

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

Date: May 23,2022

Location: The Groton Center

Time: 1:05PM Meeting called to order by Chair Jean Sheedy.

Attendance: Chair Jean Sheedy, Secretary Dottie Zale, Board Members: Paula Martin, Therese Keoseian, Helen Sienkiewicz, Judy Palumbo O'Brien, Peter Cunningham. On Zoom-Pascal Miller, Director Ashley Shaheen and Engagement Specialist Lauren Marcello.

There were 4 guests at the meeting. All are Groton residents.

Minutes from April 11<sup>th</sup>,2022 were corrected.

**ACTION:** Minutes accepted as corrected.

Additional Talking Points not in Ashley's written report.

Ashley reported that on her return to work she met with Peter Cunningham and Mark Haddad to discuss what will happen if full time staff were unable to report for work in the future. We are looking into whether volunteers can oversee the building and programming. Mark is pursuing this thought with Town Counsel and the town's insurance company. Therese asked about the possibility of using the volunteer EMT's? Peter said that yes, they are considering that possibility. The chances of this happening again are rare as staff continues to build. The Outreach Coordinator is starting on June 22<sup>nd</sup> and the Department Assistant 15hour position has been posted, Donald McKinney is on the Select Board agenda for approval. Transportation has continued to run. The Pepperell COA was very helpful with our MOW program while The Center was closed. Ashley also wanted to thank everyone for checking with her and well wishes while The Center was closed.

Director Ashley's Monthly Report: 1. On 4/21/22 The COA dropped the mask mandate for The Groton Center and the COA Van. Participants were encouraged to wear masks if desired, frequent hand washing, and social distancing were encouraged.

2. Programming is the main priority, the July/August newsletter will expand to 12 to 16 pages. Peter asked about the advertising in the newsletter. Ashley explained The Center does not endorse any of the advertisers.

3. Center update: 15 new members in April, 196 events were scheduled for April. 4/1 to 4/30 there were 689 duplicated visited and 211 unduplicated visits. Extended hours have been very popular with 116 duplicated users and 105 unduplicated users. On 5/2 during the extended hours, we had 87 duplicated users and 69 unduplicated users. Lauren reported that many members enjoyed the extended hours and felt like they were "going out". Surveys for the extended hours continue to be collected. Those results will be shared at the end of the program.

4. My Active Center: It is up and running, the computer registration option is growing, 33 members created a profile, and 22 members registered for programs. That's one out of every 8 people that are signing up for programs!

5. Important change. The Center will be closed on June 20<sup>th</sup> for the celebration of Juneteenth. The programs scheduled for the 20<sup>th</sup> will be moved to the 27<sup>th</sup>.

6. The Website: COA staff (kudos to Sara!), Bridgett Reiss and Steve Lieman have been working on refreshing the web site. The new web site will be launched in mid-May. Bridget and Steve will be presenting the web site to the Board on June 13<sup>th</sup>.

7. Staffing: Nicole Boardman has accepted the position of Outreach Coordinator. Nicole will start June 22. Tina Maeder has finished. Eddie Wenzell continues to dispatch. Since Rich Marton resigned, Ashley is still looking for 2 per diem Van drivers. A new driver's name (that will replace Rich) will go to the Select Board for approval, he is presently a driver for a COA in Concord MA. Therese mentioned Bob Hamilton's name. He apparently delivers MOW and

might be interested. Ashley will follow up with him. In April of '22 we provided 237 trips an 11.6% increase from March of '22. Ashley is working closely with the LRTA to obtain a third vehicle. We will probably not be able to obtain the Van until July of 2023. On 4/30 the COA budget was approved which included a 15 hour/week Departmental Assistant position. Ashley will be working with HR on recruitment. Sara Raveret continues to provide support during this transitional time.

8. Volunteers: Lauren emphasized the importance of record keeping. Reminding all volunteers to log in and report all your volunteer hours. We had a very successful volunteer appreciation event on April 21<sup>st</sup>, about 40 volunteers were in attendance. The garden is going well and are on track for planting the first week of June.

9. Other: A \$500 donation was received from the Friends of Groton Elders-start up funds for the garden. An individual donation of \$50.00. A \$500 donation from the Squanicook Quilt Guild. Application was made for funding through the

Groton Lecture Fund. The International Armchair Travel Program will be an interactive opportunity to see the world. The Groton COA staff will team up with Beeyond. They provide interactive travel experiences by fun and qualified tour guides, there are 350+ tours to choose from. Ashley has requested \$750 for a subscription to Beeyond. The Friends of Groton Elders supported the beautiful and colorful double-sided sheet about The Groton Center that went out to the town. The cost was \$1200.

The MCOA would like to work with the Groton COA to create a series of training videos for volunteers. Volunteers and participants would be interviewed about their experiences during the pandemic and after the opening of The Center.

10. NCOA accreditation process has given us an extension until 12/31/22.

11. Building Usage: There is an uptick in requests for building usage. The Groton Historical Society, the Friends of Groton Neighbors, the girl scout troop, various town departments and private businesses.

12. New COA Members: Jean Sheedy and Helen Seinkiewicz will finish out their terms. Michelle Collette and Mike Bouchard are interested in serving on the Board. They will be recommended to the Town Manager to be appointed by the Select Board. Mihran Keoseian will be recommended to be re-appointed for a 2<sup>nd</sup> term.

13. While we were closed the Gay Nineties Luncheon which was scheduled will be moved to October of '22. The Luncheon is a wonderful project provided by the Groton Woman's Club and funded by the Friends of the Groton and the Woman's Club. Elders. It is a celebration of Groton residents that turned 90 in the past year. This is the first year since COVID that the celebration will be held.

While The Center was closed transportation was still provided as well as MOW. Paula said that bread donations from Hannafords still arrived and they were delivered to local food banks.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:05PM.

Respectfully submitted by Dottie Zale