

**Northampton Council on Aging
Meeting Minutes DRAFT
January 9, 2020**

Northampton Senior Center, 67 Conz Street, Northampton, MA 01060

Present: Gerriann Butler, Benjamin Capistrant, Cynthia Langley, Michael Ford, Dennis Helmus, Jeanne Hoose, Deborah Epstein, Kathy Pekala Service, Kathie Bredin, Marie Westburg, Jae Casella, Laura Scott
Excused: Robert Dionne, Donna Park
Unexcused: Casey Fowler

Call to Order

- Gerriann Butler called the meeting to order at 3:33 PM.

Public Session – There were approximately thirty-three members the public in attendance. At the outset of the public session, Gerriann Butler requested that members of the public who wished to speak, print their name on the sign-in sheet which was being passed around the room. Six members of the public signed up to speak. Gerriann thanked members of the public and advised protocol for the public session:

- The Council would listen, take notes, and take under advisement all questions, concerns, and comments but would not respond during this session.

The public session lasted approximately 20 minutes.

Following is a list of speakers and a summary of their comments:

Peter Jones, 105 Brierwood Drive, Florence, MA 01062

Peter would like to know if TRIAD will set up a program to have knox boxes (fire department access box) installed on residences of senior.

Elaine Williams, 286 Rocky Hill Road, Florance, MA 01062

Elaine requested that the paperback book sale be brought back to the Center.

Ron Verville, Easthampton, ma

Ron had a question about whether the rules and policies of the Center are published.

Kim Lambert, 97 Pine Edge Dr. Northampton, MA 01060

Kim stated that sub-committee notice, minutes and video could not be found on the city website. She questioned whether the lack of transportation for medical appointments was an age friendly outcome and requested that policies/guidelines be dialed back. She called on the Mayor to redirect the focus on making the Center more age friendly.

Peggy Ensor, 42 Indian Hill Road, Northampton, MA 01062

Peggy requested that the draft of Center guidelines be made available to patrons for feedback. She also requested a process by which complaints be directed to a neutral party for review.

Gloria Parker, 40 Orchard St. Northampton, MA 01060

Gloria stated that she is not happy with some of the changes, like the ending of the book sale and Mary's sale.

Review and approval of the minutes from the previous meeting:

Two clerical errors were corrected and one clarification was made to an announcement. Cynthia Langley made a motion to accept the minutes. Deborah Epstein seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by the Council.

Announcements:

None:

Old Business: The public notice regarding NCOA meetings, complaints, public record revision comments.

- Robert raised a concern about anonymous suggestions; Marie Westburg responded that while it is not possible to respond personally to anonymous suggestions, she reads all suggestions. The FAQ's are updated if there are repeat comments or suggestions. The example given was the pilot punch card system. Jeanne Hoose recommended striking "Anonymous communications will not be considered".
- Jeanne recommended public notice should positively state the role of the COA; Marie stated concerns should follow organizational protocol and be brought to her and the COA, not the Mayor.

New Business:

- Michael Ford recommends giving each board member an opportunity to speak at the beginning of each NCOA meeting. Dennis Helmus stated this can be added to the agenda as the public has a right to know. Geriann clarified that information should be announcements versus conversation.
- Jeanne began a discussion regarding the use of the word "policy" (Ex. Outside Food Policy). Suggestions were made to replace the word "policy" with the word "guideline".

Director's Report:

- Marie Westburg covered the contents of her monthly report to the COA board. Topics included updates on suggestions/feedback provided by Council members in previous meetings., updates on staffing, Guidelines Booklet, Code of Conduct, Standards of Independence, Visitor Policy, Coffee Shop-snacks, 3mth Fitness Card System Pilot, Bid posted for Fitness Contract, EARN Website, On-boarding of Credit Card payment system, Coffee with the Director updates, Q & A Book updates, Partnerships with VNA, Northampton Neighbors, Forbes Library, Umass, Smith College, Big Y, Holyoke Community College, etc. Feb Program Coordinator Chats, New Programs, Tax Work Off Program, Young at Heart Chorus Fundraiser, Transportation: New vehicles, Survey, etc.

Other Business:

- Jeanne Hoose requested clarification on whether there were any shortfalls or goals for fundraising. Marie explained that the City of Northampton provides funding for all but

\$5k for the chef's salary. The \$5K is raised through fees for lunches and catering. The transportation program is funded sufficiently but we continue to look for ways to make it more efficient and cost effective. Dennis Helmus inquired into whether or not we have a way of subsidizing meals. Marie explained that we are not permitted to subsidize meals because of the land lease but would like to see a sliding scale and is looking at local organization sponsorships.

- Dennis announced that Northampton Community TV is responsible for airing videos and delays are not attributed to the City.

Assistant Director's Report:

Jae Casella reported that they are working on the development of two groups. One is a focus group that will explore the idea of what it means to be a welcoming and warm environment. This group will be made up of a cross section of volunteers, staff, council members and patrons. The other group is a workshop group around volunteer appreciation.

Adjournment:

Dennis made a motion to adjourn. Cynthia seconded the motion. The motion was carried by the council. The meeting was adjourned at 4:40 pm.

Next NCOA Council Meeting: Thursday, February 13, 2020, at 3:30 PM at the Northampton Senior Center.

Respectfully submitted by _____ Jae J. Casella