

Minutes of Council on Aging, April 9, 2025

Approved at the meeting of May 14, 2025.

Meeting Came to order: 5:35 p.m.

Present, identified by a Roll call: MaryJo Johnson (MJJ), Jessica Makepeace (JM), Susan Millinger (SM), Jeannette Stockton (JS) No guests.

Welcome to our newest member, MaryJo Johnson (MJJ). Thank you, Mary Jo!

Minutes: No minutes to approve for the February or March meetings, since neither meeting had a quorum and was thus not a formal meeting.

Business:

Financial Report:

The treasurer, JM, reported that finances were again confused: there are significant differences between her figures and those of the Town Accountant. She has not yet had an opportunity to meet with the Town Accountant.

Accountant: before the March Foot Clinic: Remaining in the grant: \$452.50

Remaining in the Town Budget line: \$39.42

Remaining in the revolving fund (donations): \$115

JM thinks that the accountant may not have been including the donations received recently to pay towards the cost of the Foot Clinic, using them towards the bills of FootCare by Nurses.

JM thinks that she may not have been informed of all expenditures and receipts in the summer and fall (early FY25).

Second half of grant (now expected by the end of April): expected: \$4282.50

Sums requested (which would come out of the second half of the grant)

Foot Clinic in May and June (est \$415-430/ a day)= \$830 to \$860

Request from Library Director for fitness classes: \$1500.

Requested contribution to Village Neighbors: \$1000.

If those requests were fully met, it's estimated that perhaps \$670 would remain for a short (one page, both sides trifold) newsletter of announcements.

Discussion followed: which of these requested expenses could we meet? What should we consider?

1. With regard to the Foot Clinic

- a. We cannot keep devoting so much of our grant to the Foot Clinic. We need to make significant changes if the clients can not contribute a larger share of the cost for their session. The cost to us per session now: \$55: \$25 per half-hour session and \$30, each individual's share of the \$60 we are now charged for each hour the Nurse is present,

whether or not she has a client. If no client contributed anything, we would be paying \$5,280, over half of our grant of \$8,561 in FY25.

- b. JS again suggested we think about the nail technician who tends feet for New Salem COA at \$15 a client. At this meeting she suggests a combination format, which the COA appeared to find more acceptable than giving up FootCare by Nurses. We would offer people who weren't able to contribute at least \$30 a session the option of going to New Salem *and paying New Salem [I suppose?] \$15.* (However, we would like to offer a reduced cost for those who really couldn't pay \$30. *[Could the nurse indicate those people whose feet definitely needed her attention, so that we could offer scholarships for those individuals when they chose the New Salem option.]*)
- c. MJJ suggested we try to raise money to support the program.
- d. One argument for FootCare by Nurses: We're aware of the value of enabling people to see a nurse once every two months, especially since our town is remote from medical professionals and offices, and with medical personnel becoming less and less available.
- e. We decided the best time to switch to a new way of running the Foot Clinic is on the first Foot Clinic of the new fiscal year, on July 16.

2. Support of Fitness Classes:

- a. There is more support for the \$3,000 we provide annually to support the fitness classes. These occur three times a week, are attended by 20 or more people, and provide social as well as physical benefits. SM commented that they are probably the activity most often provided by COAs according to the EOAGE's Annual Report for FY24. The COA is one of several Town organizations that support these Library programs.

3. Support for Village Neighbors (VN)

We support VN because they provide a lot of services to Shutesbury residents who chose to join VN (which has no fee, although members must agree to be CORI-checked.) Some of these services, like MedRides, we used to provide. We value the services they provide. The COA initially gave VN \$500 a year, in FY24, perhaps for the first time, we gave \$1,000. The sense of the meeting seemed to be that if we can afford \$1,000, we are happy to give it. If not, we would at least give \$500. Shutesbury residents use a lot of services, and many of the volunteers to provide services are Shutesburians.

4. Communication: *The Geezette*, our newsletter

- a. Traditionally, we have published two newsletters a year, sent to all Shutesbury households with a resident over 55 *[Note: although for EOAGE, LifePath, and other organizations, a senior/elder is defined as someone 60 or older, Shutesbury COA has used 55 as the beginning of the status. I consulted the bylaw, and it does not give an age. So we can change this on our own.]*
- b. We discussed the possibility of producing a shorter newsletter, perhaps a tri-fold, containing only announcements/information about the COA's programs, including announcements about the first Dementia and Digital Equity programs.
- c. We also need to research whether it would be cheaper to produce it inhouse, as we used to. Linda Avis Scott, long-time chair, told us it was cheaper to use Adams Direct

Mail Services; JS said she would look into the cost of a trifold, perhaps to be sent to every Shutesbury household.

- d. Needed: a new editor: how to advertise for a volunteer to take on that one task? [See below for possibilities.]
- e. It was suggested that we might ask for an increased line on the town budget to cover newsletter expenses.

5. Communication: other means

- a. Our webpage: we need to advertise it widely.
- b. Without Janis, we have no webmaster: can we advertise for someone to keep our webpage up? Need not be a member: can be a volunteer with this one task.
- c. Town Announce
- d. Nextdoor: where we cannot identify ourselves as town officials: it is unlikely that we can use it to look for editor and web master for a town committee!
- e. Flyers—to be produced inhouse, distributed at events like Lunch and Foot Clinic—and at Town Meeting and Local Election; posted at PO, Library, Leverett Co-op, Town Hall, and local churches?
- f. Article in Our Town newsletter. Material due when?
- g. Article(s) in other local newsletters: VN Newsletter? Can we advertise in the VN newsletter for help? Ask JS. *If it seemed relevant, what about the NewSalemNews?*
- h. *Who could draw up a good-looking flyer? Is there a Shutesbury VN member who might help? Ask JS. [Someone volunteered their skills at the recent Lunch: was it our new town administrator?]*

6. Other announced business

- a. Dementia grant planning is just beginning. SM is attending the planning meetings. A main contribution of the COAs is expected to be publicity: through our various meetings and any written materials either mailed or posted online.
- b. Restarting MedRides is probably not for the immediate future: we have too much else on our plate.
- c. Mary Jo was to be interviewed, but speeding up the process to provide us with a quorum because of the loss of Janis, Mary Jo was appointed by the Select Board in their meeting of 4/8/2025.

7. Unanticipated business:

- 1. Should we start the process of making Janis an Honorary Member? Then what about other past members who provided distinguished service? Decided we need more time to think and talk about this question.
- 2. We decided to ask the Select Board to reduce our membership from seven to five so it will be easier for us to have a quorum. We will still look for additional members; we would be happy to have volunteer helpers who take on one particular task.

8. Adjournment at 7:01 pm.

9. Next Meeting: Wed, May 14 at 5:30

Next Community Lunch: May 7, noon to one.

