

Town of Natick
Council on Aging Board Committee
Community-Senior Center, 117 East Central Street
Monday, April 08, 2019, 7:00PM – 9:00PM

Minutes

Board Members in Attendance: William Grome, Chair; Andrew Eschtruth, Vice Chair; Elaine Ostroff, Secretary; Bobbi Ciarfella, Harriet Merkwowitz, Sal Pandolfo, Sue Peters, Connie Pitt, Judy Sabol

Board Members Absent: Judy Keefe

Associate Members Present: Karen Oakley

Associate Members Absent: Cari Ryding

COA Staff: Susan Ramsey, Director, Council on Aging

Guests: Sue Salamoff, Selectman, Town of Natick

Representatives from other Boards present: Mary Jane Burgess as representative for Friends of Natick Senior Center

Visitor: Shirley Magnarelli attended meeting with possible interest in COA Board

Notes:

1. William Grome, Chair, opened the meeting at 7:02 pm
2. Public Concerns – Sue Salamoff proposed an agenda item for April 16 Board of Selectman (BOS) meeting and sent to all department heads and committee chairs to recommend all town departments and committees conclude business at 11pm Monday through Friday. Many town board meetings have been running very late. Email Selectman@natick.ma.gov if you wish to provide input.
3. Guest Speaker: Selectman Sue Salamoff, Spring Town Meeting Article 20 Home Rule Petition: Means Tested Senior Tax Exemption
 - a. Home rule petition must be approved by State Legislature. Town of Sudbury has home rule petition for similar provision since 2014. Wayland has provision based on circuit breaker program. Money comes from overlay (all tax exemption programs). Need to get funding details clarified on current practice in both Wayland and Sudbury.
 - b. BOS agreed to sponsor as a warrant article. Revenue neutral for the town.
 - c. BOS decided to study means tested exemption. Look at possibilities for how it is funded. Senior Property Taxation Exemption sub-committee to study topic composed of 1 BOS, Director COA, 1 assessor, 3 community members at large. BOS recommend referring the article back to BOS for study. Town Meeting starts April 9.
 - d. What is the possible pool of eligible Natick seniors? Would need resources to do the means test eligibility.

- e. Communication of tax exemptions will be provided but not until after approved at Town Meeting and the State Legislature. Concern that many people are not aware of possible exemptions. Possibly send out with Tax Bills. Provide full range of available exemptions, deferrals, etc. Good to have someone like SHINE volunteers to help seniors make an informed decision on various tax benefit programs for eligible seniors.
- f. Susan Ramsey questioned how trusts impact eligibility. Eric Henderson, new tax assessor, will speak at next COA board meeting on all Senior tax programs.
- g. **Action:** Anyone interested in serving on sub-committee, let Sue Salamoff know.

4. Council on Aging Director, Susan Ramsey

- a. Discussion – Age Friendly Communities: Sue Salamoff made a recommendation at BOS meeting that COA look at Age Friendly Community designation. Study how different communities have addressed. Handout – 8 domains on flower. Good livability criteria and checklist. Assess how Natick is doing. Several MA cities and towns are age friendly. Brookline has a group that created non-profit – Brookline CAN (Community Aging Network). Many directions this can head. Consider adhoc committee or within a subcommittee of COA to begin study of best practices to provide a platform to launch. “Great place to grow up and grow old.” BOS wants a proposal from the COA whether Natick should be certified. Priority of the Governor of Massachusetts. Who certifies? And what’s the benefit and cost of certification? Or should it be aspirational guidance. Possibly helpful to other departments throughout Natick. Need to call it “All-age” friendly
- b. Other: Harriet, Connie, Karen and Susan met with subset of Friends of Natick Senior Center Board. 2 more meetings scheduled to share current definitions/roles.

5. Chair’s Report – William Grome

- a. Review 2030 + Master Plan Goals + Recommendations: Executive Summary provided of items that concern COA. **Action:** Read entire report for discussion at next month’s meeting. Full report is available online. Bobbi suggested that the town web site should remove some of the older materials.
- b. Other: Thank you to all volunteers during National Volunteer week. Also, thank you for the volunteers that helped with the 50th anniversary breakfast.

6. Liaison Reports

- a. Friends of the Natick Community-Senior Center – Judy Keefe: Mary Jane reported that the Friends are considering investment options for some of the checking account.
- b. Commission on Disability – Elaine Ostroff: Committee is very small right now and needs more members.
- c. BayPath Elder Services - Harriet Merkwowitz: Looking to expand the board to include more diverse members.

7. Sub-Committee Reports

- a. Rules of Governance – Sal Pandolfo: next meeting schedule for May
 - b. Diversity – Cari Ryding: Cari resigning due to professional responsibilities. Cari will try to recommend a person to fill the position. Submitted letter of resignation. Sal made motion, Judy Sabol 2nd, 9-0-0 motion passed. Chair and Director will send a letter. Bill made motion, Sue Peters, 2nd, 9-0-0 to send letter.
 - c. Housing – Bobbi Ciarfella: Met in May. Look for volunteers to train on taping for Pegasus broadcast. Recommend two sessions this fall.
8. COA Board Concerns – loved the breakfast, consider whether to do a dementia-friendly lunch. Requires a lot of preparation. Dementia friendly usually required to be free. Possibly once a month?
9. Director Concerns – Not doing anything new and different. Down 2 staff and Jemma is leaving so concerned. Parking lot very full. Don't have the capacity to take on new programs. Earliest start May 1 for clerical. Staff member for conversation project will be 19 hours per week and on site Tuesday and Thursday. Still bring new ideas.
10. Secretary's Report – Minutes of March 11, 2019. Correct Pandolfo, Harriet Merkwitz made the motion, Sue Peters seconded the motion, motion passed 9-0-0.
11. Adjourn – 8:37pm: Sal Pandolfo made the motion, Harriet Merkwitz seconded, unanimously approved (9-0-0).