

## **Acton Council on Aging Board Meeting Minutes for 2/09/2009**

**Present:** Stephen Baran, Chair; Mike Gowing, Vice-Chair; Sally Thompson, Secretary; Anita Dodson; Pat Ellis; Gena Manalan; Barbara Tallone; Paul Turner; Jean Fleming, Director; Connie Ingram, President, Friends of the COA; Jim Papachristos, Friends of the COA; Paulina Knibbe, Liaison Board of Selectman.

**Absent:** Edwin Carell; Bill Ely, Treasurer; Detective Dan Silva, Liaison Police Department.

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 3:45 PM on 02/09/2009 at the Senior Center by Steve Baran.

### **Review of the Minutes**

The minutes of the Acton Council on Aging Board meeting for 01/12/09 were reviewed and accepted.

### **Financial Report**

Barbara Tallone read the financial report of the non-personnel budget. There was an opening balance of \$11,964 and a closing balance of \$11,261. There was a total of \$703 in expenses for the month (including: program supplies, travel, newsletter, and membership dues in the Liberty Alzheimer's Partnership).

### **Director's Report**

Jean Fleming reported that she presented the budget for FY 2010 to the Budget Committee. The COA budget is \$223,000. The COA Van Enterprise budget is \$104,000. There is a need for more COA outreach hours to be funded by the town. Currently the town pays for 11.5 hours and a grant pays for 9 hours per week. If the grant is reduced, there will be a need for the town to support the needed hours. The number of Acton residents seeking assistance with the outreach worker at the COA in the past 6 months equals the number of individuals she saw in the 12 months prior to that. Fuel assistance is the biggest priority at this time. It is anticipated that the new town social worker will help with the non-seniors requesting assistance.

Ridership for the COA van was up 25% last year above the previous year. This year ridership is up 11% above last year.

The board was reminded that the full time COA van driver, Ron, is retiring at the end of February, 2009. He will continue to drive for 2 days per week and a second part time driver has been selected and is undergoing the vetting process.

Jean Fleming met with Town Manager, Steve Ledoux; Chairwoman of the Board of Selectmen, Lauren Rosenzweig; and Franny Osman of the Acton Transportation Advisory Committee. The recommendations of a consultant are to consolidate both

Acton vans and lengthen the hours of service. A possible satellite parking lot with van service for the South Acton train stop was also suggested.

The Safety Sand program has been very successful, serving 60 Acton seniors.

The March COA Newsletter is in the works. The newsletter will be published monthly until the three month summer edition. There are 175 seniors who receive the newsletter by email and 15 pick it up at the Senior Center, reducing publication and postage costs.

The candidates for the Board of Selectman position will attend the March 17<sup>th</sup> Saint Patrick's Day luncheon at the Senior Center.

Funding through the Friends of the COA has supported additional programs for the coming months: Big Bands, 19th Century famous elections, British romantic writers, and bridge classes for beginners.

The trip to the Rhode Island Flower Show was cancelled due to inadequate sign up.

There is no liaison selected yet from Minuteman Senior Services to our COA board.

#### **Senior Center Expansion Update:**

Paulina Knibbe led a discussion about the expansion proposals. The Senior Center Expansion Committee has made its recommendations. Of the three options, it is clear that the best option is to build a new building on town land. However, now is not the right time to undertake this capital project. We should request money from the federal stimulus proposal when monies are made available to support this proposal. The current senior center requires improvements so that it is safe and workable for the short term. The COA staff has created a list of building improvements and maintenance with attention to safety issues. A lengthy discussion of these recommendations followed.

#### **Volunteer Transportation Issues:**

The COA outreach worker is trying to create a small volunteer driver group to supplement the van. Connie Ingram reported questions the Friends of the COA had about liability issues related to volunteer drivers. Jim Papachristos reported his experience as a volunteer driver for cancer patients, meals on wheels, and Minuteman Senior Services. There was enthusiasm among the board to find out more about volunteer driver programs with an eye toward facilitating such a program for seniors in Acton.

#### **Spring Priorities:**

The COA board agrees to focus its priorities on:

- 1.) The improvement and maintenance projects necessary at the Senior Center
- 2.) Determining the possibilities of forming a group of volunteer drivers to supplement the COA van

**Old Business:**

Stephen Baran reminded the COA Board of an upcoming volunteer job fair on February 11<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. He is looking for board volunteers to accompany him to the fair. Our board is looking for associate members with an interest in an additional liaison position.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

**Next Meeting**

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the COA Board is March 9, 2009 at 3:45p.m. at the Senior Center.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sally Thompson, Secretary