

COUNCIL ON AGING BOARD MEETING

DATE: May 11, 2021—1:30 pm

Virtual Meeting via ZOOM Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order
Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law

Board members present: Dilla Tingley (Chair), Laura Crosby (Vice-Chair), Dan Boynton (Recorder), Donna Rizzo (Trip Committee), Sally Kindleberger (provides humor at the meetings and volunteers for difficult tasks), Don Milan (SHINE services), Florence Montgomery and Hope White (Diversity Initiative), Jane O'Rourke (WIDE), Terry Perlmutter and Kathy Ramon.

Staff: Abigail Butt, PhD, COA Director; Amy Gagne, Assistant Director

Welcome and Introductions:

Dilla called the meeting to order. Dilla individually polled members of the board and each affirmed their presence.

Approval of minutes: Dilla made a motion that the LCOA minutes of April 13, 2021, be approved, and all board members present voted unanimously to approve these minutes.

Liaison Reports:

Report on Housing Commission meetings – Abigail Butt (Substituting for Victoria Benalfew)

Abigail said the Housing Commission's partnership with the Council on Aging these last several months has been absolutely incredible. They've been working with us and the Community Preservation Commission in regard to the rental assistance program, but on top of that they've started bringing us in on interactions they are having with residents, where they know that the residents need assistance from the COA. Dilla told Abigail "I'm always amazed, it shows real dedication to your career to be totally overworked and excited when new clients come pouring in".

Report on recent trips and trips planned for the future – Donna Rizzo

Donna let board members know that Sara Mattes, the new President of the Lincoln Historical Society, and she's already proposed a few trips of noteworthy Lincoln related people that have done important things in the rest of the state. Abigail added that we were thinking of also broadening our future trips to make them inclusive, so that our programming is more integrated when it comes to where we're going what we're seeing. Now that museums are opening up and things are totally changing, it might be time to start thinking about doing the trip but rather than riding in a bus, everybody getting there separately.

Report on Minuteman Senior Services board meeting – Wendy Kusik

Wendy said one of the things they did say this last board meeting was that the House ways and means of added about \$200,000 for home care management, but it still left a \$1.1 million gap. Minute Man is working on a strategic plan right now, based on the fact that there's changing demographics and they're recognizing that there's still a lot of people in their communities that are underserved. They also are beginning to look at

how they apply for grants. In the past, you could apply for a grant for Meals on Wheels, because everyone wants to help people get fed. (They deliver more than 700 meals currently.) But now, when they apply for grants, they want to build in a flexibility so that they can use what money they get for another program that might be under funded, so this is just a change in thinking.

Report on SHINE counselors meeting and update on SHINE services – Don Milan
Regular in-person office hours have been established now for SHINE counselors at Bemis Hall on the first and third Wednesday of each month. (In addition, SHINE counseling services continue to be provided by email, ZOOM, FaceTime and telephone.) All three SHINE counselors passed their recertification exams which were more difficult because they doubled the number of questions.

Jane O'Rourke said, "I benefited from SHINE personally. Craig spent a good amount of time with me on the phone sorting out my-about-to-turn-65 stuff regarding Medicare and social security and gave me a wealth of information, including hand delivering some things to my side porch. I just thought he was delightful and so helpful."

Report on Diversity Initiative – Florence Montgomery and Hope White
Florence started her diversity report by saying that Benjamin Banneker (a free black man, 1731-1806) was the first person to speak of the cycle of the 17-year cicadas. Joy Harjo, a native American woman, was selected for the third time to be Poet Laureate of the U.S.

The Library is conducting their series, Reading for Racial Justice, for the third time. Florence showed some of the books included in past series: So You Want To Talk About Race and me and white supremacy that she had mentioned before because she thought they were important and difficult. She showed a study guide for one she got because she had not wanted to mark up the original -- the assumed suggestion was that the guide might help one remember important points.

The Lincoln Land Conservation Trust is sponsoring a series of African American speakers. Florence mentioned the most recent talk and showed two books again by J. Drew Lanham who will be a virtual guest on June 2nd. She also reminded us of various selections that are included in the collection at Bemis.

Hope added "The third town wide anti-racism training that was hosted by WIDE (Welcome Inclusion Diversity and Equity) group. I don't know what the next steps will be, but since I sit on the committee, I will be sure to let you all know what's happening after that." On June 11 the METCO Group at Lincoln School will be hosting a Juneteenth celebration. Hope asked Board Members, "I don't know if you all have ever heard the term Juneteenth?" Florence responded, "We have a wonderful book in our collection that covers this subject." Hope said, "Okay, well Juneteenth marks the ending of slavery. It's a day to commemorate African Americans becoming free, so this year METCO will have a virtual celebration, which is going to be on June 11 from 6:00 to 7:15pm when I get the link information and more

information, I'll give it to Abby." Hope also endorsed a four-part HBO documentary on racism called Exterminate All the Brutes. It's very powerful, very insightful and basically gives you the real history as opposed to what you've been reading in your history books.

Report on WIDE training – Jane O'Rourke

Jane said it's quite awesome to see 120 little (zoom) boxes of people who all represent a broad swath of Lincoln who are really committed to having their representative groups do a better job of supporting diversity. Session One was about just heightening one's awareness of what race is, when you noticed it, how you understand it, how did you grow up with it.

Session Two is who you are, how do you identify, what what's your experience as a race and have you been discriminated against. Jane said the first group consisted of Dilla, Sally, Hope and myself and "it was very poignant hearing in our own respective ways how we've experienced this in our in our lives" and "I think we'll end up with an informed perspective and lens about how to move forward." "We had to talk about how we might have felt discriminated, cultural humility, white privilege and unconscious bias."

Jane said, "The truth of the matter is the real work comes back to us. What we're going to do and how uncomfortable are we willing to be, and how broad can we look, and how can we ask ourselves really hard questions. And, and how much fun, can we have doing it."

Dilla reminded board members enrolled in the WIDE training of the scheduled meetings and Sally encouraged all board members to read the web of institutional racism, which is the homework assignment for board members enrolled in the WIDE training.

Announcements/Director's Report – Abigail Butt

Abigail started her report by saying that she and her staff are feeling overloaded with work, and in particular cases of senior abuse. "We think we'll have a handle on it and then Amy will get some random phone call from a senior we've never even heard of saying they're being abused or neglected, and It is non-stop." Sally asked, "Is there any way that we can support you in all of this?" Abigail's response was that she needed more social work support. Laura asked about the staffing comparison with other towns our size that Abigail and Sally were working on. Abigail answered that she had all the data but had not enough time to analyze the data.

New Transportation Coordinator – Carlee Castetter

Carlee is a master's in social work student at Salem State and comes to the COA with a wealth of training and experience in both social and aging services. Carlee's hours at the COA are Monday-Wednesday, & Friday, from 11:30AM-4:30PM. Carlee will be providing administrative support, coordinating our LINC volunteer transportation program, and assisting clients sign up for programs such as the RIDE, Go-Go Grandparent, and Medicaid PT-1 transport. Abigail said we will probably have Carlee for a year and a half before she moves on, unless we can take her on full time.

Summer Intern– Anna Fitzgerald

Anna's background is in Studio Art, Art Therapy, and Psychology. Anna brings new art programming opportunities to the COA and is a rising junior at Endicott College. She'll be doing art therapy mostly and art classes.

MCOA Legislative Housing Task Force

The Massachusetts Council on Aging (MCOA) Housing Security Task Force legislative committee has invited Abigail to be member. The goal of the group will be to address and advise on legislative issues related to housing issues and tax relief for seniors.

COA Name Change

Abigail encouraged board members to attend Town Meeting because one of the things on the agenda is to amend general bylaw and change our name from Council on Aging to Council on Aging and Human Services.

Noteworthy Programming for May

Amy said she reached out as we were adding more in-person groups and what's really funny is some of the groups at this time would rather stay virtual. They're used to it, it's easy, there's no concern using masks, or whatnot. So, there was only really one group other than the men's coffee that we're going to probably have a small group in-person and that is the Russian Conversation group. Also, the SAIL Balance class will be offered both on ZOOM and in-person.

Pierce House

- Tuesdays and Thursdays, Stretch and Flex and Active Aging, Terri Zaborowski.
- Wednesdays, Line Dancing, Katrina Rotondi
- Fridays, SAIL Balance, Derry Tanner

Bemis Hall

- Tuesdays, Knitting (outside)
- Thursdays, Ukulele Gathering (outside)
- 2nd Fridays, Legal Clinics in person/virtual with Attorney Sasha Golden (inside)
- 1st & 3rd Wednesdays, SHINE Office hours in person/virtual on Wednesdays (inside)
- 4th Tuesdays, Podiatry

Traveling

- 2nd & 4th Tuesdays, Men's Coffee virtual & hybrid

Virtual

- Chair Yoga
- Tai Chi
- SAIL Balance

Noteworthy May events

Amy said, "I am going to be looking for someone to bring us a presentation surrounding some of this Asian Hate that was talked about today. It seems something that we should educate ourselves about and I think it would be of interest to everyone, so if

anyone has ideas, please send me emails.” With increased in-person activities, we have to be careful and all do contact tracing for that. So this is adding a little bit extra burden to us but we’re just trying to remind everyone to call or email to sign up for activities. Abigail added, “Peter Carvel, who’s our veteran service officer, has started doing social work out of necessity, because it’s the only thing left to do”.

Wednesday, May 5th 2pm, BC/BS Immunity Webinar

Friday, May 7th 1pm, Convo with Select, J. Glass.

Bring your questions - Town Meeting is May 15th!

Wednesday, May 19th 11am, Chat with Town Nurse, Trish McGean, R.N.

Wednesday, May 26th 1pm, Learn to Zoom with Andy Payne at 1 pm (last session until Sept)

Thursday, May 27th, BC/BS Meditation Webinar.

Monday, May 31st, Happy Memorial Day! Special event at Pierce House 9-10:30.

Massachusetts Medal of Liberty Ceremony. 16 Gold Star Families to be honored with medals. Traditional Memorial Day celebration to follow from 11-12 at Pierce House. If you hear any cannons on May 31st, it is because the Concord Battery is bringing 2 cannons for the salute honoring these fallen heroes.

Old Business

Status update of new bench: It has been ordered.

New Business

There was no new business

Adjournment: Dilla asked for a motion to adjourn, Sally said “so moved”, Don **seconded this motion and all board members voted unanimously by raised hands to end** the meeting.

NEXT MEETING: June 8, 2021