

**Carlisle Council on Aging Board Meeting**  
**Clark Room Town Hall, 66 Westford Street, Carlisle MA**  
**March 22, 2022 Minutes**

**Board Members Present:** Verna Gilbert, Maxine Crowther, Sally Hayen, Ann James, Ann Quenin, Elisabeth Bojarski, Abha Singhal

**Associate Members Present:** John Ballantine

**COA Staff Present:** Joan Ingersoll, Carol Grueneich

**Guests:** Mary Cheever, Toni McBride

**Friends Representative:** Nancy Jaysane

The in-person meeting was called to order at 10:30 a.m. by Chair Ann Quenin.

**Introductions:** Potential board member Toni McBride was introduced.

**Secretary Minutes:** A **motion** was made by Maxine Crowther to accept the February 22, 2022 minutes submitted by Verna Gilbert. It was seconded and carried by voice vote.

**Director Report:**

- A **motion** was made by Verna Gilbert to accept the March 22, 2022 Director's Report; it was seconded and carried by voice vote.
- There will be a Women's Breakfast in April and a Veterans' Breakfast in May.
- The in-person Shamrock Shindig was very successful. The March 12 CCHS St. Patrick's Day drive-thru had 120 seniors registered.
- A Volunteer Appreciation Lunch is scheduled for May 5 at the Congregational Church, catered by a Lexington restaurant.
- Day trips are being offered and in-person lunches are scheduled to resume in May.
- The COA provided 125 rides in February and have 132 scheduled thus far in March. The FLOW vehicle provided 15 rides in February, with two being to the expanded geographical service area. Two Boston rides are scheduled for March. Meals on Wheels volunteers delivered 152 meals to 10 households in January. A new part-time driver, Gretchen Gallimore has been hired. Myriam looked at the new accessible van we will be getting through LRTA in the fall to replace the FLOW vehicle.
- Carol and Joan met with the Concord-Carlisle Community Chest regarding our Innovation Grant for telehealth mental health services. Decisions will be made in May.
- Carol and Joan met with the ARPA committee to discuss pending proposals as well as additional areas where we could request ARPA support. The final rules issued by the Treasury Department increased how funding could be used. While premium pay is not currently supported by the Select Board, the committee will consider other ways of recognizing the COA drivers, such as gift cards. They are also considering supporting the mental health telehealth proposal. The COA also submitted proposals of \$10,000 to support the new Heart to Home Meals program and \$53,000 to provide rental assistance to Benfield Farms residents spending more than 30% of their income on housing. Joan is also working with the Carlisle Affordable Housing Trust regarding Benfield Farms rental assistance.

- Carol is holding monthly office hours at Benfield and Village Court to make it easier for residents at these locations to access social work services.
- The COA created a more comprehensive benefits brochure that includes services to residents of all ages as well as more information on available senior tax programs. This brochure will be widely distributed after the COA name change vote at April Town Meeting. The newsletter will now be mailed to all town residents and will have a Family Section.
- Joan will meet with the new interim Town Administrator next week.

### **Social Worker Report**

- The Community Services Work Group has its fourth meeting February 28. Attendees included Chief Sorrows, Linda Fantasia, Public Health Nurse Trish McGean, Father Bill from St. Irene Church, and Amy Smack from Carlisle Public School. Discussions included working with the fire department to make updated smoke detectors and Knox boxes available to homes wishing them.
- Heart to Homes Meals have now been delivered for four weeks and received enthusiastically. The meals are free to seniors; the COA pays for them, using grants when possible.
- Carol has established contacts with CCHS counselors who inquired about possible support for a family. These contacts will be useful in the future.
- Carol is assisting a frail senior with moving to assisted living.
- The fuel assistance deadline was extended by two weeks and Carol is completing the forms. About 10 seniors applied this year, as compared with 1 or 2 last year. Many are impacted by the increased cost of heat and gasoline. The COA requested the use of \$2,200 unused from last year's Friends grant for additional fuel assistance.

### **Financial Report**

- Jerry is away but Joan reported that as of March 11, we have expended 63% of our General Fund allocation and 81% of our grant funds.

**Minuteman Senior Services (MMSS):** Sally was unable to log in for the last meeting. She will not be doing this next year, so if anyone is interested, they should contact Sally or Ann Quenin.

**Friends of Carlisle Council on Aging:** Nancy said that the Friends Annual Meeting will be at St. Irene Church on May 22, with Fire Chief Brian Sorrows as the speaker. Record donations are still being received. The Friends donated funds to the Carlisle Playground project for chairs and tables. The Friends are beginning their nominating process for next year.

### **Old/New Business:**

- Community Center: There was spirited discussion about what to do next regarding a Community Center on the Goff property. Currently, there are many other town projects that will use millions of dollars of town funds that are ahead of a community center, which is still mightily desired by the COA. There was general agreement that space and facility requirements should be addressed comprehensively so the town can adequately plan to meet the needs of all stakeholders. The new Carlisle Master Plan outlines space needs by department. The COA needs an additional 3,000-4,000 square feet of space for

programming for the short term. One suggestion was that if the Police get a new building and those currently on the first floor of Town Hall, except the COA, move to the old Police building, then the COA could use the first floor of Town Hall for its needs. This would not be available for some time so it was mentioned that it would be very helpful if the COA could have use of the Clark Room now during the day. This would alleviate some of the space issues for the short term and would also allow for drop-in socializing space for seniors as well as programs, exercise classes, and much more. Joan will speak to Dave Model about making this happen. John Ballantine and Joan will write a position paper outlining current COA space requirements. The COA wants to be fiscally responsible but does have urgent space needs; 30% of the town population is seniors 60+.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be Tuesday, April 26, the fourth Tuesday, at 10:30 a.m. The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

**Documents Provided:**

- Meeting agenda
- Minutes of February 22, 2022 meeting
- March 22, 2022 Director report

Submitted by Verna Gilbert, Secretary and approved on April 26, 2022