

Council on Aging/Friends of Council on Aging: Joint Meeting

DATE: Tuesday, September 14, 2021—1:00 pm

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Lincoln Board of the Council on Aging and the Friends of the Lincoln Council on Aging will be conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible.

Friends Board Members: Rhonda Swain (Chair), Irene Briedis, Florence Beaudry, Connie Lewis, John Getsinger, Packy Lawler, Nancy Constable, Craig Donaldson, Lynne LaSpina, Gwyn Loud and Harold McAleer.

COA Board members: Dilla Tingley (Chair), Laura Crosby (Vice-Chair), Dan Boynton (Recorder), Donna Rizzo, Sally Kindleberger, Don Milan, Florence Montgomery, Jane O'Rourke, Terry Perlmutter and Kathy Ramon.

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

Welcome and Introductions:

Rhonda Swain called the meeting to order. Abigail individually polled members of the boards and each affirmed their presence.

ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act): Abigail explained that this is Federal money given directly to cities and towns, and the Town of Lincoln is getting \$2 million dollars. Tim Higgins has asked staff to share with board members that this is happening and one of the allowable items is social services. Lincoln has a budget shortfall of \$400,000, and that leaves over a million dollars to be spent on other things. A possible plan would be to propose to the Town that Carlee Castetter, who is a trained social worker, working as our Transportation Coordinator at 20 hours-a-week to boost her hours to 40, so that she could handle the many clinical crisis situations that the COA faces each week.

Dilla asked Abigail, "Do you expect this emergency situation to continue once Covid is behind us?" Abigail responded, "When someone experiences a big economic crisis, they're finally willing to come to you to seek help, that kind of turnaround can take anywhere from a year and a half to three years."

Terry Perlmutter asked who controls the funds? Abigail answered, "Everyone's going to be involved in there's going to be a lot of opportunity for Community input. The Board of Selects and the Finance Committee, will make the final decision. It's also possible this will go to Town Meeting."

Nancy Constable said, "I was wondering how far down the list with the COA be for this money?" Abigail responded, "The town wants to do something that's going to make a lasting impact, and one of those things would be adding in some hours to the COA social worker. Some other things that are really needed are potentially grants to organizations like Parks and Rec and Magic Garden because the cost of childcare is very high."

Mission Statement – A vote may be taken

Rhonda Swain described the process of how the new COA mission statement was developed. A group of both Friends board members and COA board members (which included Rhonda Swain, Dilla Tingley, Sally Kindleberger, Hope White, Connie Lewis, Terry Perlmutter, Florence Beaudry, plus COA staff Abigail Butt and Amy Gagne) attended a training back in the spring, that was run by an organization called Lincoln WIDE (which stands for Welcoming Inclusion Diversity and Equity) and this training was designed to give some experience to all the town boards and committees around improving our ability to be a welcoming, inclusive and diverse town.

One of the things that we could do was to modify our mission statement to emphasize our commitment to diversity and bring it before both boards in order to further revise it and to seek a vote of approval. A lively discussion took place with members of both boards participating. Dilla Tingley questioned why the statement included the precise number of residents over 60 and this was changed to about one-third and various one-word changes were made to the statement was in correct English. Dan Boynton made a motion to accept the mission statement as proposed, Don Milan seconded the motion and Abigail Butt proceeded the poll each board member separately. Nine COA board members voted for the motion and one was opposed. Abigail said, “the motion is passed”.

Terry Perlmutter asked Florence Montgomery why she voted no. Florence answered, “I thought people wouldn't understand what we meant by diversity, inclusion and whatever else that middle word was...equity, I think it has to be more specific”. Abigail responded, “The more we go down into the small details of what every single one of these things means, it turns from a mission statement into a thesis.” Rhonda agreed with Abigail. Florence said, “These words are so used by so many people and nothing ever happens.” Connie Lewis said, “I wanted to add that this is a town wide initiative and there were 100 people at our training sessions.”

Rhonda Swain asked for a motion to support the adoption of the COA new mission statement from someone on the Friends Board. Packy Lawler made this motion and Florence Beaudry seconded it. Rhonda Swain polled each of the Friends Board members and all were in favor of the motion.

Adjournment:

Rhonda Swain asked for a motion to adjourn. Harold McAleer made that motion, Lynne LaSpina seconded it, and all members of both boards agreed to end the meeting