Groton Council on Aging The Groton Center

163 W Main Street Groton, MA 01450

Meeting Minutes for August 21, 2023

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| **Date:** Monday, August 21, 2023 | |
| **Time:** 10:00 AM | |
| **Location:** The Groton Center | |
| **Attendance**  **COA Board Members:** Michelle Collette; Pascal Miller; Judith Palumbo O’Brien; Tony Serge; Dottie Zale (via Zoom); Michael Bouchard, Harris McWade and Lois Young  **Member vacancies:** One  **COA Staff:** Ashley Shaheen, COA Director  **Members of Public:** None | |
| **Recording of Meeting Minutes:** Michael Bouchard | |
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| **Agenda Items** | **Notes** |
| 1. Open Meeting | Pascal Miller, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:02 AM. The meeting was  recorded on Zoom. One attendee participated via zoom. |
| 2. Approval of July Meeting Minutes | A motion to accept the minutes of the July 10, 2023 meeting was offered. The motion was seconded.  In the July 10 minutes, an action to determine the role of the COA Board Secretary with respect to the taking of minutes and the Board’s by-laws was identified. Discussion on August 21 identified that the Secretary is the “keeper” of the minutes. Board discussion  concluded that the “keeper” role did not preclude another person taking the minutes nor require that the Secretary take minutes. Numerous examples of other boards and |

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|  | committees with alternative minute takers were cited. The Board also discussed asking a staff member or outside volunteer to take minutes. No conclusion was reached.  Vote: The July 10 minutes were accepted unanimously by roll-call vote. |
| 3. COA Screening Sub- Committee Update | Lois Young, a newly appointed Board Member, introduced herself to the group. Lois had a previous commitment which caused her to miss the July 10 meeting. August 21 was her first meeting. Welcome aboard!  Judy Palumbo presented a Screening Subcommittee (Committee) update of the applicant review process for the COA Board’s vacancy. The Committee was comprised of Pascal  Miller, Harris McWade, Ashley Shaheen, and Judy Palumbo. The procedure used by the COA Interview Committee was to give each applicant a 30-minute opportunity to introduce themselves, answer essentially the same 4-5 questions posed by board members and for the applicant to ask questions. The interviews took place on the morning of Wednesday, August 16. The interview process was designed to help the Committee members get to know a little about each applicant, their interest level, background and visions for  enhancements to programs and services offered through the COA. The Committee’s overall goal was to identify and select one applicant to recommend to the full COA Board for the Board’s nomination submission to the Town’s Select Board for formal appointment. See  interview summary below:   * Four applicants were interviewed and their letters of interest are attached. * A secret ballot vote was conducted and yielded a four-way tie. * The Committee then verbalized each candidate’s strengths; with all applicants bringing value to the table. * The Committee then reviewed each candidate’s participation availability - which   helped to narrow the applicants down to two primary candidates: Carole Carter and Alberta “Berta” Erickson.   * A second secret ballot vote was taken and resulted in a 3-1 vote. Carole Carter was voted as the primary candidate to be recommended to the full COA Board and Berta Erickson was recommended as the alternate. |

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|  | * Carol Carter, a long-time resident of Groton brings to the Board experience as a Center Receptionist volunteer, with previous volunteer work related to the school system and fund raising, along with her genuine interest in being a “listening ear” for patrons at the Center.   Pertinent to this discussion, Mike Bouchard announced that he had accepted an offer to sell his house and would be moving from the Town at the end of September, creating an  additional vacancy on the Board.  A first motion was made and seconded to accept the recommendation of Carole Carter, to fill the initial Board vacancy and further recommend that her nomination be submitted to the Town’s Select Board for formal appointment.  Vote: Unanimous approval by roll-call vote.  A second motion was made and seconded to recommend the alternate applicant from the current applicant pool, Alberta Erickson, for appointment to the new vacancy resulting from Mike Bouchard’s resignation, subject to process approval by the Town Manager. Alberta was the alternate primary candidate identified by the Committee.  The COA was unclear if the second vacancy needed to be re-advertised. However, given that the new vacancy occurred before nominations were submitted to the Select Board,  Ashley was asked to seek input from the Town Manager on this recommendation and motion.  Vote: The motion passed by a unanimous roll-call vote. Ashley will confer with the Town Manager.  The Committee was thanked for their good work and all Board members were asked to thank applicants for their interest in the COA when they meet or see the applicants. |

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|  | All applicants were personally thanked by Judy Palumbo and notified of the Committee’s recommendation to nominate Carole Carter to the Select Boards as primary for the initial  vacancy. |
| 4. COA Board Workshop Agenda Review | Tony Serge presented a proposed agenda for the COA Board’s workshop. The workshop will be held in two half-day Monday sessions: October 2 and October 16). *See attached draft*  *Agenda.*  The theme of the first session is “Who We Are”, with Board member introductions and their personal visions to enhanced programming and services at the Center. The group will also discuss Board priorities, roles and expectations of members with guest speakers from the Massachusetts Council on Aging Council.  The second session will focus on member survey feedback, “operationalizing” the strategic plan and growing the Center’s membership.  Ashley arranged to have two facilitators work with us. The facilitators are both Massachusetts Council on Aging members. We are fortunate to receive their participation in our workshop and learn from their leadership and experience. Kelly Burke is the Director of Metro Services and has a background as a COA Director. Donna Popkins also has extensive COA experience.  A discussion of the concept of “*team champions*” teased out that “champions” was not meant to be a competitive sports term, but as a term to identify small teams that would advocate and lead COA strategic plan initiatives.  Harris volunteered to will work with Tony to present the Strategic Plan Review at the second session of the workshop.  Pascal was thanked for his detailed review of the re-accreditation materials. Tony was congratulated on a well thought out workshop agenda. |

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|  | There will be pre-work for all COA Board members prior to the workshop. Pascal will create a google-drive library area for existing documents and ongoing updates. A second area will be set up to house workshop preparation documents. Note that only Pascal and Ashley will have “write/edit/posting” privileges for this folder to facilitate revision control.  The workshop will be held as a public meeting, with limited or no public input. Aside from the Groton Center as a meeting location, the Groton Electric Company meeting room on Station Avenue, bubbled up as an alternative and Michelle volunteered to explore the  availability of Lawrence Academy’s Media Center as another option. |
| 5. Announcements & Town’s Code of Conduct Policy | Michelle announced that the Nashoba Associated Boards of Health will be presenting a session called “What is Public Health” at The Center on September 18 at 12:00 PM.  Ashley asked that Council members please review the new Town Code of Conduct policy, distributed by the Town Clerk via email. |
| 6. Next Meeting and  Adjournment | The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 AM. The next meeting will be on September 18 at 3:00  PM (note time change). |

Respectfully Submitted, Judith Palumbo O’Brien August 23, 2023