

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

January 12, 2022, 5:30 pm

Present: Jean Patel Bushnell, Richard Carroll, Phil Doiron, Bill Neeb, John Pellegrino, Mary Riley, and Stephen Strykowski.

Absent: Dan Burns, Barbara Flaherty, and Mike Rosa.

The Zoom meeting was called to order at 5:30 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 November meeting. M/Phil Doiron S/John Pellegrino. Motion passed.

Director Jean Bushnell presented an update on COA operations including:

- **EARMARK CONTRACT:** All paperwork for \$85K grant submitted to Executive Office of Elder Affairs on 1/10th.
- **CAPITAL FACILITIES PROJECT:** 3 discussion sessions with a total of 31 patrons to clarify “mixed use” of proposed facility. Ascertain patron input on use and design. Participants averaged some 10 years coming to the Center and shared a range of reasons for doing so to include: physical and mental wellbeing, social life, amongst others. The seniors wanted to ensure that each group (COA and Recreation Dept) had their own space and repeated this need throughout the discussions.
- **MEETING WITH TOWN MANAGER ON STAFFING:** Pat Zapert and the Director met with John Curran and Clancy Main on Dec 14th to make a case for stronger staffing and added capacity in some vital areas that affect the volume and quality of our impact.
- **Change Outreach Associate to Social Worker, Full-Time.**
- **Change Activity Assistant/ Front Desk Helper ACTIVITY**
- **Change Head Clerk to 2 Positions of Assistant COA Director (New) & Principal Clerk. Assistant COA Director.**
- **RESPONSE:** There was a favorable degree of support for the Outreach position upgrade although the Town Manager was somewhat concerned that our work in outreach is moving more to social services as opposed to referral services we delivered earlier on. For the front desk upgrade, he wondered whether volunteers could not be given deeper training on responsibilities and expectations but listened very carefully to the need. We positioned the Assistant Direct and principal Clerk as part of our long-term plan as we move to FY2024 and building staff capacity for a new Center. We provided detailed job descriptions for all 4 positions. **TOTAL INCREMENTAL IMPACT to FY2023 budget for Outreach and Front desk adds: \$47K**
- **ELKS LUNCHEON:** We supported Deb Carver in recruiting 70+ seniors for the Billerica Elks Annual Thanksgiving Dinner on Thursday November 18th.
- **CABOT COMMUNITY IMPACT:** The Cabot Holiday Experience on Dec 15th was more than successful. The entire event funded and supported by Cabot led by Board member Phil Doiron brought holiday cheer to more than 225 patrons.
- **COMPANION PROGRAM:** An Ad Campaign supported by Salem Five began with an insertion in the special Living50 section in the Nov 18th issue of Lowell Sun.
- **GRATEFUL FOR GIFT CARDS AND VISITS:** We thank representatives from all of these town departments for helping us bring a holiday gift card and warm greeting to some 130+ homebound seniors in town.
- **TEMPLE SHALOM EMETH BURLINGTON THOUGHTFUL ACTS:** On Dec 23rd many volunteers from the Temple delivered some 70 lunches to homebound seniors. SalemFive, Boston Rd donated their branded bags for packaging.
- **LIONS CLUB OF BILLERICA CONTINUES TO CARE FOR HOMEBOUND SENIORS.** Led by Paula Baldwin, co-lead of our Quilting Group and a senior member of the Lions Club and Joan Di’Orio the Club President, this group has been regularly designing themes to send out little ornaments and giveaways to our homebound seniors.
- **ACTIVITY STATS:** Below shows our steady ramp up as patron confidence increases to return to the center. FY2022 data is for approximately half the year.

Fiscal Year	Exercise Visits	Van Trips	Socialization / Games	Nutrition
FY2021	7,215	1,796	1,418	2,484
FY2022 YTD	4,591	1,435	3,944	1,512

AVERAGE VISITS PER DAY: Number of patrons who check into the building based by day of week
The trend to greater numbers this fiscal year is apparent.

Fiscal Year	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
FY2021	54.1	73.9	41.6	67.4	38.7
FY2022 YTD	75.1	171.2	73.3	72.3	79.2

Ms. Bushnell added the pride we have in keeping the Billerica COA open and active. Many area COA's have been moving in the other direction planning shutdowns considering the surge in Covid cases.

In response to correspondence to the COA Director and Chair Mary Riley from Mr. Stephen Strykowski, Rich Carroll made a motion to accept the resignation of Mr. Strykowski as 2nd Vice Chair. S/Bill Neeb

Phil Doiron raised discussion as to the reason behind his decision. Stephen mentioned his dismay at the value of disabled people. Stephen will remain on the Board as a voting member.

M/Passed

Vice Chair Rich Carroll makes a motion to nominate Phil Doiron to 2nd Vice Chair. S/Mary Riley / Motion passed.

Secretary Bill Neeb raised questions to Ms. Bushnell regarding the Friends of the Billerica financial reports she shared with the Board in an email on January 7, 2022. Specifically:

- FCOA membership fees
- December 2021 Raffle receipts
- Cardio Boost (Funds used to offset fees to patrons for highly successful cardio program)
- Accounting fees
- Directors and Officers insurance. Coverage of Friends Board
- Confirmation of Director's discretionary fund listed under programs

A question was raised as to coverage for the COA Board. Consensus is that they are provided coverage via the Town of Billerica.

Member Stephen Strykowski raised an issue on the treatment of persons with disabilities.

He informed the Board that the United Spinal association has a downloadable book on Disability etiquette.

He raised a question as to what correspondence should be included in Board minutes. Mr. Carroll replied that only correspondence directed to a quorum of the board and discussed the conduct of the Board with respect to handling of open meeting laws needs to be disclosed.

Mr. Strykowski went on to discuss:

- Implied rating system for disability
- Mr. Strykowski's history of his own disabilities.
- Exploitation of handicapped persons
- Self-advocacy for disability

Mr. Strykowski and Ms. Riley engaged in a debate over disparate treatment of persons with disabilities.

Chair Mary shared her personal experience caring for a disabled family member and that she also has advocated on behalf of disabled persons. Ms. Riley also tried to make the point that while she is conscious of Mr. Strykowski's disability, she works to regard him in the same standing as she does other members of the Board.

Mr. Strykowski notified the Board that he has now received a working phone and can once again receive calls and emails.

Chair Mary Riley requested that any future questions should be addressed to her so you can be acknowledged that you can speak. (Agenda items ?).

Phil Doiron raised a question regarding the status of the Black-Tie Bingo fundraiser. Ms. Riley reported that Friends Chair Mary Camilleri is soliciting donations of meals and O'dourves. John Pellegrino followed with target date of June. Ms. Bushnell clarified that she wrote the grant for \$4,000, and that the target date is June 17th.

Next meeting date: February 9, 2022, at 5:30 pm

Motion to Adjourn M/Phil Doiron S/John Pellegrino Motion Passed

Meeting adjourned at 6:30 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