**COA Board Meeting Minutes for Monday November 13th, 2023**

**The Groton Center**

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| **Date** | Monday, November 13, 2023 |
| **Time**  | 2:00 p.m. to 3:54 p.m. |
| **Location** | The Groton Center |
| **Board Members in Attendance** | Pascal Miller, Chair Tony Serge, Vice Chair Judith Palumbo O’Brien, SecretaryHarris McWade (via Zoom)Michelle Collette Berta EricksonLois Young Dottie Zale Carole Carter |
| **COA Staff in Attendance**  | Ashley Shaheen, DirectorNändi Munson, Community Engagement Specialist |
| **Guests in Attendance** | Mark Haddad, Groton Town ManagerKara Cruikshank, Executive Assistant  |

**Agenda Items and Notes**

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| **Open Meeting**  | * The meeting was officially started at 2:02 p.m. by Board Chair Pascal Miller.
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| * **Acceptance of Minutes**
 | * Review of Board Meeting Minutes from October 2nd, October 16th, and October 24th Board Meetings. Edits were documented.
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| * **Building Use Policy**
 | * Addition of $100 security deposit in addition to $100/hour rental fee. Food and beverage policy was significantly amended and was reviewed by Board of Health Chair. Nonprofit groups are permitted to fundraise by obtaining proper permits. Access to bathrooms and lobby added. Noted that the Groton Center cannot be used by political groups.
* Bridgette Braley recommends the Food Service permit should be issued to the Town of Groton, instead of to the Groton Council on Aging. Mark Haddad agreed.
* Michelle Collette made a motion to support this updated Building Use Policy.
* A vote was taken; all COA Board members voted in favor of supporting this Building Use Policy.
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| * **NCOA Reaccreditation Update**
 | * Ashley Shaheen shared that Sandra Johnson our Site Reviewer expressed the Groton Center is one of the best she has ever seen. She conducted an exit interview with Ashley Shaheen and Mark Haddad and shared her highly favorable impression of the application, community involvement, COA management, building, department and volunteer program.
* Sandra Johnson shared four recommendations:
1. Pursue opportunities to involve student interns
2. Focus more support on community members experiencing cognitive decline.
3. Focus attention on growing lifelong learning programming.
4. Incorporate more opportunities to collect survey data from participants and community members.
* We hope to receive official re-accreditation status in the New Year.
* The next time the Groton Center is due for review, NCOA will be issuing Certificates of Excellence through a self-evaluation process as opposed to the formal re-accreditation process currently in existence.
* Ashley Shaheen expressed gratitude for all who helped with the reaccreditation process.
* A suggestion was made for the Selectboard to issue a Proclamation at Town Meeting to mark our Re-accreditation status, once received.
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| * **COA Departmental Report**
 | * All Town departments were tasked with presenting two budgets this budget season: one budget for level service, and one budget for an 11% reduction, if the town does not pass an override.
* The budgets are due Monday November 20th
* Town Department heads must present budgets at the Selectboard Meeting Tuesday November 28th at 8:30 a.m.
* The Senior Tax Work off program received 31 applications. The town will identify 30 of these individuals who exhibit the most need, and these individuals will receive a tax abatement for $1,000 for 67 hours of work from December 2023-November 2024.
* Pascal Miller reviewed the TREAD (Tax Relief for Elderly and Disabled) program, which is mandated by the Commonwealth to assist seniors and adults with disabilities stay in their own homes here in town. The Groton TREAD program received $5,000 from Lowell Five Bank to help kickstart the TREAD fund. There is a committee that generates eligibility criteria. There will be a meeting Wednesday November 15th at Town Hall to discuss. Applications will be received in January 2024 and monies will be distributed in March/April 2024.
* Review of Senior SAFE program through the fire department, which provides assistance with File of Life, Resident Lock Boxes, Sand, and replacement of smoke alarm batteries.
* The annual Gibbet Hill Holiday Dinner for Seniors is a partnership with fire and police departments, as well as others. Gibbet Hill is looking for volunteers to join Police and Fire departments to assist with preparing vegetables Wednesday night November 15 at 6:00 p.m.
* Michelle Collette noted two recent Lunch and Learn programs have both been very successful, with strong interest, attendance and engagement.
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| * **Expense Report**
 | Ashley Shaheen reviewed the Expense Report through September 30, 2023 and noted:Reviewed expense report through September 30, 2023. * Formula Grant increased from $12 per senior to $14 per senior.
* The Town budget will be voted on in the Spring.
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| * **Sportsman Club Update**
 | Michelle Collette reported on the Field Trip the Sportsman Club Sub-committee took on Thursday November 9th. * The group observed concerns with the set up and layout of the fitness court, as it did not appear to be accessible to seniors and individuals with disabilities.
* The subcommittee would like to evaluate other options/modifications for the proposed Groton Fitness Court that would be user friendly to older adults and individuals with disabilities as well as the community.
* Several subcommittee members indicated they had envisioned walking paths with fitness stations.
* The group plans to explore the options to modify the Fitness Court plans to be more age appropriate and accessible; looking to encourage usage.
* The next subcommittee meeting is scheduled for Friday December 15th at 9:00 a.m.
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| * **COA Board Resource Manual/Discussion**
 | * Tony Serge reviewed the Table of Contents for the new COA Board Resource Manual, noting that the manuals will be easy to update and add in additional minutes and documents.
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| * **Workshop Part 2 Scheduling/Planning**
 | * The second session of the COA Board Workshop will take place January 8th, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
* The Bylaws, Marketing, and Strategic Plan will be reviewed.
* A Bylaws Subcommittee will be formed in January.
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| **Closing of Meeting** | * Dottie Zale made a motion to close the meeting. Lois Young seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Pascal Miller closed the meeting at 3:54 p.m.
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| **Next Meeting** | * Next meeting was scheduled for Monday December 11th at 1:00 p.m. at the Groton Center.
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Respectfully submitted,

Nändi Munson

November 22, 2023

Judith Palumbo O’Brien

December 4, 2023