

Dover Council on Aging Board Minutes Tuesday, May 5, 2020

Present: B. Cocks, J. Connolly, M. Dilg, B. Hagan, C. Johnston, R. Townsend, G. Wise
Staff: J. Claypoole

Meeting called to order at 9:30 a.m. via Zoom video conferencing

COVID-19 Update

Outreach -- J. Claypoole began by requesting the Board to consider how they may help with projects as staff work on services, programs, and re-entry plans. Town buildings remain closed to the public. She reported on the following:

Outreach services are conducted by COA staff N. Vaida and S. Sheridan from home with outreach also by J. Claypoole. A. Thompson and J. Claypoole organized outreach/wellbeing check in calls to all seniors aged 75 and older (over 450 seniors) utilizing staff, volunteers from COA and Friends Boards, and Town volunteers. A script was prepared for volunteers to use for calls. Volunteers call seniors once a week or every other week and report to COA on calls and any concerns. Staff also call other seniors at risk or caregivers needing support. N. Vaida and J. Claypoole enter data from calls directly into My Senior Center, and A. Thompson is tracking and supporting volunteers. Staff have limited time in office and work remotely to limit exposure. With the core of COA workers not in office --the six Senior Property Tax Work Off workers--staff is behind in data entry. We hope to activate these workers soon so they may provide support.

Seniors are sharing on calls that they are feeling overwhelmed, depressed, isolated and frustrated on how long this will continue. Some are fearful for their health. J. Connolly asked are these symptoms manifested in their life by people who are living alone? J. Claypoole replied, yes, most of these people are living alone, while some are caregivers and/or dealing with a chronic health condition. J. Connolly mentioned that one thing that she is hearing that most influences senior's lives and which gives them a good feeling is going out for long walks. Is there a way for someone to go for a walk with them and keep their distance? C. Johnston said the easiest place to walk is around Town Hall. Suggestions also included volunteers to help seniors move chairs outside to get fresh air, or a friend to call and ask them to go for a walk. J. Claypoole will share ideas with the Volunteer Coordinator, add questions to script for outreach calls, and check in with COVID-19 Task Force and Board of Health on program options. Currently, people over 60 are advised to stay home, social distance, and limit exposure to others.

The Town COVID-19 Preparedness Task Force meets twice weekly and a subgroup is exploring formation of a Covid-19 Community Resource Center ("CCRC") as all calls and emails are currently coming into the COA. J. Claypoole is receiving at least 100 emails a day. The CCRC would be staffed with medical/healthcare volunteers to field COVID-19 questions/requests through an information phone line, separate from the COA. The CCRC will be modeled on how the COA has been working these past few weeks. J. Claypoole is a member of the task force and

on the subcommittee and is communicating with members that COA staff cannot take on more than they are currently doing. B. Cocks asked for estimated numbers of calls received regarding depression, meals, etc. J Claypoole replied that staff and volunteers were reaching out to 450 people over 75 years or older as well as those younger with chronic health issues with multiple calls. S. Sheridan has approximately 65 people on her call list. N. Vaida also has a substantial call list and spends longer time with each call in developing care plans and providing resources and support. She and J. Claypoole manage the crisis calls.

Volunteers – The COA is designated as the point of contact for all volunteers for the Town of Dover during COVID-19 and for any information calls regarding COVID-19. COA volunteers are delivering meals and bread, grocery shopping, picking up and delivering medications, and taking rubbish to Transfer Station for seniors. Younger volunteers are creating cards and artwork, decorating delivery bags, and writing notes. A pen pal program has started with seven children and seniors. After seven weeks of COVID-19 services, COA is checking in with volunteers and deciding how to use their experience to benefit the Town and support the COA. Over 100 volunteers have volunteered through the town’s website.

Meals have been delivered the past three weeks. COA began by providing 40 meals the first week and the past two weeks have increased to 70 seniors. Last week 10 volunteers took 6 or 7 meals each out to deliver. Volunteers provided feedback that this task makes them feel good and they want to continue to support the COA and the seniors. Donations from Blue Moon Bagel Cafe and BJs Wholesale of bread and baked goods are becoming an overwhelming task to manage. Pick up is three nights per week with over 50 people currently on the bread delivery list. Extra food is delivered weekly to Salvation Army shelter in Cambridge. In future, extra food will also go to local food pantries. C. Johnston asked the cost of the meals and who is paying. Costs have ranged from \$10/meal to \$5.50/meal and are paid from the COA’s operating budget. BayPath Elder Services offers a Meal on Wheels program and delivers twice a week. G. Thisse reached out to BayPath and COA staff also contacted BayPath to see if eligibility criteria has changed with the public health crisis. Seniors requesting this service must contact BayPath directly to verify they meet their eligibility and criteria standards.

R. Townsend asked if we had applied for the Dover Foundation grant. J. Claypoole replied that every day has been so full that she did not get to it. Ruth stated funds may be accessed next year. The COA has available funds for meals at this time. J. Claypoole contacted A. Kence at Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital in Needham and received permission to shift the \$1,000.00 falls prevention grant to be used for COVID-19 needs. J. Connolly suggested establishing guidelines for ourselves as well as the community. We should define what we are able to do within the community. What are COA’s capabilities and resources? Our list should be culled to those who are in actual need. She suggested asking the volunteers to call people who receive meals and bread to see if they really need these deliveries. J. Claypoole asked for input on printing a COA newsletter or mini-newsletter to share information as there are no volunteers to help with mailing and information will be outdated by the time it is delivered. B. Cocks said the focus of the town is to use the town website. Discussion took place on how many people would look at the town’s website versus read our newsletter. Discussion also took place on how to put

together the newsletter and send it out.

Virtual Programs – J. Claypoole reported that virtual classes are very well received. There are 4 fitness classes a week on Zoom and mat and chair yoga on Dover Cable TV. Ukulele is now a Zoom class. The Dover Cultural Council has agreed to shift Tricia Silverman’s grant to “12 Tips for Boosting Your Immune System” which will take place on May 15 via Zoom. The following weeks, it will be broadcast on Dover Cable TV. Many other COAs are also using Cable TV.

Other town COA’s reported they are preparing for budget cuts in FY 20 and FY21. MCOA states that the FY21 state Formula Grant may be cut due to reduced revenues for the State. Town has indicated no cuts for current FY and is reviewing next FY budgets. If Town Meeting cannot be held safely before end of June, the FY20 budget levels will remain in effect and Departments may only spend 1/12 of budget each month with monthly reporting required to State by Town.

C. Johnston asked how the Board can help. J. Claypoole replied she would like the Board to help write the newsletter. Each board member can take a topic for which they can write a blurb. She can use people to help organize obtaining fresh produce for the community. J. Connolly mentioned that she is organizing a senior-to senior card project for DSHS Class of 2020. The seniors of the community will reach out to seniors who are graduating. But this is proving to be challenging and expensive. There are 190 seniors graduating. Sherborn will pay for their part of this project. M. Dilg suggested instead of sending out cards why not place a large ad in the local newspaper congratulating our graduating seniors. M. Dilg also suggested the possibility of placing a banner on the Town Common.

C. Johnston asked if COA is using local vendors for services. COA has approached Dover Market, which is very busy with local deliveries. COA used Basil’s in Medfield, Bill’s Pizza in Natick, and TJ’s in Ashland to provide individual packaged meals for delivery. We are trying to support local vendors and it is unclear how long we can sustain these meal deliveries. J. Connolly suggested using gift cards to markets. J. Claypoole suggested utilizing a portion of the Beth Israel Deaconess Friends grant. After discussion it was decided to use the \$1,000.00 grant money to purchase \$25 gift cards from Dover Market and distribute to those in need or place a gift card in a meal that is being delivered to a senior. M. Dilg will talk to L. Pettit on this subject and it should fit within the Friends parameters. Dover Legion and St. Dunstan’s food/supply pantries have partnered with COA to provide items to the community. Permission has been received from Town, Board of Health, and Police Chief to set up a pick up site at the rear of the Community Center for drive through pick up. COA is considering this option for food, supplies and fresh produce pick up. M. Dilg was concerned with the possibility of having a long line of traffic if only one day for pick up. J. Claypoole responded that she had spoken to the Police Chief and he suggested having residents pre-schedule when they would pick up food. Meals would still be delivered to residents who cannot leave their homes.

Board Member Items

There were no Board member items.

Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made at 11:15 a.m. by B. Cocks and seconded by C. Johnston. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Dilg
Secretary