

MINUTES

COUNCIL ON AGING BOARD MEETING -

DATE **January 14, 2020**

Present: Carolyn Bottum, Dan Boynton, Laura Crosby, Ben Horne, Sally Kindleberger, Wendy Kusik, Don Milan, Florence Montgomery, Dot Taylor, Dilla Tingley, Diana Chirita - liaison from Housing Commission

Minutes: The Minutes for the December meeting were approved.

Calendar: Carolyn reviewed the highlights for the February calendar.

Carolyn Bottum announced to the Board that she would be retiring in July. This is very sad. Carolyn has been such a huge asset to the COA ever since she came. The good news is that she has formed a very great team and we will be left in good hands. This is also a very good time for her to step down as her husband is also retiring. Abby Butt will take over as Director, Joan Ingersoll will move up to Assistant Director and Natalie Dedkov will become the COA social worker. A new Town Social Worker will be found. We will be in good hands.

Director's Report:

The Ogden Codman Trust has extended our grant for **the Town Social Worker** for another year. She only works 12 hours/week. We will be gathering data to convince the Town to pick up this position in the FY22 budget cycle and to increase the hours to 20/week.

We have received a **Cultural Council Grant** of \$625 to fund a performance of "Murder a la Carte" by the Delvena Theater Company on May 17.

Rental Assistance Program: Even Carolyn was startled by the level of response. 29 households applied and 27 appear to be eligible. See the Director's Report for more detail on the applicants and their needs. Only 1 in 3 will receive the subsidies once the lottery is completed. It is clear that our request to the CPC for FY22 will need to be significantly increased to be more in line with the demonstrated need. Carolyn and her team will do some publicity as they have more data

This year 34 seniors received **Holiday Gift Bags**. This is up from 15 in 2017 and 25 in 2018. The bags contain toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, socks, deodorant and stamps – items which cannot be purchased with SNAP benefits. These bags are greatly appreciated and the Lincoln Girl Scouts have been a huge help in gathering the items. Members of the Board suggested that this might be done twice a year but realized it was too much to ask Abby to take on more and no one volunteered to lead it.

Twelve households have already signed up to receive **Sand Buckets** provided by the Lincoln Girl Scouts.

Thirteen residents have completed application for **Fuel Assistance**. Joan and Natalie are calling everyone who might be eligible. When an applicant also applies for rental Assistance, some data is duplicative and can make the process more efficient.

Liaison Reports

Trips- no report

Minuteman Senior Services: They have received a grant to address Cultural Competency regarding LGBTQ issues.

SHINE: The COA's push to identify people who would qualify for Rental Assistance identified people with healthcare questions and added cases for Don.. A lowering of income limits has allowed some people to qualify

for more benefits. SHINE at the state level lost their second in command so materials are not always as up to date. There continue to be problems with the Medicare Plan Finder. People who get bad information will be allowed to change enrollment at any time of year. Don will get some help as several people have signed up to train to become counselors.

Housing Commission: Only 8 applications were received for the lottery for the 15 affordable units at **Oriole Landing** and only one was “local preference”. The application process is tedious and the upper and lower income limits are very restrictive. Diana will suggest that they go to the wait list for Lincoln Woods to possibly find more applicants. Additional applications will be processed as they come in and not subjected to a lottery. They are not cheap; a one bedroom affordable is \$1678/mo and a 2 bedroom is \$1876. These are calculated based on Median Average Income in the area which is over \$100,000. Market rate units have not been offered yet. It is clear that the type of affordable rentals that are available in Lincoln do not meet the needs of our low income residents.

Diversity Initiative: January is complicated because it provides many opportunities for materials. Florence was pleased that Carolyn had suggested the word “inspirations” in place of “resolutions”. Two books she recommends are “Tattoos on the Heart” and “Barking to the Choir”. Ray Shepard’s talk at Lincoln Academy was very informative but his new book covering information on 6 black heroes written for young adults has not been published yet. He mentioned that many adults read his books.

Refocus Mission: The recommended name change of the COA from “Council on Aging” to “Council on Aging and Human Services” will go to Town Meeting in March. Some concerns have been raised that we are walking away from our mission to serve seniors. We have given Carolyn our consent to stress that our focus will remain on seniors, but needs in the Town have forced us to add Human Services for all residents under our umbrella. It will be a good opportunity to educate the Town about the level of need that has been identified.

Board Vacancies: Kathy Ramon and Ben Horne will be stepping down and greatly missed. Carolyn asks us to bring names for possible new Board Members to our next meeting.

Submitted by Dilla