

## Ashland Council on Aging

January 11, 2017

Note: The meeting was delayed one week due to a snowstorm on 1/7/18

### **Guests:**

Joanne Duffy, Jennifer Wuelfing, Sue Wells, Kim Kotob, Steve Mitchell, Ed Brudz, Guy Williams

### **Board Members:**

All present; James Zebrowski, Alexis Christopher, Barbara Thoresen, Dianne Hanson, Carol Love, Izzy Assencoa, Jean Delouchry, Sara Perkett, and Donna Vuilleumier.

**Meeting called to order at 10:04 AM.**

### **Citizens Participation**

Steve Mitchell updated the CoA from the BOS meeting that Ashland received a Distinguished Budget Award for the transparency and cohesiveness of the town budget and its ease of understanding by residents. Financial Director Brittany Iacaponi led this project. The BOS appointed Lynn Monahan to fire captain. At the recent BOS retreat there was discussion to recommend change the town charter after the two years of work towards this update and a conversation for the next town ballot to opt in or out of the sale and cultivation of marijuana.

Former health board chairwoman and firefighter Mary Mortenson has died. She had long been a dedicated advocate for the town and residents of Ashland.

Jennifer provided information on Axuda loans which are short term soft loans available through SMOC. This is an online program for people with short term financial needs.

### **Secretary's Report**

Following the vote of the CoA last month on reading meeting highlights with the full text in hand, the December 7, 2017 Secretary's Report was recapped. This new format was well received. A motion was made by Alexis and seconded by Dianne to accept the Secretary's minutes. The COA Board voted unanimously to accept the Secretary's Minutes.

### **Outreach Report:**

**Out Reach Report** - Sue Wells read the Outreach Report for January 2018. Copies of this can be requested through Sue Wells at the Outreach Coordinators Office. 120 clients have been served (8 new) and 51 received the hot lunch.

Sons of the American Legion donated Market Basket gifts cards. The lock box program through Lt. Iarussi at the Fire Dept. is ongoing. Recently a lock box needed to be used the day after it was installed for an emergency. Smoke and CO2 detectors continue to be available. There is an increase in the number of protective services needed. The Caregivers Support group meets twice a month and new people are joining. As of April 1, 2018 there is an increase in tax exemption which will increase to \$666. SMOC has increased fuel benefits for oil to \$300 which will provide for one 100 gallon tank.

## **Directors Report:**

Joanne Duffy read the Directors Report dated January 2018. Copies can be requested through Joanne Duffy at the Senior Center Office. The Center was closed 12/25/17-1/1/18 and the Great Room was painted then. The Center will be closed on 1/15/18 for MLK day. There was an increase in attendance to the center even with the one week closure and cold weather. Discussed possible use of Community Center as a warming center but it does not qualify as no generator is available. AHS is the warming center.

Town buildings are closed by the Town Manager. School closings through the Superintendent mean that the Center is also closed. Concern that Channel 5 does not have this information and closure notice comes in ways that seniors may be less likely to have access to such as on Twitter. There is an updated voice mailbox and sign on the door to indicate the closing. Discussed adding to town robo calls as other important information is shared this way. *Action:* Jim to email School Board and Alexis to attend a School Com meeting to clarify communication access.

Ongoing activities include Soup Day, legal advice, offsite Bingo as an outreach, the impact of technology and tax work off opportunities.

Motion to accept the Directors Report was made by Jean and seconded by Dianne. The COA Board voted unanimously to accept the Directors Report.

## **Old Business:**

**New Senior Center Brochure** - Alexis and Dianne presented a tri-fold mock up sample which includes broad information on mission, location, CoA, FCoA, activities, services, photos and contact. Minor additions and edits were discussed by the CoA. When complete will be available at various places and events in town.

**New Committee Handbook from BOS** – will be coming maybe before Charter Review and May town meeting.

**Name Tags for CoA Members**- FCoA had to be postponed and Jim will follow up with them at their Feb. meeting.

**How to Advertise Benefits for Seniors**- Jim, Sue and Kim met with TM Michael Herbert on 1/3/18. Discussed having a fair of town programs that would include individual discussion tables for education and clarification. Presenters and/or topics being considered include treasurer, emergency fund, and TBD broader services such as food stamps and fuel program. Due to filing deadlines this will need to occur before 4/1/18. Sue will provide information in next newsletter.

Also discussed ability to defer taxes and the tax work off program. CoA should have website links to appropriate resources. Increase in number of town residents who are retired and exceeds number of children in school system.

**Senior Center Budget for Next Fiscal Year:** no update at this time

## **New Business:**

**Meeting Room Arrangement**- Discussion and sample floor plan for rearranging of tables and chairs for CoA and FCoA meetings for a better layout.

**Grief Support Group**- Susan and Donna met to discuss and plan for a grief support group that will begin 3/1/18. Donna will be the facilitator for the group who will meet in the Great Room on the first Thursday of the month from 1-2:30. Patterned after the Caregivers Group, this group will be an open, drop-in group format. Information about the group will be shared in the town newspapers, through the Senior Center communications, Matarese Funeral Home and faith communities in Ashland. The COA Board voted unanimously to include this support group among the services available.

**Mission Statement: Review, Discuss, Strategize/Create Action Plan**- initial discussion for mission based goal setting came from clarifying the current mission statement to:

It is the mission of the Ashland Council on Aging to *advocate for* a variety of services and activities that support the independent well-being of all seniors, while enhancing their dignity and self-respect.

The revision replaces '*provide*' with '*advocate for*' to best reflect and update the aim of the CoA.

Discussion included the connection and relationship between the CoA and the Senior Center. The mission statement will be read aloud at the opening of the CoA meeting as a purposeful reminder for board members. The revised statement will be in all posted places where the current one is with the exception of the plaque.

Alexis made a motion to accept the new phrasing and Dianne seconded it. The COA Board voted unanimously to accept the change.

### **One Last Thing**

Dianne spoke to the success of the Baypath Advisory Board grant program and the resulting impact on two project in Sudbury. This could also guide us to some creative opportunities. Appreciation expressed to Alexis and Dianne for their time and work on the creation of the new Senior Center brochure as well as to Donna for the beginning of the Grief Support Group. Jim spoke of Seniors Helping Seniors as a companion for a few hours a week. All noted a good meeting.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:02 was made by Alexis and seconded by Dianne. The CoA Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Vuilleumier - Secretary COA