

Harvard Council on Aging
Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, July 28, 2020
Virtual meeting via Zoom

Present: Beth Williams, Chet Hooper, Fran Maiore, Guy Oliva, Carl Sciple,
Kim Schwarz, COA Director Debbie Thompson, recorder/alternate
Connie Larrabee
Select Board liaison Lucy Wallace, FCOA member Barbara Cerva,
Harvard Press reporter Joan Eliyesil
Absent: Lynne Musto-Pesa, Cathy Walker

The meeting was convened at 4:01 p.m.

The minutes of the June 16, 2020 board meeting were approved as written.

Treasurer's Report

The account balances as of 6/29/20:

Revolving Funds	\$ 6,233.67
MART	\$10,487.51
Payroll	\$ 13,675.71
Gift account	\$ 90,619.65 (\$7,000 reserved for kitchen)
Formula grant	\$ 145.42
New van costs	\$ 13,989.48

The balances that remained in the payroll and new van accounts at the end of the fiscal year June 30 will revert back to the town and become part of fiscal 2020 free cash. Lucy advised Debbie to include wording in next year's budget request reminding the Select Board and Finance Committee that this year's appropriations were not fully spent because of COVID restrictions.

At least some of the money in the gift account is reserved for kitchen improvements and could be used to get a dishwasher or for other upgrades.

Director's Report – Debbie Thompson

COA fitness classes are continuing via Zoom although it might be possible to hold small classes outside. The Zoom yoga class has attracted some new members who say they prefer being able to participate from home.

Some COAs are moving toward opening their buildings at 25% capacity but at Hildreth House that would mean only 4-5 people in the dining room. The porch can hold roughly 16 with adequate social distancing, so the men's group will meet there this week on a trial basis. Debbie will distribute a document outlining the requirements for gatherings on the porch. The main restriction is limited access to the building, for use of the downstairs bathroom only. Otherwise, Hildreth House is still closed to the public.

Debbie has been looking into possibilities for using other space around Hildreth House for outdoor activities, and has spoken to Tim Bragan, who suggested erecting a tent near the porch for overflow seating. The Lions Club might be able to help find a suitable tent we could use temporarily.

The number of van rides is increasing as more medical and dental offices open up. The van can carry only one passenger at a time (plus an aide, if needed) until the Board of Health approves an increase in van capacity.

Scott is still delivering food from Loaves&Fishes to anyone who doesn't want to drive there. There are no age or income limits. COA staff members will all be taking vacation time in August but the building and events will be covered. Debbie will be off the week of August 10-14.

COMING EVENTS (all events held via Zoom)

Friday, August 7 Social media computer class, 11:30 a.m.

Tuesday, August 11 Vet Café 9 a.m.

Tuesday, August 11 Story Slam 1 p.m.

Thursday, August 20 Lobster Roll Grab& Go 2 p.m.

Thursday, August 27 Nutrition during COVID, 10 a.m.

Phase 2 – Beth Williams

The Capital Planning and Investment Committee has asked whether the COA wants to discuss the possibility of a less costly alternative to the \$4.3million expansion of Hildreth House that was voted down at Town Meeting and Town Election in June. Guy Oliva, who led the Phase 2 design effort, said the defeated proposal was designed to meet COA needs and it wouldn't make sense to propose a smaller addition that wouldn't meet our space requirements. And to come up with a revised plan, the COA would need more money for an architect, which it would be unlikely to get from the Select Board this year.

After a brief discussion, board members agreed there are too many unknowns to push for a reconsideration this year, but it's important to keep the project alive by publicizing the COA's need for more space. And the board will seek to determine whether the Phase 2 project is now anywhere on the town's long-term capital plan, and if not, how to get it included in the plan again.

Lucy suggested a meeting with the Select Board in the fall to report on the difficulty of maintaining adequate programs with limited space, and to discuss how to move forward.

At that meeting, Lucy said the board should be prepared to answer questions about the suitability of Friendly Crossways as a senior center, given that the subject was raised at Town Meeting.

Beth noted that a couple of other sites have also been suggested and asked if the board will be expected to investigate every possibility that arises. Lucy acknowledged how cumbersome that would be and said the board should present a convincing statement to the Select Board about the desirability of the COA's present location at Hildreth House.

Public Comment

There were no comments from the public

Friends of the Council on Aging

There was no report from the FCOA.

Program Committee – Beth Williams

The board agreed to table discussion of programs until a new program committee is formed at the August planning meeting.

Buildings & Grounds

Possible projects for the Buildings and Grounds Committee this year might include kitchen renovations, a patio, a bocce ball court, and determining the feasibility of converting the porch for three-season use. New members are urgently needed for this committee.

August Planning Meeting

The annual planning meeting will be held on a Monday morning in August on the porch. Beth will send an email with suggested dates to see which one works for the most people. New officers will be elected and new goals will be set for the coming year.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Connie Larrabee, recorder
