

AMHERST COUNCIL ON AGING MINUTES
May 10, 2007

Members Present: Daniel Clapp, Elsie Fetterman, Ed Kaler, Rosemary Kofler, Tom McAuley
Barbara Sutherland, David Yaukey

Absent: Doris Holden, Susan Whitbourne

Select Board Liaison: absent

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

Absent: Marlene Barnett (Program Coordinator)

Guests: Marge Babb, Deb Jankowski

Welcome:

Barbara Sutherland, Chair, called the Council on Aging meeting to order at 9:08 AM.

Minutes of Previous Meeting:

The minutes of the April 12 meeting were approved and accepted.

Senior Trust Treasurer's Report:

The report was not presented due to the Treasurer's absence.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

Friends Progress:

Nancy had a successful meeting with Deb Jankowski. She provided each member a copy of the revised By-Laws to put into their notebooks to replace a previous copy. Nancy and Deb have been working on the Articles of Organization which are now ready to be submitted to the Secretary of State. The incorporators are Doris Holden, Barbara Sutherland, Janice Denton, Shirley Lauder, Allen Torrey, Barbara Slovin, Norma Packard and Susan Whitbourne. It is OK for two COA members to also be incorporators. Soon we will receive the formal paper work saying the Friends group is approved. Next month's COA meeting will adjourn briefly to allow a Senior Trust meeting to occur to discuss the best way to transfer the funds from the Trust.

Deb Jankowski completed Nancy's report when she arrived at 9:40AM. She said that the only way to dissolve the Trust is to turn the money over to the Town. There are two options. One is to give the money to the Town and they in turn would give it back to the Friends Group. That means that \$75,000 would be sitting before the Town in these times of dire need and the money could theoretically be spent by the Town. The Town Manager thinks that is unlikely. The other option is to have the Town hold the money in a separate fund earmarked for the Friends group. The money would not be mingled with Town money in the general fund and the COA would earn the interest. Nancy and Deb will meet with John Musante to discuss the easiest way to withdraw that money when needed if the second option is chosen.

Deb also mentioned the changes to the By-Laws. 1) Officer's terms will be staggered. 2) There will be no limit to the number of terms for officers. 3) The Treasurer will be authorized to write and receive checks. 4) Directors can request regular audits.

Dan requested that the minutes reflect a vote of very great appreciation for all the work that Attorney Jankowski has been doing. It is exciting to have this completed.

Budget Update:

Nancy read an email from **Gerry Weiss**, who was unable to attend the COA meeting. He mentioned the fact that he was the only Select Board member who voted to put extra money into the senior services budget. The override did not pass so cuts remain the same as originally recommended: \$250 off office supplies, \$250 off Senior Center activities, and reducing Marlene from 30 to 20 hours. Marlene's loss of hours will be a real hardship. For example, she usually delivers Meal on Wheels 2-4 times a week, she runs Musical Showcases, serves as the Senior

Center's Volunteer Coordinator (90 students this semester), coordinates the Walking Group, the Wednesday Bread Program, and the Outreach Survey.

Dan asked if the money in the Trust fund could be used to restore Marlene's hours. Nancy said the decision would have to be made by the Friends once the Trust is transferred. Some of that money would have to be used to cover other expenses and she feels it would be unwise to deplete the fund, which took 30 years to build up. In FY08 it is projected that the Town will only support Marlene for 5 hours a week plus her benefits. The rest of her salary comes from the state Formula Grant. The Trust money can't continue to support Marlene's hours year after year.

Counseling Center Update:

Maura shared a copy of the Counseling Center "Consent and Agreement for Outpatient Psychotherapy" form. Sheri Weintraub, MSW, LICSW, will provide psychotherapy. There are 3 slots for elders or caregivers to have 6 free sessions (paid by Title III Grant). If the person needs more sessions Sheri will help her/him make arrangements with either herself or another therapist. If that person chooses Sheri, she will bill Medicare and there will be a co-pay (between \$5 and \$30).

Nursing Center Update:

Rosemary reported that progress is being made toward re-establishing the Senior Health Services (aka the Nursing Center). Nancy will supervise the nurse in all things non-medical. Dan has agreed to volunteer as a consultant/advisor, which meets with Larry Shaffer's approval. Nancy asked Larry Shaffer to contact Town Counsel about liability issues for Dan. The nurse will carry her own malpractice insurance. The advisory group decided not to seek an Advanced Practice nurse for the position, since an RN with a BSN can fulfill the requirements of the job description – assessment, referral, counseling and education. The draft Job Description is ready. The ad will go out next month. To date, charts from the previous nurse are not available. The Bubble Room is being prepared.

Wellness Grant Policy:

Nancy asked for approval of the updated Wellness Grant Policy. Changes include limiting the grant to Amherst residents, removing the Travel Club scholarship, and a qualifying statement indicating financial need will have to be signed. A motion was made to accept the proposal. It was seconded and passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Nominating Committee Needed:

Nancy said that the first terms of Doris, Susan and Rosemary will end in June. We need a nominating committee to work with the Chair to go to those people and see if they want a second term. The committee also needs to request of the officers if they will continue their position. David and Dan volunteered to serve on the nominating committee. If one of the members does not want a second term, other candidates will be recommended. The nominating committee will interview COA applicants and make their recommendations to the Town Manager for appointment.

Ed announced his resignation from the COA effective July due to the fact that he will be moving to Iowa for his business in Reflexology. Ed expressed that he has enjoyed being on the COA and working with elders.

August Meeting:

Nancy asked members if they would like to skip the August meeting since it is a popular vacation time. Typically the COA meets 10 times a year. It was unanimously decided to not meet in August. If necessary, Nancy would call an emergency meeting.

SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATE

Comprehensive Planning Committee:

Rosemary reported that the CPC just completed work on the Survey (Questionnaire) form for Amherst residents, asking them to express their priorities for how Amherst should grow and develop. It will be mailed out along with a personal, hand-addressed, hand-signed letter to 1600 residents selected randomly from the census list. CPC hopes to get a 70% response by July 15 (2 months from the mailing date). Meanwhile, each of the seven Work Groups is formulating specific strategies, means to achieve the Goals, which the community approved at Community Choices in March. The strategies will make up elements of the Master Plan, a guide for the future growth, development and direction of Amherst.

Highland Valley Elder Services:

Elsie reported. John Lutz announced that HVES has funded 36 grants with Title III money.

Elsie spoke of the family caregiver issue. Robert Gallant sent a letter to family caregivers asking them to identify their needs and offering them a family care grant award. Traditionally, 80% of elder care is delivered by family members or neighbors. The goal is to provide more support and resources to caregivers.

Elsie suggested wider publication of the tax work-off program for elders over 60, indicating the new income eligibility guidelines. It is posted on the Town website but should also be publicized in local newspapers, the Valley Advocate, and local TV shows.

COA STAFF REPORTS

Nancy said that the Senior Center's reception desk has been changed to accommodate wheelchairs. The desk was moved back to make the entrance area wider and an open counter was created to make it easier to see and communicate with those in wheelchairs.

Nancy reminded us of the Volunteer Social on Friday, June 29 at 1:30 PM. The Eveline Sears Senior Activist Awards will be presented.

Nancy announced that Marlene is finishing work for her Masters Degree in Public Health Administration from the University of Massachusetts.

The COA meeting was adjourned at 10:30 AM.

The next meeting will be held on June 7, 2007 at 9:00 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Rosemary Kofler, Secretary