

AMHERST COUNCIL ON AGING DRAFT MINUTES
Thursday, September 4, 2014

9:00 - 10:30 a.m.

Room 101, Bangs Community Center

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tim Atteridge, Dan Clapp, Sue Dierks, Joel Gordon, Richard Kofler, Mary Jane Laus, John Magarian, Jack Wollensak

STAFF PRESENT: Nancy Pagano (Director/Program Director), Maura Plante (Assistant Director/Services), Helen MacMellon (Social Worker)

GUESTS: Rosemary Kofler (President, Friends of ASC), Kris Pacunas (Director of Information Technology for the Town), Ron Bohonowicz (Director of Facilities for Town and Schools), Scott Merzbach (Reporter, Gazette)

ABSENT: Karen Erman (Administrative Assistant), Doris Holden (Treasurer, Friends of ASC), Barb Sutherland (COA Member), Select Board Representative

WELCOME: **Dan Clapp**, Chair, welcomed everyone as he called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. He gave a special welcome to visitors. A card was passed around for all to sign for Barb who is ill in the hospital.

MINUTES: The Minutes for the COA meeting on June 5, 2014 were approved.

FRIENDS

Dick Kofler gave the Treasurer's Report on behalf of Doris Holden who was unable to be present. The General Account has **\$2,085.95**; the program Account has **\$2,173.16**; the Travel Account has **\$3,937.23** and the Investment Account (Edward Jones) has **\$95,479.67** as of July 25, 2014, making the **Total Assets** to be **\$103,676.01**. Received from FY15 annual solicitation to date is **\$1,897.58**; from the UMass Community Campaign, **\$397.58**; and from Iraqi Young Leaders Exchange, **\$833.00**. Paid to Boisselle, Morton, & Associates for Accounting Reports was **\$700.00**.

Rosemary reported that the Friends met in July at which time Fred Houck, who had fundraising experience at UMass was invited. He made some suggestions to the Friends: there needs to be more publicity about the SC services and programs and the need for financial support. He suggested some articles in the Gazette and putting a "thank you" ad in the paper, listing donors, with their permission. The fundraising efforts included the sum of \$853.00 from the Iraqi Young Leaders Program. Unfortunately the Whole Foods 5% Community Giving Day for Sept. does not include the SC and the Blessings Jewelry sale on August 21 brought no proceeds. The next meeting will be Sept. 16 with Donna Lee attending. The Follies date is set for Sunday, March 29, at 2:00 PM, at Amherst College Buckley Hall. There was a discussion about the possibilities of a White Elephant sale. As well, Nancy has written letters to both Clark House and Ann Whalen asking them to consider adding support for Lisa White who gives services to them. Rosemary sent another letter on July 18th and so far there has been no response. The Friends have been supporting that service for \$7500 each year. She suggested that maybe representatives from the administration of those houses could be invited to a meeting to hear their views on this financial proposal.

Dan commented that it is important for people to know that the Friends have been supporting part of our social worker Helen's salary in addition to the weekly SHS outreach clinics at the Clark and Ann Whalen Apartment Buildings

NEW BUSINESS

CONVERSATION WITH KRIS PACUNAS, Director of Information Technology for the Town: **Kris** stated that with the internet becoming almost like a necessary utility for daily lives, he thought there is much opportunity for the Information Technology Department of the Town to help seniors and the Senior Center. He encouraged seniors to funnel any ideas they might have through Nancy and he would try to address them.

- The downtown WiFi has been improved over the last year and a half but has room for improvement, especially the back sides of Ann Whalen and Clark House. Amherst has the largest downtown coverage of any town in Massachusetts.
- Regarding Windows 8 and 9, he does not recommend using Windows 8 and for the first time they are going to skip a series and go right to Windows 9 which is coming out in October.
- He does recommend the I-Phones as the best smart phones to buy and they have the most secure system.
- The town's Web Site is being overhauled, making it more mobile-friendly. The buttons will be larger and the site will be easier for seniors to navigate.
- The large wall TV in the Gallery (Computer Room) is for training and they plan to mount more in other meeting rooms.
- He will take a look at two of the public computers that have not been working to see if they are due for replacement.
- Computers more than 5 years old are upgraded.
- IT is planning to install flat screen TVs in the meeting rooms on the lower levels of Bangs.

Dan expressed appreciation for Kris's work to help seniors and for coming to our meeting.

ANNUAL VOLUNTEER AWARDS SOCIAL: **NANCY** informed the meeting that the Awards Social would take place on October 31 at 2:00 PM. The **Eveline Sears Senior Activist Award s for 2014** will be given to **Norma Packard** and the late **Barbara Sutherland**. **MOTION to accept these two nominations was voted unanimously.**

CONTINUING BUSINESS

UPDATE FROM RON BOHONOWICZ re Bangs work to be done: **Ron** reported on the plans for work to be done in the Bangs Center:

- Six bathrooms will be renovated. The architect who did the work at Crocker Farm School has been hired and will meet with Ron to plan the construction to begin in the winter months, avoiding any holidays. Ron invites any COA members to add ideas. The goal is to have the bathrooms handicap accessible, with better hand dryers and new counter tops and to deal with the plumbing problems in this old building.
- Two replacement cabinets have been installed in the kitchenette area of the SC Lounge.
- Maintenance is looking for solutions to fix the air conditioning problems and for the windows that lose heat in the winter and reduce heat in the summer.
- Employees will have a swipe card for entrance at the doors to facilitate when custodians are not available to unlock doors.
- Responding to the question about the windows being replaced in the Lounge and Gallery, Ron replied that he is continuing to request funds for that when they are available. He has had trouble getting window companies to respond to coming to work on the problem.
- The Hilltown Health Center will be responsible for building their own bathrooms in their area, but those bathrooms will only be for their employees, not the public/patients.
- The East Street School is being renovated regardless of potential use, possibly starting in the Spring with construction.

Dan thanked Ron for coming to share this information.

MCOA CONFERENCE: **Nancy** announced that five representatives from Amherst will be attending the 2014 MCOA Conference being held at Falmouth, MA from October 8th to 10th. Three COA members, John Magarian, Jack Wollensak, and Sue Dierks, and two staff members, Maura Plante and Helen MacMellon, will attend during October 8th and 9th. **John** added that the three COA members will be visiting three Senior Centers on the Cape. Reports will be given at the next meeting.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR ELDER AFFAIRS: **Nancy** gave some highlights from the FY 2014 Annual Report, with special focus on some aspects to note: last year there were more volunteers than this year. This could be a trend, as more seniors have to take part time jobs to augment their income. The population of seniors has increased. More seniors are needing more services. One piece of information that we don't capture completely is the number of calls coming in that are handled by the receptionists. Nancy expressed her appreciation for Jack's extra help in preparing the report and for all the volunteer staff. The Report is available for all to read.

SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

PARKING: **Jack** reported that 127 parking stickers at \$25.00 each have been sold so far, including three replacement stickers at \$10.00 each, four stickers sold to out-of-town volunteers and one to a volunteer under age 65. As of August 1, the 2014 stickers are being sold for half price, which is a new offer this year.

LONG-RANGE PLANNING: **Jack** related about his conversation with Emmett Schmarsow, Program Manager of MCOA, concerning Westwood Senior Center's ability to obtain federal funding for a feasibility study (\$35,000) of a new senior center and in part for its construction. They did this by emphasizing in federal government reports that the senior center caters mainly to underprivileged older people. Following up on that conversation, Jack called the Director of the Westwood SC, Lina Arena De Rosa, to ask about the funding of their new SC of to direct us to references that would describe the procedure. Since she had only been on the job for six hours the day of his call, she requested a return call in three weeks, at which time she will have looked up the information.

Nancy asked if the funding has to do with the Community Block Grant. **Jack** will find out.

Jack has taken some photographs of activities in our SC, which Scott Merzbach might incorporate into an article or series of articles, positive in nature, about the SC for publication in the Amherst Bulletin.

Jack has prepared a draft of a petition for signatures primarily by elders visiting the SC requesting that a new SC for Amherst be added to the Town's Capital Projects list. These latter two items will be discussed at the next Long Range planning Committee Meeting.

E-mails were sent to Carolyn Brennan, Director of the East Longmeadow COA, and to Joan Linnehan, Director of the Agawam COA to request tours of their new senior centers and meetings with them to learn about the funding of the projects. Ms. Brennan could meet with us on October 3, 6, or 22. Ms. Linnehan has not yet responded.

Dan asked if Ellen Story would be invited to the Long Range Planning Committee meeting?
Jack will look into that.

STAFF REPORTS

Nancy told about presenting the **Boston Cane Award** to Marietta Iantosca who is 103 years old.

Highland Valley Elder Services invitation was distributed. All are invited to a "Meet and Greet" lunch with the new Executive Director on Sept. 12th, 16th or 26th from 12:30 to 1:30 at HVES in Florence. ACOA needs to have a representative on the Board of Highland Valley for their monthly meetings. The previous rep, Joan Golowich, is no longer able to take that position. Nancy met with the interim co-directors to ask that HVES consider giving additional funds toward closing the lunch program shortfall of the current fiscal year. No response to that request so far. Nancy had to reduce Kathy's hours overseeing the meal program from three and a half to three hours a day, although she puts in four hours to get the work done. **John** expressed appreciation for all that Kathy does. He suggested that "someone" should send a letter of appreciation to Kathy for all she is doing, **Dan** will send the letter.

Maura reported that she and Helen have applied for a Caregivers Grant. They have a list of potential participants for the support group of Caregivers who would come for such a group. The funds would pay for the nurse Peg DeNault, RN who would work with Helen MacMellon, LCSW to run the Caregivers Support Group and for some resources.

The Wellness ride program is going well and the fee structure is working well. They will evaluate the program at the end of September. The fees are not covering the stipend that the drivers receive. Christine Stewart handles the drivers, their mileage and hours.

Helen spoke about personal safety issues two seniors have had recently. She has had to go to court on behalf of both people who have been the victims of financial scams and criminal threats. These cases have been very time-consuming.

UPCOMING EVENTS: Annual MCOA Conference -- October 8-10, 2014
Volunteer Awards Social - October 31, 2014

NEXT MEETING: THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2014 AT 9:00 A.M.

THERE WILL NOT BE A NOVEMBER MEETING.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted
Susan Dierks, COA secretary

DOCUMENT LIST

The following Documents were made available to all members of the COA during the meeting. They are available for review at the Amherst Senior Center, 70 Boltwood Walk, Amherst, MA

1. COA Meeting Agenda for September 4, 2014
2. Minutes of COA Meeting June 5, 2014
3. Friends of Amherst Senior Center Treasurer's Report
4. FY 2014 Annual Report EOEA-SGA
5. Sub-Committee Report on Parking and Long-Range Planning Committee
6. Invitation to Meet and Greet new Highland Valley Director, Heather Skubiszewski
7. List of the Members of the Amherst COA FY 15

