



Arlington Council on Aging

Minutes

Date: Thursday December 16, 2021 Time: 6:00 pm

Present: Michael Quinn, Kristine Shah, Laura Liscio, Sheila Connerney, Nancy Feeney, Pat Baillieul, Ann

Fitzgerald, Rick Fentin, Mara Klein Collins

Associates: Rick Fentin, Bob Tosi and Karen Nichols

Minuteman Board: Ann Bruhn, Marjorie Vanderhill

BOS Liaison: Steve DeCoursey

Location: This meeting was conducted virtually via Zoom, following the rules set forth by the Governor's Executive Order on Remote Participation.

Meeting was called to order by Michael Quinn at 6:02pm.

1. Call to order
2. Citizen's Open Forum -- None
3. Minutes of the November 2021 meeting for approval – Approved. (Sheila motioned to approve, Laura seconded)
4. Executive Director's Report – See below.

Discussion regarding whether the COA should institute a vaccine mandate for access to in-person services. Board generally agrees that a vaccine mandate is a good idea in order to protect Arlington's seniors from Covid-19 but more work will need to be done on the language around this.

5. Report of the Chair -- None

6. Minuteman Senior Services Report

MSS wants to downsize to a smaller office area to save money.

Staff and volunteer vaccinations are per OSHA requirements.

Need for home care workers is huge.

Working with EOE from compliance to quality approach. Working on 3 year quality plan.

Looking for more Board members. You can fill out the volunteer section on the web site if interested.

7. ASA Liaison Report -- None

8. Old Business -- None

9. New Business -- None

10. Other Community Announcements -- None

11. Adjourn – 6:50pm (Pat motioned to adjourn, Laura seconded)

Next meeting: January 20, 2022

Executive Director's Report

Kristine Shah

- I. Center Renovation
 - a. The latest update from the Department of Planning and Community Development has the project fully completed (with the exception of the kitchen) by January 31, 2022. We have asked Red Thread to install all furniture during the first week of February.

- II. COA Services and Program Update
 - a. In-person, indoor programming has been a welcome opportunity for our seniors. All of our in person classes and programs have been well attended and residents are enjoying using the town hall spaces until our center is completed.
 - b. Holiday Coffee Hour was held December 9 in the Lions Hearing room as a festive get together, coffee, pastries and good cheer was shared with a great mix of residents and COA staff.
 - c. 100 isolated seniors received a hot turkey dinner delivered on Thanksgiving morning thanks to over 50 volunteers and the hard work of our Volunteer Coordinator, Michelle. Boston Market was the caterer and meals were funded by Arlington EATS and the Retired Mens Club of Arlington.
 - d. 50 Warm Wishes gift bags have been stuffed and will be delivered to residents in need between December 17-24. Each bag contains personal items, a special snack, a gift from Maxima, and a CVS gift card, sponsored by Coldwell Banker.
 - e. Our walking club moved from McClennen Park to Burlington Mall this month and will continue there until the spring. We are providing free rides on the van to the mall for this weekly program.
 - f. International Intergenerational Tea Talk with and LGBTQIA+ programs will merge in January to have a combined event at Town Hall.
 - g. We have seen a steady increase in fuel assistance requests this month and have been assisting residents with their applications and also relief through the emergency heating assistance fund.
 - h. We have also seen a steady increase in calls for support from APD and families in distress (mental and financial). These issues are all addressed by our social workers as the cases are brought to our attention.
 - i. To complement our LINKS snow shoveling program this year, a local Life Scout will be assisting us with a new project, which he needs to complete to become an Eagle Scout. This project will allow local seniors to receive a delivered bucket of sand/salt and a scoop at their door step to use through the snowy months.

- j. AARP volunteers will assist residents with their taxes again this year in person; appointments will be Fridays between Feb 4 and April 15. Residents can call for appointments after January 1.

III. Transportation

- a. We are in the process of recruiting more Volunteer Medical Escort drivers to get our seniors to medical appointments outside of Arlington. We are turning to Uber more and more after repeated challenges with the taxi company. Due to driver shortages and other issues, we have received many complaints from taxi riders. We are working with the Sanborn Foundation to see if it would be possible for them to set up an arrangement with a different taxi company for cancer related rides.

IV. Age Friendly/Dementia Friendly

- a. The long awaited Age/Dementia Friendly Action Plan is due to us by the end of this month.

V. COVID-19

- a. The town has held 3 adult COVID-19 vaccine booster clinics. Homebound vaccine boosters were given December 15 and 16 with the help of our COA Nurse, Joanne Sliney, and a team of volunteers. We also continue to offer free transportation to seniors who are receiving their vaccines/boosters at local pharmacies. The Arlington Housing Authority is conducting their own booster clinics throughout January in their individual buildings.
- b. COA staff continue to be highly involved in the pre-registrations and logistics at each clinic. Joanne Sliney is also assigned as a weekly contact tracer for the town.

Link to COA newsletter: <https://www.arlingtonma.gov/departments/health-human-services/council-on-aging/senior-newsletter>