

Holliston Council on Aging
Minutes of the Regular Monthly Meeting
April 14, 2021 - 2:00PM

Members Present:

Kathy Anguish, Millie Bedard, Yvette Cain, Frank Caron, Carmen Chiango, Bob Hopkins, Bob Malone

Associates Present:

Shirley Hopkins

Staff Present:

Lisa Borchetta, Bryan Perkins, Marty Schneier

Others Present:

Linda Marshall, Consultant; Chris Cain, Holliston Reporter

The meeting was convened in person, with adequate social distancing and masks, in the Senior Center great hall.

Bob Malone called the meeting to order at 2:00PM. A quorum was present. There were no public comments.

Linda Marshall was called on to introduce our new Senior Center Director – Lisa Borchetta. Lisa spoke a bit about her background, and her pleasure and excitement at joining the Holliston Senior Center. Lisa was welcomed by Bob Malone and Council members.

For Chair's comments, Bob Malone announced the appointment of a nominating committee chaired by Frank Caron, joined by Millie Bedard, to develop and bring to the June meeting a slate of officers for the program year 2021 – 2022. He also noted the Senior Support Foundation (SSF) will be meeting tomorrow and will be talking about possible fund raising efforts in the coming year.

The minutes of the March 10, 2021 meeting were offered for approval. Yvette noted two corrections, and the minutes were approved unanimously (with motion by Bob Hopkins, second by Frank) with those corrections. A corrected copy of the minutes will be provided. Also it was noted, with thanks, that Yvette had prepared minutes of the special January 2021 meeting and the regular February 2021 meeting. They will be reviewed and offered for approval at the May meeting.

As was agreed with Lisa, Linda then presented the Director's report; first item was building issues. Renovations are still going on, with painting, ceiling tiles, and carpeting installation. Kitchen cabinets are ordered for installation. Work remains on the great hall.

With approximately \$10,000 remaining in the original capital expense line, Linda and James Keast, town Facilities Manager, have discussed replacing the flooring in the great hall and Good As New shop. The cost would be approximately \$14,500. A review of the current budget indicates that there will likely be a surplus of unspent funds in the FY2021 budget. Upon recommendation of Linda and James, a motion was made by Bob Hopkins, seconded by Millie, to allow the Director (Lisa) to make line item transfers of unspent funds in the utilities and communications lines for FY2021 of up to \$4,500 to the building maintenance line to meet the needs for additional funding for new flooring. The motion was passed unanimously.

The Center has received another \$400 from the Superette donation jar. This collection has now totaled over \$4,000 since inception, a remarkable expression of support for a modest effort. Much thanks to Chris and the Superette for maintaining this donation program.

A grant has been submitted to the Metrowest Health Foundation for one large and two smaller tents, outdoor chairs, and a storage shed to facilitate outdoor programs, in the amount of \$9,500. Linda expects to hear about the results of this submission shortly. In the event we are not successful with this grant, Linda has explored the possibility of paying for these items with a request for CARES Act funding. In the event that becomes necessary, the Council adopted a resolution (moved by Bob Hopkins, seconded by Yvette) for Lisa to request such funding in the amount of \$9,500 from CARES funds. The vote was unanimous.

The staff continues to offer programs as possible, with the use of zoom and drive-by participation. On Tuesday, April 20 there will be a Volunteer Appreciation pick-up brunch at Anthony's On The Green, and Tuesday May 4 will be a drive-by hello and goodbye celebration to say goodbye to Linda and hello to Lisa. In that vein, Linda will be organizing a number of limited capacity and covid-safe "meet and greet" meetings to meet Lisa in person, starting May 11.

The SSF monthly breakfast series will begin again with a drive-by breakfast on Tuesday, May 11. Also the Summer Sizzler is scheduled for June 21 at 12 Noon.

There has been no response to the advertisement for a part time driver, but funds from the BayPath grant and MAPC transportation grant have been used to provide taxi service as necessary.

Requests for funding from the SSF were presented by Linda for \$100 for the May breakfast (credit card), and \$120 tip for the Appreciation Brunch for Anthony's (cash). A motion to make the request was made by Bob Hopkins, seconded by Millie, and voted unanimously.

Linda was asked about reopening plans for the Center. She reported that the town (in the person of Chief Cassidy) provides guidance for safe gathering and the proper distancing and preparations for our facilities, and we strictly follow these guidelines. Outdoor gathering may become possible in the near term, but it will be limited and guided by safe gathering protocols. For the immediate future there is a strict limit on the number of persons allowed in the Center (as in other town buildings), and regathering for classes and programs as with pre-pandemic levels is some time in the future.

The Council turned to a request for support from Mary Greendale of a potential town meeting article. This article proposes the establishment of a Comprehensive Long Range Planning Committee that would develop a vision statement for the town and a subsequent plan to bring that vision into reality. There was spirited discussion, most particularly about how the establishment of such a committee would be supportive of and impact the perception and delivery of services to our senior population. Some elements of such a task, such as the preparation of relevant demographic data, were applauded as helpful to identify the growth and trends of the composition of the senior population, and might highlight the growth in this segment of our population. However, two aspects of the proposal brought vividly expressed concern. The first was the apparent lopsided composition of such a committee, with only one seat for a member of the senior community and heavy weight of school community representation. The other was related; the concern that priorities for advancing and addressing senior issues would continue to be a problem in the face of other, perhaps more organized, calls for financial and organizational support. In the past, even in the face of demonstrated demographics (growth and projections of senior population, decrease in school enrollment, growth in senior registered voters, percent of tax revenue attributed to seniors) it has been challenging to garner support from town leadership for a significant priority for funding for senior issues. The disparity is still evident in the per-capita appropriation of town budget dollars – over \$2,000 per student for enrolled student population, approximately \$62 per senior. (It was noted that the current Select Board has been demonstrably more supportive of senior issues.)

After much discussion, it was the unanimously-held opinion of the Council that we would not take a position either in favor of or against the proposal, but would be favorably disposed to review the question again in light of more information as to the composition of the committee and deeper understanding of how town-wide priorities might be reflected and described. The Chair was directed to communicate our current position to Ms. Greendale.

Under old business, Chair Malone described the process of minute taking, currently done by volunteer. He has been willing to take minutes when he is available, and other volunteers have stepped up when he is away. He then described the Library system, with a list of rotating minute-takers. For the present, Bob M. is willing to continue as the primary taker of minutes, but perhaps the Council might want to revisit the question at the annual meeting. Members were asked to think about this.

Finally, chair Malone noted the exceptional work that has been done by our staff in the face of the pandemic, in keeping services to our seniors at as reasonable a level as possible. They have been extraordinarily responsive, creative, and even-tempered in the face of the many challenges, and the Council is grateful for their fine work.

On motion made by Bob Hopkins, seconded by Frank, the meeting was adjourned at 3:18PM, by unanimous vote. The next meeting of the Council will be Wednesday, May 12, at 2:00PM at the Center.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Robert Malone