

**BILLERICA COUNCIL ON AGING (BCOA)  
BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21, 2018**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT/EXCUSED**

Barbara Flaherty, Chair  
Joan DiOrio, 1st Vice-Chair, **Excused**  
Mary Riley, 2nd Vice-Chair, **Excused**  
Lucille MacKinnon, Secretary, **Excused**  
Dorothy Grossman  
Grace Gullotti  
Marilyn Keating

**ALTERNATE MEMBERS PRESENT/EXCUSED**

Joseph Duggan, **Excused**  
John Pellegrino, **Excused**  
Stephen Strykowski

**SELECTMEN PRESENT/EXCUSED**

Kim Conway, **Excused**  
George Simolaris

**Called to Order:**

- The meeting was called to order at 9:34 a.m. by Chair Barbara Flaherty.
- A moment of silence was observed.

**Review of the Minutes of the Last Meeting:**

The minutes were previously mailed to all Board Members for their review.

**Motion Pertaining to the Minutes:**

Dorothy Grossman made a motion to accept the minutes, seconded by Grace Gullotti, the minutes were approved unanimously.

**Correspondence and Reports:**

**Director's Report: Review of Report with Discussion**

**Health & Wellness Programs:**

**Tax Work Off Programs:**

The Senior and Veterans' Tax Work-Off Program for Fiscal Year 2017-18 ended on February 28th, with one hundred and three (103) participants, consisting of eighty-eight (88) seniors and fifteen (15) veterans, for a total of eight thousand three hundred and thirty (8,330) hours. A total of one thousand three hundred one and one-quarter (1,301.25) hours were donated by volunteers that could not participate in the program but wanted to help.

**Respite Program:**

Bonnie Courtemanche and Jean Bushnell met with Mary Kay Browne, Special Councils Director, MA Councils on Aging (MCOA) to discuss the BCOA Respite Companion Program. MCOA and its partners seek to provide more supports for people with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD) and caregivers by expanding statewide infrastructure to improve understanding of and supportive responses to dementia. There are several elements of our successful Respite Program that Browne wants to study.

Current statistics reflect that about fifty percent (50%) of our Respite clients are Elder Services of Merrimack Valley (ESMV) clients as opposed to private pay clients. Jean agreed to provide some statistics on the average number of hours of care provided to private pay clients vs those from ESV.

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Board Member Stephen Strykowski mentioned State Representative Colleen Garry, whose district includes Dracut and Tyngsboro, is very interested in the topic of dementia and Jean agreed to reach out to her to see how her interest would mesh with the Dementia Friendly initiative.

Fitness Room:

On January 17th the SCI-FIT Latitude Stability Trainer was delivered. This machine has been well-received by Fitness Room users. It helps strengthen stabilization muscles, protecting older adults from falls.

Memory Café: Memory Cafes are on hold until April with the next Café scheduled for April 11th at 1:00pm. C.C. King, Certified Leader & Trainer and InterPlay specialist, will introduce the concept of ‘InterPlay’, which unlocks the wisdom of the body. This program remains an excellent collaboration between the BCOA and the Billerica Public Library.

Saturday Caregiver Support:

The BCOA has started a Saturday Caregiver Support program for those who can’t attend the sessions we offer on Wednesday mornings. Bonnie Courtemanche is facilitating the group which started on March 3rd and will take place bi-monthly on the first and third Saturdays of the month at 10:00am.

Intergenerational Programs:

Planning has begun for a summer Intergenerational Program leveraging the skills of Janet Habeshian for two intergenerational (grandparent/grandchild) paper craft programs; a tri-fold memory album with pictures and a recipe book.

Dementia Friendly Billerica (DFB):

Several members of the Dementia Friendly Billerica Leadership team provided training to over twenty (20) nurses and medical assistants that work at Circle Health Urgent Care facilities in Billerica, Chelmsford, and Westford. The training covered topics related to recognizing and accommodating patients with dementia, and was conducted by DFB training team members Daria Rabkin, Diane Welch, Dan Patterson, and Ann Rosas.

Stelio's Family Restaurant and The Emerald Rose Restaurant & Pub have become the first restaurants in Billerica to join Purple Table Reservations. Both of these restaurants are working to provide accommodations to guests with dementia and similar conditions so that they and their caregivers can have an enjoyable dining experience.

**Life Quality Activities and Volunteer Management**

Director Jean Bushnell discussed the critical importance of reducing social isolation and the BCOA’s continuing efforts to put together programs to address that. Some of the more successful efforts have included the pairing of lunch with a movie and supplementing the ESMV lunch offering with food from other local venues. The recent Chinese New Year luncheon / movie program which paired ESMV items with food from a local Chinese restaurant was a good example of that success.

Programs:

- New Friday afternoon Yoga program is gaining popularity.
- The Sunday Dinner Stories program which had been planned for March has been rescheduled to May in the hopes of attracting a larger audience. The program teaches members and their families how to preserve life stories before it's too late in journals, music or on simple paper.
- Motivational Mondays, a program devised by Alternate Board Member Stephen Strykowski, proved to be popular and another good example of pairing lunch with a movie.

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- The Holi and Henna Celebration on March 1st drew a mix of staff and patrons who enjoyed a beautiful evening of Henna and the start of the celebration of Holi. Henna Artist Maria O'Connor walked us through the history of Henna and added beautiful designs to hands. The group also enjoyed great food from Zaika Indian Bistro in Woburn. The evening truly reflected the start of the colorful festival of Holi, the age-old festive ritual marking the end of winter, the coming of spring, and symbolically, the triumph of good over evil.
- BCOA will host a program on Clutter Control on April 24th at 6:00 p.m. which will focus on how to handle clutter in the home with tips and tricks to get organized.

Talent Show:

BCOA will host a Talent Show on Wednesday, May 2nd. In addition to traditional show performances of singers, dancers and the like, we will also be showcasing crafts and work done by knitters, quilters and artists.

**Nutritional Programs**

Director Jean Bushnell reported on the meal program statistics. The Friday Breakfasts continue to draw up to one hundred and fifty (150) participants each month. On February 9th, in honor of Heart Healthy Month, Friday breakfast included egg whites, Canadian bacon, wheat bread and fruit.

**Outreach and Community Transportation**

Geriatric Case Management Services:

Director Jean Bushnell related that the BCOA is looking to engage the services of a Geriatric Case Manager on an ad hoc basis. This person would be available to BCOA staff to discuss cases that are complex and require expertise that is not available in house on an 'as needed' basis.

Home Fire Safety Program Expansion:

In February Captain Paskiewicz and Jeanne Teehan, along with a representative from the Substance Abuse department, visited five (5) homes to replace and install smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. The Substance Abuse department also provided packets to help dissolve unwanted medications.

Lunch Around:

The program continues to be a wonderful addition to Outreach offerings. On average, forty-five (45) seniors attend each lunch. Seniors who do not drive and don't get out much get a ride on the van, socialize and enjoy a nice affordable lunch. The January lunch was at The Great Wall in Bedford and February was at The Ninety Nine.

Transportation:

The program continues to grow. Our vans are essential for seniors to remain active in the community. In addition, special trips to sites of local interest such as shopping malls, museums, movies, casinos, Lunch Arouns etc. are extremely popular. There are now also scheduled shopping trips every Friday to markets in neighboring communities such as Stop & Shop, Hannaford and Shaws.

Board Member Dorothy Grossman asked if the BCOA van service was going to support trips to evening events. Director Jean Bushnell explained that these would be considered but that any expansion of transportation offerings need to be economically viable.

**Systems and Administration**

Re-Purposing the Library:

The former library space is now ready to be used as a Staff Room, offering confidentiality and a lunch space.

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Lighting System Upgrade:

The lighting system upgrade is now completed. All lighting in the building has been upgraded.

Kitchen Appliance Upgrade:

We have ordered a new larger, commercial refrigerator and freezer for the kitchen through our FY18 town funding.

Audio-Visual Upgrade:

We have the funding and are planning to get estimates for this work; which will upgrade audio / visual capabilities in the first floor community room.

Generator:

Work has begun on the installation of the generator.

**Aging Network and Partnerships**

Health Fair:

Director Jean Bushnell and Ann Rosas, Director of Admissions & Marketing - Life Care Center of Merrimack Valley, are in charge of the design and production of a vital health and wellness handbook for Billerica that extends the voice of the Health Fair beyond April and puts an important resource with key listings in the hands of Billerica residents.

Dementia Friendly MA, Regional Meeting:

Director Jean Bushnell and Bonnie Courtemanche attended the Regional Dementia Friendly MA meeting. These regional meetings provide an opportunity to learn ways to better support communities in sharing lessons learned, challenges, opportunities, and resources found along the road to becoming dementia friendly. Some of the insights at the meeting were:

- A reframing of dementia - folks are living with a disability. It is not a death sentence. We need to change the stigma.
- The distinction between dementia friendly and age friendly. We need to help people with dementia to feel included and supported in places they work, live and play. We work to reduce stigma and increase inclusion so that people with dementia feel supported at the post office, retail stores and community at large. By comparison an age-friendly community encourages active aging by optimizing participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age.

**Director's Report - Comments and Discussion:**

Warming Center:

Alternate Board Member Stephen Strykowski commended the BCOA staff for their efforts during the recent snow emergency that required the Senior Center building to be used as a warming center for three days in early March. Stephen mentioned that the staff rose to meet the challenge in what were difficult circumstances.

UMass – Lowell Concert Performances:

Selectman George Simolaris provided some information on musical performances at UMass – Lowell that feature a variety of musical offerings, including string ensembles, jazz groups, acappella performances, and are held at Durgin Hall on the UMass – Lowell campus.

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Intergenerational Programming:

Selectman George Simolaris mentioned that both UMass – Lowell and the Billerica Public Schools may be a good source for speakers and programs that would be of interest to seniors and also offer more intergenerational programming; including some clubs or activities such as chess or a writers club.

Motion Pertaining to Director's Report

Dorothy Grossman made a motion to accept the Director's Report, seconded by Grace Gullotti, approved unanimously.

**Board Topics:**

**Strategic Planning Progress Update:**

Chair Barbara Flaherty discussed the progress of the strategic planning effort. The effort will probably wrap up by the end of April as final results of SOAR focus groups and survey are being compiled. Results do reflect some consistent themes.

**Next Meeting Date:** May 9, 2018

**Adjournment/Closing:**

Motion made by Dorothy Grossman, seconded by Grace Gullotti, approved unanimously at 10:19 a.m.



Respectfully Submitted, Lucille MacKinnon  
Secretary