

Council on Aging Board Meeting  
Ludlow Senior Center  
228 State Street  
Wednesday, September 20, 2023

Present: J. Zepke, D. Peacey, R. Forti, B. Mishol, B. Radowski, H. Grabowski, D. Johnson, J. DaCruz, F. Krzanik  
Excused: K. Martin, F. Barrosa. Absent: J. DaCruz

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**I. Roll Call** – The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by Chairperson D. Peacey

**II. Secretary's Report**

a. Minutes from the August 16, 2023 meeting were reviewed and no changes were made. M/S: B. Mishol/R. Forti. All in favor.

**III. Treasurers Report**

a. FY 24 Budget Status: There was general discussion about the status of the budget; J. Zepke reviewed which items are funded by the Town of Ludlow (salaries, meals, van, and capital improvements) and which items were supported by various grants. Also discussed sources of revenue which are returned to the town. She noted that the lunch program has returned approximately \$10000 to the town in the past two months. \$75,000 is budgeted for nutrition annually but approximately \$60000 is returned annually based on current revenue. General discussion regarding subsidized senior housing and that there is central screening and assignment in Massachusetts (not by individual towns).

**IV. Director's Report**

a. Grant Updates: MCOA received \$1.54 million for Service and Incentive Grants for COA hybrid programs. COAs may apply for up to \$100,000 for technology and training to offer online programming. Zepke decided against submitting a request for this grant as there had not been a lot of interest in the hybrid programs at Ludlow in the past. However, they will see how other communities use this technology and may reconsider in the future. MCOA will also receive funds for SIG grants (Service Incentive Grants); there are eight types and include topics such as senior center modifications, music, art, etc. Zepke or Heather will attend the bidders conference to get more information about what types of programs this grant could support.

MCOA will release funds for a new behavioral health grant; will consider re-applying for this grant for 2024. Zepke noted that these grants should be released earlier as money must be spent by June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024. This is a hardship as programs must be set up and implemented very quickly to assure that funds are utilized by deadline.

b. Center Numbers: Attendance remains high at the center but are a little higher during summer months. The lunch attendance is generally between 120-150 daily but going to as high as 200 on holidays and special occasions. Attendance at extended hours on Tuesdays varies depending on what activities are held. Beginning in October, transportation on Tuesday evenings will be restricted to travel to and from the Senior Center. No one had utilized travel on Tuesday evenings for other reasons (appointments, trips, etc.). The part time driver will remain per diem so that he can be scheduled to cover absences of other drivers due to sickness or vacation.

c. Fall Classes and Activities: There are 4 new classes/activities beginning in October. These include a weekly mindful meditation class, a new support group "Better Together", personal training for interested seniors in the gym, and a 4-week program entitled

"Ageless Grace" run by JGS which will include music and exercise. RSVP Healthy Bones and Balance and Boomer Boot Camp classes are so popular that they continually have people on waiting lists.

d. New Senior Center Staff: Gary Spear was hired as new dispatcher and has started in past month. He had previously worked at Comcast Communications for 27 years and has also worked as a professional clown. He is currently being oriented to his new job and welcomed by all staff.

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e. ALICE Training: Active Shooter Training will be held at the Senior Center on October 20<sup>th</sup> from 2-4pm for staff. The Center will be closed during this time.

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f. It was noted that the senior center has lost their usual SHINE volunteer. In the interim, Deb Johnson will try to cover this function to assist seniors in their selection of plans. Open enrollment season begins October 15<sup>th</sup> and goes through December. In addition, Lambert will be working on assisting seniors for applying for fuel assistance (programs begins November and runs through April).

## V. Chairman's Report

a. Policy Manual: B. Mishol said the work group is making steady progress and the work group meets every two weeks. He continues to be optimistic that it will be completed by the end of 2023. The full Board will review the final draft and it will be sent to Town Administrator Marc Strange as well for review once approved by COA.

b. COA Goals/Strategic Plan Discussion: Members discussed development of a 1, 3, 5-year plan and a process for developing it. K. Green has volunteered to lead the discussion on this topic. It was suggested that we also consider the COA Mission statement and perhaps by-laws as we develop the plan. D. Peacey will forward the current Mission statement and the by-laws to all members by email (including the draft revisions of the by-laws developed by a previous group in 2012). It was noted that the by-laws were quite outdated and needed revision. Strategic plan will be on agenda of the October meeting when all members are present for discussion.

## VI. Visitation

a. K. Green from the Friends of the Senior Center reported on the successful fund-raising project which occurred during the FESTA. She noted that the Ludlow Police presence at the Senior Center parking lot was very helpful during this event. Proceeds will help fund the proposed scholarship fund for Ludlow residents seeking to pursue a career enhancing the lives of older adults. This was previously approved by the Friends and the bylaws were changed to include it.

## VII. Adjournment: 5:30 p.m. M/S: R. Mishol/R. Forti. All in favor.

*The next Board Meeting will be at 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, October 18, 2023.*

Respectfully submitted,

D. Peacey, Chair, COA