

Northfield, Mass. Council on Aging

Meeting Minutes: Feb. 20, 2024

Meeting called to order at 1:01 p.m. at the Northfield Senior Center in the lower level of the Town Hall.

Attendance: Chair Deb Lanou, Director Colleen Letourneau, Treasurer Betty Whitcomb, Secretary Chris Harris, members Jim Whitcomb, Pete Vearling and Meg Livingstone

Absent: None

Minutes: Based on a review of the minutes for Jan. 23, 2024, a motion to accept without changes was made by Betty Whitcomb, seconded and approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Betty Whitcomb presented the January fiscal report. A number of expenditures from the COA Gifts account will be reimbursed from the MCOA FY24 FDP Memory Café for Northfield COA-Start up grant. A motion to accept the report was made by Meg, seconded by Jim, and approved unanimously.

Chair's Report (Deb Lanou)

Recap of press coverage: Senior Center activities have been featured in The Recorder in photos, feature stories and news briefs in the North County Notebook. Also, the Montague Reporter did a feature story with photos by Lee Wicks about our Memory Cafe.

Informational events: Thanks to the efforts and vision of Colleen Letourneau and Robin Jenkins, we have a full calendar of events through which to share our message and mission. We've got the new men's group, the new Memory Cafe, the new Wii bowling and all sorts of things that are enabling us to reach out to a lot more people.

Adding card and board games: There was a discussion about adding board games and additional card games. Bridge is a popular activity on Monday afternoons and Wednesday mornings. The challenge is to schedule another activity, such as cribbage, pitch, dominoes, puzzles, or Wii bowling, in the same space without the noise disturbing the bridge players. The goal is to maximize the space we have. The board supported the chair in broaching this idea to the bridge players. Adding a portable, sound-dampening partition was also discussed.

Outreach: The council discussed expanding the COA board of directors. Pete introduced it at the men's breakfast, which is a way of reaching out to people who don't know all that we do. Chris offered to write an "elevator pitch" — a very brief spiel that members could use to acquaint other people with the COA.

Director's Report (Colleen Letourneau)

Fred W. Wells Trust Health Grant: Colleen has almost finished this year's application, which has to do with people living in rural areas. Last year, we were awarded \$1,000, which was put toward 60+Yoga. This year, we are going to ask for more funding, and we are grateful for their grant funding last year.

Friends of Northfield Seniors Fundraising Goals: At their last meeting, they asked, what do we want them to fundraise for? Concerts at the Beech House and at our pavilion are always popular, as are our monthly meals. The last monthly meal was packed and we hired a harpist. So, if the Friends could support entertainment at \$100 per luncheon, that would be great. So we would like to pitch "music" as a fundraising goal. Friends are also giving us \$50 per month toward whatever we need it for. Colleen just got the first such a payment last week and she put it in the COA gift account. Also, Friends are expected to authorize the purchase of a new food

prep table for the commercial kitchen in the Senior Center. A room divider for the Senior Center is another idea to pitch to them.

Donations to TRIAD program: We would like to accrue enough money in a donation bucket to "buy" a table at their next annual event, the annual Health Fair at Schuetzen Verein in Gill, MA. where we can publicize our Senior Center. This is also to support TRIAD, as it is one of their fund-raising events.

Senior Center Program updates: Colleen reviewed some upcoming programs, including the Memory Cafe on Feb. 28, with Jim Anderson as entertainment; the Tech School will do hand massages and manicures; there will be a visit from the North Western District Attorney about how to spot a scam; art, the Memory Cafe in March will feature an art project with Ginny Rockwood, a hearing clinic with Julie Fisher, Happy Little Feet returns in April, and many more events.

Robin will appreciate help in putting on the Men's Breakfast on March 19th. Contact Robin as to when to arrive to help.

The March 12th, 2024 COA meeting is rescheduled to Tuesday March 26 at 1:00 p.m.

Around town

Legislative update: Chris reported on an upcoming bill, H 4154, which would apply digital grocery coupons at check-out to the orders of all seniors.

Neighbors at Home: Betty reported that N@H added Carol Pike to their board. A subcommittee about reimbursing driver volunteers learned that the paperwork and tax implications for reimbursing volunteer drivers made this proposal unfeasible at the present time.

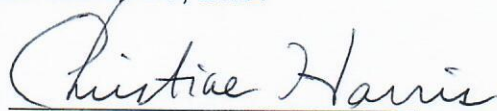
Friends of Northfield Seniors: Jim reported that we have already touched on pertinent points.

CPC (Community Preservation Committee): Meg reported that four projects have been approved, including a pavilion at the elementary school, work on the VFW building in West Northfield and two projects at the Dickinson Memorial Library. They will meet on March 12 at 6 p.m. to finalize what goes before the Selectboard at Town Meeting. There was interest in an application that will come before the CPC next year about making the Unitarian church building more accessible.

Motion to adjourn: 2:15 p.m.

Approved date: March 26, 2024

Approved by:



Christine Harris, recording secretary