

## **Council on Aging Minutes for Virtual Meeting of April 8, 2020 Final**

The meeting was called to order at 5:33 p.m. by co-chair Linda Avis Scott.

Attendance was taken by calling the roll. Present: Susan Gomberg, Janis Gray, Susan Millinger, and Linda Avis Scott. Absent, Melissa Makepeace-O'Neil. JoAnn Bernhard was not able to be with us for the opening roll call, but arrived by the time our guest, Mary Anne Antonellis, Library Director, joined us.

Scott read the official statement from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts authorizing virtual meetings for town committees and boards.

### **Business:**

**Minutes of the Meeting of March 11, 2020:** Motion to approve as read was made, seconded, and passed unanimously by roll call vote.

**Program Updates: The COA website has been updated to indicate that all three programs it runs have been suspended for the time being:**

#### **-Community Lunch**

**-Med-Ride** (the earlier statement that Med-Rides would be considered on a case by case basis has been replaced by a statement that Med-Rides have been suspended.)

**-Foot Clinic:** Discussion ensued about what process to use when sessions can again be scheduled. It was decided that the first available appointments would go to those who had signed up for March; next to those who had signed up for April; then to the two clients with May appointments.

If any client indicates to Gomberg that they have a problem with their feet, she will suggest that they contact their primary care physician or Foot Care by Nurses.

**Discussion of coming joint meeting of COA members and Village Neighbor leaders** of the four Village Neighbor towns: Leverett, New Salem, Shutesbury and Wendell. Gray and Millinger, who plan to attend for the COA, wish guidance about what answers to provide to the anticipated questions.

-It was agreed that what we are doing well are the three programs and the Council's support for the fitness programs initiated by the Library Director.

- It was agreed that our main challenge has been hosting well-attended programs of other kinds (specifically talks providing seniors with useful information dealing, for instance, with financial matters.)

-What would we like to see in collaborative activity? Specific suggestions: take short day trips to local sights: museums, historic buildings, gardens, etc. and have more local history walks like those Leslie Bracebridge has offered. A dementia café was also mentioned.

The responsibility for presenting this information was divided between Millinger (strengths and challenges) and Gray (ideas for collaboration.) Any requests for funding would be brought back to the COA.

**Request for possible funding for special online fitness classes** from guest, Mary Anne Antonellis, Library Director. Antonellis described the good reception for the online Strength Training courses which have begun on Tuesdays and Fridays, to continue through May. She has a grant which will pay for a couple of months of these classes.

Now she would like to add an online yoga class, on eleven Wednesdays through the end of June, and is requesting funding for this class. At \$50 a session, the course would cost \$550.

Antonellis was asked for her rationale, since there already are online yoga classes. Her reasoning: this would be free, unlike other online classes like those of the Yoga Center in Amherst. It would continue the sense of community of the in-person yoga class she has been sponsoring, particularly important in this time when people are isolated in their homes. It would also involve a well-known and trusted instructor, by whom people feel “respected and loved.” The regularity of the time of offering would also be important.

Scott pointed out that with other programs on hold, the COA’s budget could certainly support this class. The motion was made “that COA allocate \$500 for an online yoga class that Mary Anne Antonellis, Library Director, will set up that will run from the middle of April until the end of June.” The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Bernhard was informed of what she had missed in the earlier part of the meeting.

**Brief discussion of COA content in next *Our Town* newsletter.** It could contain information about the suspension of the COA’s three programs, information about the Library’s yoga class, and a repeated invitation for people to send in their email addresses so that COA can reach them with information about programs. A motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously by roll call vote to empower Janis Gray to compose a short article for the upcoming issue of *Our Town*.

**Motion to adjourn was made and carried unanimously.**

**The Meeting was adjourned at 6:17 p.m.**

**Next Meeting:** Regular May Meeting, the second Wednesday, May 13, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Susan Millinger, secretary