

AMHERST COUNCIL ON AGING MINUTES

May 11, 2006

Members Present: Al Byam (Co Chair), Barbara Sutherland (Co-Chair), Doris Holden (Treasurer), Elsie Fetterman, Ed Kaler, Susan Whitbourne, Tom McAuley, Rosemary Kofler (Secretary)

Absent: Frank Lattuca,

Select Board Liaison: absent

Staff Present: Nancy Pagano (Director/Program Director), Maura Plante (Assistant Director/Services), Karen Erman (Administrative Assistant), Marlene Barnett (Program Coordinator)

Guests: Marge Babb

Welcome:

The Council on Aging meeting was called to order at 9:06 AM by Al Byam, Co Chair.

Minutes of April Meeting:

Several minor corrections were made to the minutes. They were accepted as amended.

Senior Trust Treasurer's Report:

Doris reported money paid for Wellness Grants of \$165.00 and a donation of \$300.00 to Experience Works. The report was accepted.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

June 19 Volunteer Recognition:

Nancy reported that Bob Ludwig declined the honor of the Eveline Sears Award. It was suggested that Dorothea Kissam be the recipient. She has been a long-time driver for Meals on Wheels and has donated money to families who could not afford MOW. COA members approved Dorothea Kissam and John Foster as recipients of the Eveline Sears Award for 2006.

Nancy said that Bob Johnson, who runs the *New Options Seminars* at the Senior Center, would be the keynote speaker at the volunteer event. Doris and Elsie volunteered to assist Nancy in the planning and execution of the event.

Budget Update:

Nancy referred us to the handout regarding Services, Programs and Activities available at the Center, a copy of which went to all TM members. The general budget will come up in TM on May 22. The Select Board and Finance Committee agree that the only cut for the Center will be one day of Marlene's time with the agreement that the Senior Center will also be relieved of some of the room scheduling responsibilities. The impact of the cut may be lessened if the Formula Grant for FY 07 gets increased. Nancy encouraged members to call TM members to vote against any further cuts. No one knows how much money will be coming into Town and there is still a shortfall.

Nancy pointed out that TM needs more members who are supportive of the Senior Center. She encouraged COA members to speak to friends about becoming candidates for TM vacancies or to become one themselves.

SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATE

Ad Hoc Trust/Friends Transition:

Al referred us to the copy of the Draft of the By Laws for the *Friends of the Amherst Senior Center*. Minor additions/changes were recommended. Changes to the document will be made by Susan, it will be sent to the Attorney and ultimately filed with the Secretary of State. Since it is a "Friends" document, it will be voted on by the Friends Board, not the COA. Nancy thanked the members of the committee (Susan, Al, Frank, Tom, Doris) for their hard work.

Transportation:

Al reported that a search committee is formed for the new administrator. In early June the FY 07 budget will be finalized.

Parking Sub-Committee:

Ed distributed a copy of the letter he sent to the Interim Town Manager, John Musante, and the Parking Staff. Suggestions for reduced parking fees for seniors were made to the Parking Staff via the Town Manager. The Parking Staff suggestions will be presented to the COA. The COA will then make recommendations to the Select Board.

Doris expressed concern about parking spaces behind the Ann Whalen House. That area is reserved for volunteers and seniors at the Center. Some people who park there do not have permits and the area is not monitored. It was suggested it be brought up to the Parking Staff.

Nancy pointed out that Handicap Van spaces on the south side of Bangs are not actually designed for cars with handicap stickers/tags. Presently those spots are marked "van accessible" and no notice is posted forbidding cars, however, this may change as the Town comes into compliance with State regulations. Cars with handicapped marking can park for free in any spot. The spots under the roof protection are especially wide and are the only easy place for people with wheelchairs and lifts to get out of their vehicles.

Highland Valley Elder Services:

Elsie reported on the event on June 5 at Look Park for Baby Boomers. There will be a speaker and an Expo of resources available to baby boomers. They talked about what Senior Centers should be doing and how to assess the needs of their seniors.

Maura has gotten very few responses to the Needs/Offer forms. Instead she gets many phone calls or word of mouth information about who has needs. The HVES website is not user friendly at this time.

NEW BUSINESS**Nominating Committee Volunteers Needed:**

Nancy reported that the first terms of 3 COA members will expire at the end of June. Therefore we need a couple of COA members whose terms are not expiring to be on a nominating committee to FORMALLY speak with members about whether they are willing to serve again and whether officers are willing to serve again. They will present a slate of officers to the COA in June. Voting will take place in July. Doris and Elsie volunteered to be on the Nominating Committee.

COA Summer Meetings:

It was unanimously approved to skip the August COA meeting.

There was some discussion of a picnic or a fun event for COA members and families during the summer.

Members will think about it and decide at the June meeting.

STAFF REPORTS**Kindred Spirits:**

Maura reported that the support group for 'kin that are raising children of relatives' which meets monthly has only one family from Amherst. Since Marlene's hours will likely be cut, and Maura has limited time, it was decided that Jennifer Higgins, the Social worker with the Northampton COA would take over running Kindred Spirits. Maura will remain available to help if needed.

HVES Grant Approved for Psychological Service Satellite Office:

Maura reported that Robert Gallant, Executive Director of HVES, approved money for the program from September 1 – October 1, 2006. They will then re-apply for Title III funds for the fiscal year October 1, 2006 – September 30, 2007. John Lutz suggested getting data about the need for the program when re-applying for

funding. He suggested a self-test assessment. Susan said that would need to go through an Institutional Review Board since it involves people.

Bread and Produce Truck Driver:

Marlene reported that Rafael Reys is the new driver. All that is needed now is a substitute driver. Food is picked up at Trader Joe's, Big Y, Henion's Bakery, Whole Foods, Panera, Black Sheep and Atkins. It was suggested we thank them all in our Newsletter. There are 120 people (in unduplicated numbers for the fiscal year) who take advantage of the Bread and Produce program.

Anita's Hours Cut Again:

Nancy reported that Anita's hours with Experience Works have been cut from 20 to 15 hours/week. She is actively interviewing for other jobs. She is an excellent worker and well liked. Losing her would be a tremendous loss to the Center. She has taken over the MOW program for Maura. Although we are entitled to 2 positions from Experience Works, the income guidelines are very limiting and few people are eligible. (The criteria is about \$12,500/year/individual including Social Security and Disability).

Charging for the Use of Bangs:

Nancy met with John Musante. He has been asked by the Selectboard to look into charging money for using rooms at Bangs as a means of bringing in extra money for the Town. Nancy and Karen will study the issue and put together a report. Charging could mean a lot of record keeping and be very time consuming, perhaps adding the amount of work equal to another half time position.

Formula Grant Increase Anticipated for FY07:

Nancy reported that the House voted to increase the Formula Grant, although not as much as we had hoped for. The Senate is working on their recommendation for an increase. The Grant is based on the 2000 census. The extra money will be wonderful because it will allow us to restore some of the hours being cut for Marlene by the Town budget. Although it could be used for many things, such as sending people to conferences, the newsletter, etc., instead we are forced once again to use it to support staff hours.

Guest, **Marge Babb** reported that the Henry Peirce Award was given to Jim Foudy, Editor of the Daily Hampshire Gazette. He gave a moving dedication to Hank.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:23 AM.

The next COA meeting will be on June 8, 2006 at 9:00 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Rosemary Kofler, Secretary

