

Town of Natick

Council on Aging Board – Meeting Minutes

POSTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF M.G.L. CHAPTER 30A, §§ 18-25, AS AMENDED

January 12, 2026 2:00 PM

HYBRID MEETING

- 1) **Welcome & Roll Call:** The meeting was called to order by Saul Beaumont at 2:02 PM and roll call attendance was confirmed. There was a quorum.

Board Member Attendance: Saul Beaumont, Jim Fitzgerald, Mark Frankel, Linda Jaffe (Zoom), Fonda Mangino, Paula Panchuck, Sal Pandolfo (Zoom), Debra Shaw (Zoom), Mal Sockol, Jan Sewell (Zoom), Laura Forker

Associate Member Attendance: Connie Pitt (Zoom), Christine Weithman

Natick COA Staff Attendance: Donna Tarutz, Director of Council on Aging & Human Services

Liaison Attendance: Richard Sidney, Town Select Board Liaison

Guest Attendance: Cliff Scott

- 2) **Public Comments:** No comments.

- 3) **Speaker:** none.

- 4) **December Minutes Approval:**

Minor updates were made. Sal made a motion to approve and Mal seconded the motion. All approved. (Saul-Yes, Jim-Yes, Mark-Yes, Linda-Yes, Fonda-Yes, Paula-Yes, Sal-Yes, Debra-Yes, Mal-Yes, Jan-Yes, Laura-Yes: 11-Yes, 0-No)

- 5) **Announcements**

Status on the grant question from last meeting. There was not enough time to react to this one. Town works grants regularly. If you find out information related to a grant, send it to Donna and copy Saul as soon as you can.

- 6) **Chair's Report – Saul Beaumont**

The Annual report is in process. (This is approximately a one page document.)

- 7) **Town Staff Report** - Donna Tarutz, Director of Council on Aging and Human Services

- a) Donna is going out on February 11th for a period due to knee surgery. Angela will cover COA functions while Donna is out.
- b) Key upcoming activities: COA and Dept of Human Services. Book group - 17 people signed up and it will start soon. Morse Library will also provide a monthly tech session for the NCSC.
- c) March 5th, the Needham Bank will provide its first talk on financial abuse. It will be a Phishing and spoofing presentation.
- d) SAFE program will focus on online shopping safety.
- e) Debbie Bud is working on hoarding program with Wayland Council on Aging
- f) "Care starts hear" program will be on gut health. It will be on Jan 22nd at NCSC.
- g) Making sense of assisted living program and home safety workshop (walking hazards) are coming up.

- i) Question: Could these programs be on Zoom? (Debbie will find out about this)
- h) Art of concertina cards (greeting cards) is coming up..
- i) AARP will be in to help people with their taxes. (note AARP also has a home fit program).
- j) Drama - Shakespeare program is coming up with Stuart from Boston College
- k) Walnut Hill is coming to do performances at NCSC.
- l) Donna is working on the trips. (Question: Do we need competing quotes? Thought earlier meeting stated if under \$9,999.99 it was not required.) See Brian Leblanc about procurement rules to clarify this.
- m) Can the COA report that goes into the State be shared with the COA Board? Donna will provide that copy.

8) Subcommittee and Workgroup Reports

a. Housing Subcommittee –Jim Fitzgerald (Linda, Paula):

- Working on the strategic planning goal.
- Will be attending a lottery meeting regarding Union Street 62+ housing on Zoom.

b. Governance Subcommittee - (Sal, Connie)

No meeting and no report. Going to meet to revise rules on Associate Members increasing their tenure from one to three years. Article 10 - last page effective date Natick COA is approved by Select Board = either get on consent agenda or remove that line. The Select Board recommends removing the line. Note, the latest governance update (from Fall of 2025) was added to the Google Drive.

c. Strategic Planning Subcommittee - Paula/Jan (Jim):

- Established a fifth goal so now we have five. They were shown on the Zoom screen.
- 1) Community Engagement and Awareness
 - 2) Quality Programming
 - 3) Advocacy and Resources
 - 4) Volunteer Opportunities
 - 5) Strategic Planning

A template was shown that will be used and now we are working with each subcommittee and workgroup to establish appropriate goals for the strategic plan in their areas. .

Questions/comments: Is there value to add key partners and stakeholders to the template? Also a column for risk? These will be considered at the next Strategic Planning subcommittee meeting. How do these goals compare to the previous strategic plan? Some of the goals are carryovers from the last version of the plan.

Speaker workgroup requested to know when Strategic Planning needs a big chunk of time at COA Board meeting so they can avoid scheduling a speaker for that meeting.

d. Health Workgroup - (Fonda, Mark, Jan, Debbie)

The workgroup has been looking at neighboring towns' health related programs. Currently Investigating how to get the Town of Natick involved in healthy active aging week/month (September). One recommendation is to send information on the topic to our Select Board liaison, Rich, so he can make the Select Board aware of it. Question: what is lead time to make sure that programming matches the needs of Healthy Aging week? (Answer was at least 2 months).

e. Safety Workgroup: (Laura, Jim, Mal):

- 1) We would like to develop a Simple SCAMS / FRAUD poster.
- 2) Two new articles on Seniors being scammed here in Natick. SPA scam and a Popup scam from Microsoft. Two articles on these are included in the google drive with these minutes.
- 3) Seniors should be wary of buying online tickets from third parties to events as it can often easily lead to overpaying by mistake.
- 4) Pedestrian safety is a concern especially near the 9/27 project. It was noted that the town has a plan for pedestrians relative to this project. Visit the Town website to sign up for updates on the project.
- 5) We would like to increase advertising of available public transportation. It is not just for disabled persons. COA Staff member Katie Carew has is working on programs to increase public awareness on all our transportation options. COA Staff are open to suggestions to increase that awareness even more.

f. Speakers Workgroup: Sal Pandolfo (Chris Weithman)

The workgroup suggests that we plan on trying to have a speaker on a quarterly basis. The Safety Workgroup stated they would provide a request for a speaker in March.

g. Programs Workgroup: (TBD)

The purpose and focus of this workgroup was discussed. Further definition is required.

9) Liaison Reports

- a. Dementia Friendly Community Update – Paula Panchuck
 - Action team meeting will meet for the 2nd time tomorrow (Jan 13th). 11 people will be trained. Draft of brochure and draft of leader and participant guides have been developed. Next meeting we will be able to see those documents.
- b. Town Select Board Liaison Report: Richard Sidney
 - The Town is renovating the audio visual system in Town Hall. This should improve Zoom accessibility.
- c. Springwell - Debra Shaw
 - No meeting in December. Next meeting is January 28th.
- d. Friends of Natick Community Senior Center - Donna Tarutz
 - Meeting is tomorrow (Jan 13th). Some programs will be presented to get funding.

10) Board items

- Please send your thoughts to Saul on how you would like to see Johnson School property used in the future. Examples are Senior low cost housing, outdoor intergenerational space, community gardens for seniors, and expansion area of NCSC programs. Please provide inputs to Saul by Friday January 16th.

11) Next Meeting Date: Monday February 9, 2026. 2 PM.

12) Adjournment: The agenda was completed at 3:47 pm. Mal moved to adjourn, Sal seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

(Saul-Yes, Jim-Yes, Mark-Yes, Linda-Yes, Fonda-Yes, Paula-Yes, Sal-Yes, Debra-Yes, Mal-Yes, Jan-Yes, Laura-Yes: 11-Yes, 0-No)

Respectfully submitted by Jim Fitzgerald, COA Secretary