

**Town of Amherst Council on Aging Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, May 13, 2021**  
**9:00 AM**  
***Via Zoom***

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Pat Rector (Chair), Timothy Neale (Vice-Chair), Greg Bascomb, Chad Fuller, Rosemary Kofler, Mila Montemayor, Mary Beth Ogulewicz (Director of Senior Services), Jacquelyn Smith-Crooks

**GUESTS:** Norma Hallock (HVES Nutrition Committee Representative), Dorothy Pam (Town Council liaison), Dick Yourga (President of the Friends of the Amherst Senior Center)

This meeting will be recorded and posted on the Town of Amherst website.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Pat Rector, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:10 AM.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** No comments.

**PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS**

- **Council on Aging Vacancies:** The terms of Sue Dierks, Chad Fuller and Pat Rector will be expiring on June 30, 2021. Ivette Palacin has resigned from the Board.  
**Appointed to Nominating Committee:** Tim Neale (leader), Greg Bascomb, Rosemary Kofler, and Jacquelyn Smith-Crooks. The work includes reaching out to others in the community who would be interested in advocating for the well-being of seniors and committed to the mission of the COA. Terms are 3 years. Potential members must reside in Amherst. There is no age requirement. Interested residents must complete the Town Community Activity Form. Appointment is determined by a committee.
- **Scheduling Team-Building Retreat on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:** Jennifer Moyston is offering to present to COA Board members a hybrid (in-person and Zoom) 2-hour educational workshop on diversity issues. The time-table was uncertain. Since it would be a team-building process and new members will soon be joining the COA, a September date was suggested. The workshop would be an opportunity for education, better understanding, and discussion on racial equity and social justice, which are critical issues and a goal of the Town Manager. There was some discussion that the workshop be an on-going process and part of orientation to new members.
- **Proposed Committee Structure Revision:** Tim Neale made a motion **“to table further discussion, including a vote on the Committee Structure until at least our September meeting”**. Seconded by Mila Montemayor. The vote was 3 in favor, 3 opposed. Pat reminded us that a motion at a previous meeting to remove the word racism from the Equity and Inclusion committee charge was rejected; an indicator that the Council is in support of the work of the Committee on Equity and Inclusion.

Pat Rector made a motion **“to create an AD-Hoc Committee to have the conversation and look at the language in the goals of the Equity and Inclusion Committee and the Programs and Services sponsored by the COA”**. Seconded by Jacquelyn Smith-Crooks. No vote was taken.

Chad Fuller proposed a ‘working group’ be formed to discuss and raise consciousness of the equity and inclusion issues. It would not be a Board meeting and would not be subject to Open Meeting Law.

- **Update on Highland Valley Elder Services** by Norma Hallock. Surveys were reviewed at the May 5 meeting. The towns in our area have had a very good response rate compared to other parts of the State. Funding depends on survey feedback. The new nutritionist will be doing site visits.
- **Updates and Looking Ahead** by Mary Beth Ogulewicz, Director of Senior Services. Important points:
  - The largest source of our funding is from the Town. The Formula Grant from the State currently gives us \$12 per older resident, or \$48,000. There are concerns that the FY22 amount may be reduced because of the level-funded budget, given that the US Census will likely show an increase in the number of older residents. 99% of our budget (including the \$48,000) goes to personnel. The Friends raises money to provide for 'operational expenses'. There is no money for 'extras'.
  - The Age-Friendly Dementia-Friendly designation will start in July.
  - Racial equity audit: **The Town of Amherst is reviewing a proposal from an external group to conduct racial equity audits for various Town departments, which may possibly include Senior Services.**
  - Our State Representative is working on getting funding for some exercise equipment.
  - Safety improvement will begin in June at the Bangs for an improved crosswalk and the remodeling of a walkway entering the lower level of Bangs into the Musante Health Center.
  - 'Scaling up' for the Senior Center will include pre-registering for classes, no admission before 10 minutes of the start of a class, no gathering in spaces, one-directional foot traffic, 30 minutes between classes. The Large Activity Room occupancy will be limited to 15 persons. Teachers have been instructed in safety features. There is great concern about teaching people who are un-vaccinated, so some classes will remain on line. The Foot Clinic will resume 2 days/month. The Computer Room will open by appointment, one person per hour. It is expected that social distancing will end at the end of August.
  - The vaccine clinic will close at the end of June.

Pat Rector recommended a second May meeting of the Council be held on May 27 devoted to hearing the critically important report by Mary Beth on the budget, a soft opening of the Senior Center, and programming. Dorothy Pam, Town Council member, reiterated the significance of hearing and discussing the Senior Center Director Report, as well as having it available to the Town.

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

- **Approval of Minutes of February 11, 2021, integrating corrections by Tim Neale and Chad Fuller.** . . Unanimously approved by all members present.
- **Approval of Minutes of March 11, 2021, integrating corrections by Tim Neale.** Unanimously approved by all members present.
- **Approval of Minutes of April 8, 2021, integrating corrections by Tim Neale.** Unanimously approved by all members present.

## ADJOURNMENT at 10:50 AM

**Next meeting Thursday, June 10, 2021 9:00-10:30 AM**

The following Documents were made available to all members of the COA prior to and during the meeting.

1. Agenda for May 13, 2021 COA meeting
2. Minutes of the April 8, 2021 COA meeting
3. Working Document on ACOA Committee Structure, Draft 4
4. COA contact information (expirations of member terms)
5. Online information:
  - a) FY22 Complete Budget
  - b) **Sector specific workplace safety standards for fitness centers and health clubs to address covid-19 as of March 18, 2021**
  - c) Mass.gov Phase 4 reopening guidelines