

Groton Council on Aging
The Groton Center
163 W. Main Street
Groton, Massachusetts 01450

Date: March 14, 2022

Location: The Groton Center

Time: 1:30PM Meeting called to order by Chair, Jean Sheedy.

Attendance: Chair and Facilitator-Jean Sheedy, Secretary-Dottie Zale, Board Members: Peter Cunningham, Pascal Miller, Judy Palumbo O'Brien, Helen Sienkiewicz, Paula Martin. Joining via Zoom: Mihran Keoseian and Therese Keoseian.

Director: Ashley Shaheen and Community Engagement Specialist: Lauren Marcello

Minutes from February 14th were corrected. ACTION: Minutes accepted as corrected.

Follow up from last meeting, question of changing the time and or date for the Board Meetings.

Jean polled all the members. ACTION: The COA Board meetings will continue to meet on the 2nd Monday of the month at 1PM.

Director's Report:

*Programming: In February we added 30 new members and in March, during the first week, we added 11 new members. We are always looking for new program offerings, Lauren helped add a brand-new instructor in Tai Chi, a new instructor to lead a class on "Writing About My Life", hosting Judge Fabbri from the Marlborough District Court during National Judicial Outreach Month and Pi Day through Groton Reads and Eats and more. Lauren adds that we will be adding a Zumba class and a Folk-Art Painting class.

*MyActiveCenter: The MyActiveCenter will be launched for program registrations with the May/June newsletter. This will be another option for users to register for events. Members will be able to also register in person and over the phone. There will be two informational sessions, March 22 and April 26. All members must be registered and have a key tag. Online registration will start on April 28th, volunteers will help. Therese asked, "If people will receive a conformation of what they signed up for?" Ashley stated they will not receive a conformation, but they can print out what they have signed up for at the time they register. Paula asked, "What if multiple people sign up for a program?". Ashley stated that all programs will be opened until full, that is based on capacity. Pete asked, "If there was an additional charge?" Ashley stated, there is no charge for the program.

*Extended Hours: Programming is ready for the 8-week pilot program of extended hours on Mondays. We are targeting residents that are working and can not normally access The Center. Transportation will be provided for all those needing a ride. See the Director's report for all the offerings. The success of the pilot program will be assessed by 1. The numbers of people attending. 2. By asking attendees to complete a brief survey. There is a plan in the works to launch a second pilot program in the fall. If

successful we will look at changing the hours of The Center to mimic those of Town Hall. Milhan asked, "What would be used to quantify the pilot programs as a success?" Ashley felt the attendance and the surveys. Board members felt every attendee should be asked to fill out a survey. Therese questioned the Groton Woman's Club use of The Center one Friday a month, their meeting usually goes longer than 1PM. Ashley felt it would not be a problem, arrangements can be made for closing The Center.

*Reinvest In You: The banner on Main Street was up the week of March 7th, a flyer went out in the electric light bills and cards have been sent to all residents 60 years and older. Special thanks to the Friends of Groton Elders for their generosity in sponsoring this initiative.

*Staff: Lauren has started her role as Community Engagement Specialist on January 3rd. She has focused her attention on recruiting new instructors and volunteers, overseeing the startup of The Center's Garden and planning for National Volunteer Appreciation Week in April.

Tina Maeder is continuing to support the Outreach Program. Residents have been reaching out for assistance with discounted options for wireless cellular service, home check-in visits and resources for in-home assistance. Sara Ravert is continuing with overall Department support. Ashley continues to work toward filling the Outreach/Van Dispatch position. The office space for the Outreach position is almost complete. The 15 hour per week Departmental Assistant position has been added back into the Town's budget. The budget will have to be approved by the Finance Committee and at Town Meeting.

*Transportation: Eddie Wenzell continues to dispatch and schedule rides for the transportation program. The loaner vehicle proved to be very useful, and Ashley is now hoping to add a 3rd van to our fleet. She will put a proposal in to the LRTA requesting that they include with their capital plans a request for a new bus. In the meantime, we will be able to utilize a loaner vehicle. Mike Kalil was appointed to the position of per diem van driver on February 28. There will be an on-site training (Passenger Assistance Training) through MARTAP on March 19, 2022. In addition, our drivers will complete a Defensive Driving webinar on March 17 at The Center.

*Volunteers: Volunteers have been reminded to log in and report all your volunteer hours, including remote hours. Garden update-Clio and Eric Fisher have volunteered to head the project. Dottie Zale has volunteered to help with organizing the meetings and keeping a Garden Planning Log for future reference. Once again, we would like to thank the Friends of the Groton Elders for helping with this important project. See the Director's minutes.

*Other: The Center is expecting to receive \$19,200 from a COA Formula Grant FY22. See attachment.

The tour of the new Groton Music Center for any interested Board members will be on March 27th. Ashley will send via email a liability form that participants must sign and return to her.

Pascal asked about the procedure for outside parties using The Center. Ashley told the group that anyone outside of the COA must sign a form taking responsibility to leave the building locked, they are liable for leaving the building in the same condition as they found it.

Volunteer appreciation Week will be a BIG event. We will have a large white board where volunteers can write messages/thoughts about why they volunteer. We will have lots of pictures.

The Fitness Center and Fitness classes are drawing new people into The Center. Once inside they usually pick up a program and see all the offerings.

Paula wanted to remind the Board about The Gay Nineties Celebration, hosted by the Groton Woman's Club. It will be held the 3rd week in May at the seniors' meals. This year we will celebrate all seniors that celebrated their 90th or 91st birthdays (because we did not have the party last year).

The next Board meeting will be April 11th at 1PM.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30PM. Respectfully submitted Dottie Zale.