

**Billerica Council on Aging
25 Concord Road, Billerica MA
Board Meeting Minutes**

January 11, 2023, 5:30 pm

Present: Jean Patel Bushnell, Richard Carroll, Phil Doiron, Barbara Flaherty, Gerald Johnson, Mary Jones, Marguerite Massey, Bill Neeb, John Pellegrino, Mary Riley, and Mike Riley.

Absent: Kim Conway

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 PM by Chair Mary Riley, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence for the sick and departed.

A motion was made to accept the minutes of the December 14, 2022 meeting. M/Phil Doiron S/Marguerite. All members were in favor and motion passed.

COA Director Jean Bushnell reported on 2022 achievements

- COVID BOOSTER CLINIC: Jan 25th distribution of 144 Pfizer and Moderna vaccines led by Cataldo Ambulance.
- COMPANION PROGRAM: Ad Campaign supported by SalemFive published Living50 and February issue of the Lowell Sun.
- AARP TAX AIDE PROGRAM FOR SENIORS: administered by staff and volunteers processed over 290 tax returns for patrons at no charge for the 2021 tax year.
- PARTNERED WITH BILLERICA COMMUNITY FARMERS MARKET: June 13 - Oct 10, 2022. While a public favorite, the event poses a safety risk to patrons walking/driving throughout the grounds.
- TENT: Secured Community Fund Grant (E Ink Corporation) to support \$5,000 cost for tent for June to October outdoor activities.
- MAY AND INITIATIVE: Clinical hours at the COA staffed initially by The Front Line Initiative then by Cheryl Knowles, LCSW.
- BUDGET: Approved at Town Meeting on May 3rd for \$422,227 including \$26,560 to cover a part time receptionist. Other budget amounts approved for FY2023 for other Town departments were:
 - o Board of Health: \$475,493
 - o Public Library: \$1,653,879
 - o Recreation Department: \$480,945
 - o Veteran Services: \$453,684

- PARTNERING WITH THE LIBRARY: Children’s Room used our lawn 26 times last summer, 9-11.30 AM.
- STAFFING: Pat Zapert retired after 10 years at the COA in July 2022. David Lamonte joined as Program Associate in the Wellness dept. Christian Panasuk hired on September 7th Head Clerk. Karen Cusack-Bouvier approved to move from part-time to full-time Associate in Outreach on September 26th.
- BLACKTIE BINGO: The BCOA supported the success of the event on June 17th which netted \$10,032.45. Funds raised support BCOA activities.
- SUCCESSFUL BREAKFAST COOKED BY POLICE DEPT: On May 6th, led by Chief Roy Frost, Deputy Chief Jerry Roche and Commander Troy Opland and others in 2 shifts. Thanks to Mike Riley, Vice-Chair, Billerica Select Board who served and cleaned. Students from Shawsheen’s Culinary-Hospitality Program helped, led by Joseph Williams, one of the Culinary Arts Instructors.
- COFFEE WITH THE DIRECTOR: Launched June 1 for patrons to enjoy a light breakfast and informally chat with Jean Bushnell.
- LAHEY MARKET 5th YEAR: The program weekly from June 14th through October 25th distributing 65 bags of fresh produce to families each week.
- BILLERICA FIREFIGHTERS ANNUAL BBQ: Held on June 24th at the Billerica Elks for 150 patrons for the first time since 2019.
- TEAS: Popular event at the BCOA bringing together 35-40 patrons in a fine atmosphere. Many Town managers, staff and volunteers assisted in serving tea and snacks.
- OUTREACH IN ACTION: Outreach worked with Habitat for Humanity of Greater Lowell’s Critical Home Repair program to assist qualified seniors, veterans and families to help alleviate health, safety and code violations.
- Outreach also worked on avoiding financial scams and Elder Abuse with organizations like AgeSpan
- SHINE: We worked with trained, certified SHINE counselors help many residents navigate the complex Medicare insurance system.
- EXERCISE REMIX: Increased costs from a primary service provider led to a switch to the Lowell YMCA for two new classes combined with an added class from a current instructor. Were able to offer these classes for \$3 through a subsidy of \$2 per class, per person from the FCOA.
- TAX WORK OFF: Sixty seniors and ten veterans participated in the program working 75 hours to earn a real estate tax credit of \$1,000.00.
- CAREGIVERS EVENT: Hosted an Annual Thank you caregivers’ event with twenty-five attendees.
- HOARDING TASKFORCE: Jeanne Teehan and the Director were engaged in several discussion meetings during the summer to establish a Hoarding Taskforce under the BOH.

- HEALTH FAIR BY Billerica Health & Wellness, Inc : Jeanne Teehan, Carolyn Savio and Jean Bushnell helped to plan and host this family well-being health fair with a focus on Mental Health.
- YANKEE DOODLE: Highly successful Yankee Doodle presence. Thanks to the FCOA for sponsoring a Balloonist that created an intergenerational atmosphere alongside Corn Hole at our booth.
- FLU CLINIC: Hosted by the Town Manager's office at the BCOA on October 11th that delivered 251 shots to the community.
- MEN's GROUP: The Men's Group was back on Oct 20th at 1.30 PM at the BCOA, with new leader Skip Colby. We thank Wayne Smith for making this group a success for years!
- LAUNCHING NEW PAYMENT SYSTEM: After careful planning and research among patrons, a pay as you go approach to begin in January.
- CABOT LUNCH on DEC 16th, ELKS: Some 260 guests enjoyed a fabulous event sponsored by Cabot Corporation. We also recognize and thank Friends, Stoneham Bank and the Kay Johnson Foundation for supplementing costs that have risen due to inflation. Our planning team consisted of Board members, Phil Doiron and Jerry Johnson and staffers Melissa Paolicelli in the lead, with Christian Panasuk.
- EMHOT GRANTS: Fall 2022 we teamed up with Tewksbury Senior Center to support their application for an EMHOT grant which was successfully won. Elder Mental Health Outreach Teams, (EMHOT) provide mental health services, counseling and outreach to older adults aged 60+.
- WON MINUTEMAN CONTRACT: Our footprint for our Companion Program now consists of Billerica, Carlisle, Burlington, Bedford and Wilmington. Carolyn Savio, Program leader is in the process of meeting with COA directors in these towns to build visibility of the program and solicit private pay referrals too. A new brochure was produced to reflect program growth.
- SUCCESSFUL GIFT PROGRAM: \$25 Market Basket Gift cards were dropped off to some 125 homebound seniors by volunteers. Many to thank for supporting the effort to include Billerica Lions Club, Enterprise Bank, Billerica Substance Awareness and Prevention, Saint Matthew the Evangelist Ladies Group, Cook & Company Real Estate Team, Billerica Rotary Club and Anonymous.
- BHS ORCHESTRA: on Dec. 14th some 44 Students, delivered a concert to some 30+ seniors.
- BILLERICA HOLIDAY FESTIVAL BOD: successful end-of-year collaboration. Over 220 free, printed pictures with Santa were given to families on Saturday December 10th. The Senior Holiday supper on December 3rd, with Rotary, served over 80 happy attendees.

- TEMPLE HOLIDAY LUNCH: On December 23rd some 60+ enjoyed lunch at the COA. In its 13th year, Burlington’s Temple Shalom Emeth continues to see this as a great community give back.
- We thank the Friends for all their support in 2022 summing to \$13,675.00. Funds used to support repairs and special programs throughout the year.
- BUILDING HEATING ISSUES: We were glad to get beyond the heating issues in the building this fall. Temporary heating over several weeks cost us over \$600 in space heaters.
- BUILDING ENHANCEMENTS: Thanks to Facilities and the Earmark secured by Mary Riley, Outreach successfully moved to the second floor, and we seriously enhanced the layout and look of the second floor Games and Crafts room which can now also be used for seminars with a more professional look.

INTERESTING STATS

AVG Patron Visits Per Day					
Fiscal Year	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
FY2021	54.1	73.9	41.6	67.4	38.7
FY2022	78.5	140.7	74.6	85.3	86.0

	FY21	FY22	Change
Fitness/Exercise	7215	10385	3170
Health Ed/Screening	229	1118	889
Nutrition	2569	1975	-594
Recreation/Social	1418	8693	7275
Comm. Ed, Crafts, Culture	1389	2339	950
Van Trips	1796	3254	1458

New Members	
Calendar Year	New Members
2021	240
2022	305

Following Ms. Bushnell’s report, Select Board member Mike Riley led the Board in a lengthy discussion over the use and plans for the spending of Billerica tax dollars, and the potential negative impact this may have in the plans for building an integrational facility. A timeline of the feasibility study underway for the project was presented. It was highly recommended that Board members publicly continue to show their support for the original project plans.

Following this discussion, Director Jean Bushnell shared her thoughts on COA goals in 2023, for a discussion on how the COA Board of Directors can assist in achieving these goals.

- 1) Supporting family caregivers. Our goal is to equally support family caregivers. We plan to double the size of the Caregiver tea, bring in evening talks with light dinners on topics pertinent to their welfare and address their search for peace of mind and resources.
- 2) Bring in more of the younger senior seeking an active adult center. An example of where the Board might help is by making phone calls to them reinforcing that the BCOA services folks 60 years and older and soliciting concrete ways to attract them with customized content.
- 3) Helping the town create a holistic approach to social services.
 - a. Right now, we have parts of social services at the BCOA, Board of Health and in the Police department.
- 4) Engaging with us more as time allows
 - a. Other ways the Board might consider is participating in meals on wheels trips, walking with the walking group, helping with the flu clinic, calling bingo, and the like to enrich one's understanding of what we encounter as opportunities to grow and barriers we face that the Board might be able to help us eradicate.

Next meeting, February 8, 2023, at 5:30 pm

Motion to Adjourn made by Phil Doiron S/John Pellegrino
M/Passed Meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William Neeb". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

William Neeb, Recording Secretary