funding to go towards programs that we want to do — such as entertainment — that opportunities for events

sometimes come up quickly and having the funding on hand, will enable the event to be possible. The COA needs funding to support all the general programs and it lends to other special opportunities and senior center needs for a variety of things in the future. Financial support from the Friends group is vital for operational needs of the Senior Center and we all appreciate their efforts and support. Big items are being discussed as possible fund raising ideas for the benefit of the Northfield COA and Senior Center needs.

TRIAD donations: TRIAD comes in once or twice a month delivering baked goods for people to take; we have a donation cup for this. They recently provided Easter hams for those income eligible. Donations could go toward supporting TRIAD by buying a table at their wellness fair this Fall.

Memory Cafe grant update: We used part of it to fund Ginny Rockwell's art class at tomorrow's Memory Cafe (3/27). The whole of the grant will be spent down by the end of its six-month duration in June; then we must seek out other funding sources. The town has a new grant writer, Leslie Roberts, who seems very responsive to our needs. Also, we could approach local people or companies who might be willing to donate fresh flowers, fresh vegetables, entertainment, lunchtime meals, etc. In April, Chris Harris and Lynne Walker will be providing musical entertainment, and in May, Master Gardener Carol Pike will be volunteering her time for an activity planting bulbs and flowers outside in the raised beds. This summer, we have barbecues planned.

Cultural Council grants: Colleen has a couple of Northfield Cultural Council grants lined up. The next one will be an intergenerational Happy Little Feet musical performance on April 29. On May 7, Michael and Karen Kline will perform songs and tell stories of Appalachia. Another intergenerational Happy Little Feet musical performance is a program with Tim Van Egmund, on May 20th.

Around town

Legislative update: Nothing to report concerning seniors.

Neighbors at Home: They are going to do a free brunch at Zeke's on May 4th. Their annual meeting is set for June at the Beech House at the Northfield Golf Course. The board will start holding their monthly meetings in the Senior Center ("Thanks, Colleen!") to utilize the hearing loop.

Friends of Northfield Seniors: Jim is absent so no report.

CPC (Community Preservation Committee): Meg reported that the CPC is preparing its submission for the Town Meeting Warrant of applications they have approved for spending CPC money. Meg explained that the Northfield CPC doesn't approve any housing projects because the town has no local committee that reports to the regional housing authority.

Motion to adjourn: A motion to adjourn was made at 2:12 p.m. and unanimously approved.

Approved date: 4-16-2024

Approved by: Christine M. Harris

Christine Harris, recording secretary