**Groton Council on Aging**

**The Groton Center  
163 W Main Street  
Groton, Massachusetts 01450  
Meeting Minutes for June 12, 2023**

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| **Date:** Monday, June 12, 2023 | |
| **Time:** 1:00p.m. | |
| **Location:** The Groton Center | |
| **Attendance: COA Board Members:** Mihran Keoseian, Chair; Michael Bouchard; Michelle Collette; Peter Cunningham; Therese Keoseian; Pascal Miller, Vice Chair; Judith Palumbo O’Brien; Tony Serge; Dottie Zale  **COA Staff:**  Ashley Shaheen, COA Director  **Guests:** Mark Haddad, Town Manager, Kara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant, Harris McWade, COA Board Member Applicant | |
| **Facilitator(s):** Mihran Keoseian | |
| **Recording of Meeting Minutes:** Ashley Shaheen | |
| **Agenda Items** | **NOTES** |
| 1. Welcome & Opening Remarks -- Open Meeting | Mihran Keoseian opened the meeting at 1:01 p.m. |
| 1. Meeting Minutes | Peter made a motion to approve the minutes from the April 10, 2023, COA Board Meeting. Pascal noticed a typo in the May meeting minutes. “Mal 12” was typed but should have been May 12 as noted in section #3. With the correction, Peter Cunningham made a motion to approve the minutes for the May 12, 2023, Board Meeting as amended; Therese Keoseian seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously. |
| 1. COA Department Report—Ashley Shaheen | *See attached Department Report*  A verbal update was shared of the department’s happenings:  Programming: The Select Board and Town of Groton recognized May as “National Older Americans Month” during the Select Board meeting on April 24. A formal proclamation was read during the annual Senior Summer Appreciation event. The first ever “Senior Spirit Week,” May 8 -12, was scheduled with a variety of programming to celebrate and honor all of Groton’s older adults.  Volunteerism: The focus has been on getting the garden ready. Ashley signed off on the Eagle Scout’s proposal for the Bryce’s Eagle Scout Award to include a picnic bench and a new gate. The reinstitution of weekly Garden meet-ups has gone into effect.  Outreach: Nickole continues to plan her monthly National days. She also attended a conference at Nashoba hospital on mental health. Nickole is a key participant in the conversation surrounding the development of the Town’s TREAD program.  Transportation: We welcomed Hank Montanari as a new per diem van driver during the month of May. We have two other applicants interested in driving, too. Peter inquired about Senior Van operating budget for FY23 and the state assessment. Ashley shared that FY23 was a benchmark year as it was the first year that the building has been operational. The budget increased in FY24 to match the State’s assessment. In future years, we may need to advocate for additional funding from the taxpayers to subsidize the state assessment.  Mihran commented that he was excited to hear of Carol Wing was teaching the personal training program. He mentioned that she is an expert in the field of senior fitness. |
| 1. Re-accreditation Update | During the May 12, 2023 COA Board Meeting, the Board approved all of the documents in the google drive to upload into the final application. Ashley shared that the submission deadline is June 30, 2023 and she hoped to finish the application by June 20, 2023. She thanked Pascal for his assistance with the gap analysis to confirm that the documentation was complete. Mihran shared that we were the only COA that approached the process with this level of engagement. Ashley extended her appreciation to all involved and explained the next steps: Upon submittal of the Application, the National Council on Aging (NCOA) will match the COA with peer reviewers to review the application. If we are missing any documentation, we will receive notification and a window of time to submit the missing material, if any. Once this step is completed, we will organize two days of interviews at the Groton Center with the peer reviewers and those involved in the Re-accreditation process. Mihran recommended that prior to the site visit, we all review the information submitted. |
| 1. Building Usage Policy Update | Ashley shared that there are still areas to investigate regarding the draft building use policy. The Town Manager and outside parties continue to explore options and plan to bring additional information to a future board meeting for discussion.  Michelle noted the new signage on the doors to the kitchen. She also provided an update of the Town’s most recent election held at The Groton Center. Michelle shared a concern that an election worker had entered the kitchen despite the signage and the Town Clerk previously indicating that the kitchen was off-limits. Later the election worker notified the Town Clerk’s Office that they had tested positive for COVID. Michelle reiterated that this situation was an example of why we have a Kitchen Policy and that this policy is intended to provide safety of all COA visitors and staff.  Therese commented that the assumption that the spread of COVID at the COA was a result of the kitchen violation that had occurred was inappropriate as COVID could have been transmitted anywhere outside of the kitchen or center and may have occurred off site. Peter and many of the Board members agreed with Therese. Several board members chimed in indicating they would like to keep exploring options for a more liberal policy that might include the presence of a ServeSafe Certified individual (staff, committee member or caterer) if they oversaw the kitchen usage for events.  Michelle recapped her safety concerns and the food code. |
| 1. New COA Board Members | Tony Serge was welcomed to his first meeting on June 12.  Harris McWade and Lois Young are on the Select Board agenda for June 12, 2023, to be appointed to their new positions. Dottie Zale and Judith Palumbo O’Brien were on the agenda to be re-appointed to a second three-year term. Therese Keoseian decided not to be re-appointed to a second three-year term.  There is one current open position on the board.  Ashley thanked the current Board for their dedication and years of service. She looks forward to welcoming new board members and working with the FY 24 Board Members.  Therese thanked Peter and Mihran personally, and on behalf of the Board for their many years of dedication and support to the Groton COA and for their outstanding leadership on numerous initiatives undertaken to expand outreach and benefits for the Groton seniors and our community. Therese also noted that without the hard work and guidance of these Board members, we would not have the Groton Center that we have today. The Board unanimously agreed and offered their sincere thanks.  Mihran shared that this was his last meeting and he will miss working with the COA. |
| 1. Next Meeting | The COA Board will meet in July 2023. Date/time TBA. There will be no meeting in August. |
| 1. Adjourn | Peter Cunningham made a motion to adjourn; Pascal seconded the motion. The board voted unanimously to adjourn at 1:36 p.m. |

Respectfully Submitted

Judith Palumbo O’Brien

July 4, 2023