

**Town of Natick
Council on Aging Board Committee
Monday, September 11, 2023**

Minutes

Board Members in Attendance: Alan Blevins, Saul Beaumont; Elaina Danahy; Linda Jaffe; Karen Oakley; Paula Panchuck, Connie Pitt; Judy Sabol; Mal Sockol

Board Members Absent: Harriet Merkwitz; Sue Peters

Associate Members Present: Sal Pandolfo

Guest Speaker – Grace O’Donnell, Volunteer Services Program Manager

COA Staff: Lorraine McNally, Deputy Director, Council on Aging and Human Services

Chair Judy Sabol opened the meeting at 7:01 pm and welcomed board members and staff. Welcome to Paula Panchuck and Alan Blevins. Introductions were done by all members.

1) **Public Concerns**— None

2) **Guest Speaker:** Grace O’Donnell, Volunteer Services Program Manager

- a) Grace’s role is an expanded volunteer services role for Organic Farm, Park & Rec, Sassamon Golf, Veteran’s Services, and Council on Aging. It does not include Springwell; it is for all Natick Community Services. Donna Campbell is the local lead for Springwell Meals on Wheels. Trying to get the Natick Website updated.
- b) Different tracking required for state and local reporting. Several nuances in what counts for which reporting.
- c) Grace provides training to new volunteers. Recruits volunteers and works with town departments to define volunteer opportunities. Examples of volunteer programs are delivery of Farm shares, Sages and Seekers with Natick High students and Olin College senior design projects. Future opportunities are leaf raking for seniors, holiday dinner, volunteer recognition, and spring activities. Grace also fills short quick requests.
- d) Thank you to the volunteers who helped with Natick Days including Alan Blevins, Judy Sabol, Linda Jaffe.
- e) Property Tax workoff program is for senior Natick homeowners within specified income limits (tied to LIHEAP – Limited Income Heating Energy Assistance Program). Residents volunteer for a town department up to 100 hours between October 1 and June for up to \$1500 tax credit. Grace will send an email asking anyone that would like to donate their hours as a proxy. Credit hourly rate is based on minimum wage.
- f) List opportunities in the Newsletter to help expand awareness for volunteers.
- g) Myvolunteerpage.com is where we log our volunteer hours. Grace will send out an email with instructions. Log in and go to site guide. Grace assigns the activities available for users. Request all members to log their hours. An excel spreadsheet will be distributed with the meeting dates, length, and who attended for FY23. Do not log meals on wheels hours. Please update FY23 hours by end of September.

- 3) **Chair's Report-** Judy Sabol, Chair
 - a) Review of the proposed slate of officers. Elaina Danahy presented the slate of candidates: Elaina Danahy for Chair, Mal Sockol for Vice Chair, Connie Pitt for Secretary. Alan Blevins moved to accept the slate of candidates as proposed; Karen Oakley seconded. The motion passed 9-0-0, unanimous in favor.
- 4) **Deputy Director's Report** – Lorraine McNally
 - a) Staff Updates – Anna started as new Admin Assistant, Dan hired as new Building Monitor. Posting soon for another receptionist.
 - b) Program & Services Updates:
 - i) Adding a number of evening programs to schedule including dance and yoga. New exercise classes and some art classes added during the day including some at higher cost.
 - ii) Open Enrollment for Medicare is October 15 to December 7. SHINE appointments are available. 3 SHINE counselors are available for scheduling; 2 in person and 1 over the phone.
 - iii) EOE report requires the volunteer hours as well as programs and participant statistics.
 - iv) Beginner pickleball class on Friday is now 2 hours from 12:15-2:15pm.
 - v) Fitness Room door has been repaired and will be locked starting next week.
 - vi) The muscle building classes are back-to-back starting at 9am. The time is due to the instructor availability and popularity of the class.
 - vii) 11,000 people receive the email for the Newsletter. Open rate is 40% which is higher than industry average.
 - viii) Migrants coming into Massachusetts and struggling with housing, school services, etc. in local towns. Meeting held to expand awareness for Emergency Response team in Natick. Keep awareness.
 - c) HVAC system has been tuned and appears to be working much better. Need to keep Gym and Great Room doors closed for it to work well.
- 5) **Subcommittee and Work Group update**
 - a) Pickleball Workgroup – Mal Sockol – 8 hours of free pickleball weekly. Natick is known for this. Beginners is a friendly group on Friday for those new to Pickleball.
- 6) **Liaison Reports**
 - a) Friends of the Natick Senior Center—Karen Oakley – Annual meeting is September 12, at 10am.
 - b) Springwell Elder Services—Harriet Merkowitz – No Updates
- 7) **Board Concerns—**
 - a) Wellness Fair at Keefe Tech sponsored by Karen Spilka. October 14, 9-1:30, RSVP.
- 8) **Deputy Director Concerns** – Lorraine handed out the org chart requested previously.
- 9) **Secretary's Report**—Minutes of August 14, 2023, were reviewed. Linda Jaffe made a motion to approve the minutes; Mal Sockol seconded. The motion passed (9-0-0).
- 10) Alan Blevins made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Elaina Danahy seconded. The motion carried (9-0-0). Judy Sabol declared the meeting adjourned at 8:31 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Connie Pitt, Secretary