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Council on Aging Minutes 04/20/06

The following minutes of the April 20, 2006 Regular Meeting were approved at the Annual Meeting of the COA on May 18, 2006.

ARLINGTON COUNCIL ON AGING

27 Maple Street
 Arlington, MA 02476-4909

Robert Tosi, Jr., Chair
 Paul West, Vice Chair
 Shirley Chapski, Secretary

Regular Meeting of the Council on Aging, April 20, 2006 MINUTES

Place and Time of Meeting: Arlington Senior Center, 27 Maple St., Arlington, 7:30 p.m. Members Present: Robert Tosi, Jr., Ann MacGowan, Mildred Hurd, Paul West, Ruth Palombo, Harry McCabe, Robert Carey, William Carey, and Shirley Chapski. Others Present: John Jope, COA Executive Director; Elisa Lopez, President Arlington Seniors Association; Roland Chaput and George Arena, Committee for the Town of Arlington 200th Anniversary. Quorum Identification/Call to Order: Bob Tosi, Jr. presided and Shirley Chapski, Secretary, kept the minutes. A quorum of 9 was present.

Minutes of the March 23, 2006 Regular Meeting: Harry moved to receive the minutes of the March 23, 2006 meeting, Paul seconded. The following correction was made: p. 1, Unfinished Business, bottom line, delete the word, "resident signatures," and insert: "registered voters." There being no further correction, all voted to approve the minutes, as amended. Motion carried.

Citizens' Open Forum: Roland Chaput, member of the 200th Anniversary Committee, spoke about their fundraising drive, and the many events planned for the bicentennial. He stated that his purpose in coming before the COA board is to raise funds. George Arena talked on the "Countdown to the 200th" Fund Raising Dinner at Sons of Italy Hall on Friday, on Oct. 6, '06. Bob Tosi said their request for a contribution from the COA will be put on the agenda for the next meeting. Roland and George then departed the meeting.

Executive Director's Report: The Executive Director's report is attached hereto and made a part of the minutes. John added the following additional comments:

- COA Geriatric Nurse Specialist Position: Discussion took place on the vacated COA nursing position. Bob Carey moved that we compose a letter to the Town Manager advising him of the desperate need to fill the geriatric nurse position. Paul seconded, all in favor. Motion carried. Harry offered two options: (1) we could go to Finance Committee and request a transfer from the reserve fund, or (2) Town Meeting will be starting soon and we could present a substitute COA budget with additional funds for a nurse. This step would require advance preparation with the selectmen, town manager and finance committee. Ruth proposed using Sevoyan funds to supplement the nurse's salary (which at present is at a very low \$22 to \$28 for 19 hrs. a week with no benefits) as an interim measure, and go to town meeting for next year. A subcommittee (Bob Carey, Bob Tosi, Harry and John) was appointed to meet with the Town Manager.

Health and Human Services: Beginning July 1, 2006, Christine Connolly, Director of the Board of Health, will serve as Director of Health and Human Services. Her office will stay at 27 Maple Street.

- Walk the Rink Program: This program, funded by a grant from Lahey Clinic, will take place at the Veterans Memorial Rink, Arl. beginning May 9 through June 15. Sign up takes place at the COA. There will be physical therapists from the VNA at the rink to help participants.

- April 27, 2006 Student Government Day: Three high school students will be at the COA from 9 to 10:30 a.m. to learn about the COA and the services it has to offer. • Town Day: Town day this year will take place September 8 & 9, 2006.

- Election of COA Officers: The annual election of officers is scheduled for the May 18th board meeting.

- MCOA News: The Governor has flat-lined the Elder Affairs budget for 2007. Presently, Formula Grant funds translate to

\$5.37/elder/year. The MCOA board is asking for a \$2,000,000 increase which would translate to \$7/elder/year in formula grant. The House Ways and Means has approved \$500,000 but the MCOA has decided to go after the full \$2,000,000. This action will require a floor amendment and Rep. Jim Marzilli agreed to lead the charge.

- Joint Conference Nat'l Council on Aging & the Amer. Society on Aging will be held in March 2007 in Chicago.

OTHER REPORTS:

- COA Representative/Liaison to Minuteman Senior Services: Harry reported that all was well. Bob Tosi said there is still an open position for Minuteman and he has put an article in this month's Senior Notes. Dr. Forbes, who will be president next year, is willing to speak with interested candidates.
- COA Representative/Liaison to the Seniors Association: Mildred could not attend the last meeting but Bob Tosi was there and he turned the reporting of the meeting over to Elisa Lopez.
- Arlington Seniors Association Representative to COA: Elisa reported that the ASA is doing well and a fundraising effort is currently underway with letters to local merchants asking for their support. Bob said both boards have a joint task force and are working on plans for the October 14 Health Fair.
- Budget Committee: The committee, Bob T., Shirley and John, have been meeting each month to go over the numbers before presentation at the board meeting, incorporating the committee's, as well as the board's, suggestions to improve the format. One suggestion is to include a column showing prior year YTD so a comparison can be made of how expenditures differ from the previous year and John will have the new format for next month's meeting. John next reviewed the financial report included in the board package. Discussion followed concerning ways to encourage donations and bequests to the COA. Paul moved that the COA provide opportunities for bequests, Ruth seconded. Harry advised that the matter be referred to Town Counsel for his input on the language. All voted in favor. Motion carried.
- Transportation Committee: Bob Carey, John and Ruth met on April 10, 2006 and discussed issues facing the Transportation Enterprise Program and options for helping to solve these issues. By memorandum April 12, 2006 to the board the following recommendations are proposed.

Current Transportation Fees

In-town van rides \$1 per one-way
 Out-of-town van rides \$10 /round trip
 Taxi: \$3/one-way ticket; taxi co. gets \$7.50/one way
 Sanborn Fund is \$30/round trip

Proposed Transportation Fee Changes

In-town van rides \$2 per one-way
 Out-of-town van rides \$15/round trip
 Taxi: \$4/one-way ticket
 Sanborn Fund: no change

John met with COA staff recently to review the proposed transportation fee increases. Overall, the COA staff is strongly opposed to raising client cost, their argument being that most of the clients requiring transport are low to moderate income people and it would impose a financial burden on them. The staff suggested that Sevoyan subsidy funds be used to augment transportation as needed. John doesn't feel the increases aren't justified but it will be hard to ask people to pay more than they are used to paying. After discussion. Harry moved to approve the fee changes to be effective July 1, 2006 subject to the condition that any increase in the funds be reserved for transportation purposes only and not be used for any other purpose; Ruth said the changes will be reevaluated in six months. Bob Carey seconded the motion. John commented on the enterprise program setup. An enterprise fund is designed to make enough money to pay its own expenses which this will never do and John doesn't think the town expects it to. However, in other towns van purchases, maintenance, salaries for the drivers are paid by the municipality and not by the COA budget. He doesn't think there is any possibility of spinning the van service off from the Transportation Enterprise Fund and putting it under the municipality where tax dollars would pay for it. The Transportation Enterprise Fund was originally designed with the Dial-a-Ride taxi program only and it would still support that if that were the only thing that was in it. John said it would be a hard sell to convince the town to pick up the vans since it costs \$180 a day on the average to run and he thinks that's the only way he can think of to balance this. Bob Tosi said the Transportation Committee decided to make no change to the Sanborn Fund transportation fee, but he feels charging the full value for running the van to take cancer patients to their treatments is an option to be considered if the fare is greater than the standard \$30. Otherwise, we are subsidizing the Sanborn Fund that is supposed to be taking care of these medical trips.

Bob also stated that with any increase in fees we do everything possible to reduce the cost of running the vans. He suggested as part of these fee increases that we require COA employees to bring the vans for basic maintenance to the town yards. He understands that it could be an inconvenience for them and incur delay but we have three vans to rotate and only on Wednesday do we have two vans in process. We should do what we can to reduce costs. After discussion, Paul moved to amend the motion to approve the proposed transportation fee changes as recommended by the Transportation Committee o that the starting date of the transportation fee increases be effective August 1, 2006 subject to the condition that the funds be restricted to the Transportation Program. Harry moved the question, Bill Carey seconded, eight in favor, Mildred abstained. Motion carried. John will inform Patsy Kraemer and the Town Manager of the board's decision.

- Sevoyan Bequest Committee: Harry said the next meeting will be Tuesday, May 9, 2006 at 7:30 pm at the senior center.
- Senior Outreach Task Force: The task force consists of all 4 agencies in the Senior Center with the goal of reaching every senior in Arlington by the end of 2007. The next meeting will be Friday, May 5, 2006.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- Status of COA Warrant Articles: Bob attended the recent warrant review. The Finance Committee voiced their support for the Harry Barber Community Service program in the amount of \$7500 which would provide ten positions for next year. Bob plans to put together

a two-sided promo piece, one side outlining the Harry Barber community service article and the other side giving information on the Minuteman Senior Services warrant article which does not have a recommendation. In order to go forward at town meeting somebody would have to put forward a substitute motion to support the article in the affirmative. Harry said in regard to the warrant article on the COA budget, we should be seriously thinking of offering an amendment to provide realistic funds for a COA nurse. Bob also spoke on the warrant article about tax exemptions for the elderly which was put in by the Board of Assessors to increase the maximum income qualification from \$20,000 to \$40,000 and to reduce the interest rate from 8% to 0. The Selectmen supported it but Fin Com has not.

NEW BUSINESS: Harry asked if the board would be interested in having the executor of the Sevoyan Bequest, Atty. Richard Keshian, attend the May 9, 2006 meeting of the Sevoyan Bequest Committee to clarify the intent of the bequest. John distributed copies of a letter from Mr. Keshian to Alex Moschella of the COA Board dated September 22, 1997 concerning the intent of the bequest.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, Harry moved to adjourn; Shirley seconded; all in favor. Adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Shirley Chapski, Secretary

ARLINGTON COUNCIL ON AGING
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

April 20, 2006

the mission of the council on aging is to provide advocacy and support services
to help arlington elders live dignified and independent lives

1. Peg Allen, our Dial-a-Ride Clerk, is home recuperating from a hospital stay. She is in good spirits and hopes to return to work in the near future. She's in good spirits but not pleased with being so unable to get out and around.
2. The Council on Aging Geriatric Nurse Specialist position is being advertised. It has been reduced from a benefited 21-hour position to a non-benefited 19-hour position.
3. Our monthly podiatry clinic will continue but other health/wellness offerings (blood pressure clinics, muscle-strengthening series) will be discontinued until this position is filled. The student nurses will staff our twice-weekly blood pressure clinics through the end of April.
4. Met with Operation ABLE, negotiated a new agreement with them to renew our Senior Aide's involvement at the COA in an expanded role.
5. Christine Connolly, Board of Health Director, will assume the position of Director of Human Services as of July 2006. She will also remain as Director of the BOH. The Recreation Division will split off from Human Services and will become its own department.
6. Participated in a Flu Pandemic Tabletop Exercise at the Community Safety Building in late March.
7. No COA vans were in operation on Tuesday April 4 as the drivers were all at a required training session.
8. Our student interns are nearing the completion of their field placement here. The student nurses will end their involvement here in early May. Mary Anne McGuirk, Social Work Intern will end the first week in May. Marilyn Richards, Pastoral Intern, will end May 24th.
9. Final details for the "Walk the Rink" Program are being attended to. The program gets under way May 9th at the Veterans Memorial Rink. Any and all board members are invited to participate and to model the usefulness of our services.

Next Regular Meeting, May 18, 2006 at 7:30 p.m.

