

## **Council on Aging Minutes for Virtual Meeting of March 13, 2024**

### **Approved at the April 10, 2024 Meeting**

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m.

A roll call of those present: JoAnn Bernhard (JB), Martha Favre (MF), Janis Gray (JSG), Susan Millinger (SM) and Jeanette Stockton (JS). Guest: Jessica Makepeace.

Patti Demers, Information and Caregiver Resource Center Director for Life Path was present to talk about Life Path's programs and answer questions. Demers' informative presentation occupied the initial portion of the meeting. Only a summary can be presented here.

She noted that some services extend into surrounding counties. Services can change: note especially that some are grant dependent. Services that require matching a volunteer may take time to arrange.

Demers' office is the gatekeeper of the agency. Questions go there, to be answered by the resource consultants over the phone or at the two-hour Thursday table at Athol Library. These consultants can process referrals.

There is no charge to see the Options Counsellor, who can help with contacting others at LifePath. Available in person or by phone or digital call.

A new grant supports a Benefit Enrollment Center, which helps with MassCare, SNAP, Fuel Assistance, and Medicare Savings programs. This is a 20-month grant for Franklin County, the North Quabbin, and part of Hampshire.

Transportation: Rides to medical appointment for clients in the Home Care program are given by volunteer drivers matched with the client. FRTA can provide some free rides for people already in the Home Care program.

Caregiver Support includes caregiver respite. Respite scholarships are available. Unfortunately, there is not currently much adult daycare available. There is a new Caregiver Engagement Center in Sunderland, supported by a new grant. This provides two hours of caregiver respite with activities for the person cared for. Life Path hopes the State will provide more support for this program.

Services Overview:

Adult Family Care for those 16+.

Home Care for those 60+. Sometimes there is a copay for this; there is no copay for those on MassHealth. Personal care is only provided to people on MassHealth. It can include a personal care attendant, but there is a shortage of such workers. As a result, a person can hire someone they know who will be paid for providing personal care.

Clinical Services: Dementia coaching, elder mental health outreach. These services are being expanded.

Protective Services for over 60 at risk. A call reporting an elder needing protection can be anonymous.

Ombudsman Program: Volunteer visits nursing homes and rest homes

Money management: volunteer help

Shine: assists with insurance, Medicare, etc.

Meals on Wheels: Monday through Friday, providing lunch/supper and a wellness check

Onsite housing staff are at seven apartment complexes one day a week. LifePath also has a new program, providing staff at Baystate Franklin to meet with patients before discharge, to speed up the process of transition to home

Classes and Support: Healthy Living classes for people of any age; Support: Rainbow Elders; Dementia

To contact: lifepath.org; [info@lifepath.org](mailto:info@lifepath.org); or call LifePath directly at: 413-773-5555  
Open Monday-Friday, 9-5.

### **March Business Meeting**

**Minutes of the Meeting of February 14, 2024:** *A motion was made to approve the minutes of the February 14, 2024 meeting. It was seconded and passed unanimously by a roll call vote.*

#### **Business:**

#### **Financial Update: February began with \$4,761.43**

The second half of our grant from EOEA has been distributed.

#### **Expenditure to date;**

Foot Clinic (February): \$166.00

Leaving unspent: \$4585.43

#### **Remainder available to be spent:**

Remaining funding less anticipated expenditures: \$1,559.43.

#### **Next Issue of *The Geezette*:**

**Cost of upcoming issue of *The Geezette*:** There was a lengthy discussion of whether we could afford to pay \$988 for a twelve-page issue of our newsletter, especially since Adams Direct Mailing had discovered that it did not charge us for \$282 of the cost of the spring newsletter.

**Mailing list creation:** As noted in the February minutes, creating a new mailing list is a laborious and challenging task. The Town Clerk thinks that next year the new computer system may make it easier to combine very different sets of data. Last year, 489 newsletters were sent out; this year 805 individuals were identified and newsletters were to be sent to 659 residences. *A motion was made to send out the twelve-page*

*issue and to pay the remainder of the cost for last year's issue. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.*

**Coming program:** A new workshop, Session II of "Using Your Smart Phone Smarter" taught again by Barbara Friedman will be offered on May 1 or 3.

**Next Meeting: April 10 at 5:30 p.m.**

**Adjournment:** *We did not have time to officially adjourn, having been bumped by the next meeting at 6:58 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted, Susan Millinger, Secretary