

Harvard Council on Aging
Board of Directors Meeting
November 21, 2011

Present: Lucy Wallace, Fran Nickerson, Katie Petrossi, Bonnie Sweeney, Pam Frederick, Connie Larrabee, Debbie Thompson
Absent: Carlene Phillips, Mike Peters, Sharon Briggs
Guest: Pat White

Call to order: 4: 15 p.m.

The minutes of the October 17, 2011 Board of Directors meeting were approved as submitted.

There was no treasurer's report due to Sharon's absence.

Fiscal 2013 Budget

Debbie went over revisions to the proposed COA budget for fiscal 2013. Our original budget request had to be revised after the Finance Director disallowed projected staff increases in the next five years and also the requested transfer of the MART dispatcher from the Finance Department to Hildreth House. But after a lengthy discussion, board members agreed that the proposed MART transfer is a reasonable and entirely appropriate request and should remain in the budget. Therefore, the board voted unanimously to re-insert a line in the revised COA budget for the MART dispatcher, which would be offset by MART reimbursement, and to carry that line forward in future years. Board members further agreed that the new budget and its accompanying narrative would be submitted with an addendum explaining the board's position. The proposed FY13 budget was then approved by a unanimous vote, as was the projected budget for the next five years.

Old Business

Senior tax work-off: Debbie reported that the work-off year has ended and that not all the money was spent. This was partly due to the early perception that participants would be unable to get the customary 93 hours, which caused some people to drop out. In the end one person did get 93 hours and others could have, but didn't for one reason or another. The board agreed that we should push to maintain funding for this important program at least at its present level, and work out a more effective way of managing it. There was a short discussion about whether the program should be income-restricted and how that might be implemented.

Director's Report:

The COA is now CORI certified and the first CORI checks for recent volunteers have been done online. This should reduce turnaround time to 3 to 7 days.

The Girl Scouts are coming November 22 with pies and treats to enjoy lunch with seniors. The Girl Scout Holiday Tea is scheduled for Wednesday, December 7 from 2 to 3:30 at Holy Trinity Parish. Board members were encouraged to attend.

Debbie suggested it would be nice to hold a holiday party at Hildreth House this year. The board agreed it's too late now to plan anything elaborate but that something celebratory could be arranged at a Tuesday lunch. Debbie will work on it. Next year, several board members suggested that we consider holding a holiday open house, or a craft fair like the Sixty Plus Club used to have.

At a recent meeting with the new director of Minuteman senior services, Debbie found that the agency could deliver hot lunches twice a week – Tuesday and Thursday – if at least 10 people participate. This would be a way of continuing the new Thursday lunch program, which has been prepared by volunteers and as a tax work-off project. It is also possible to have hot Meals on Wheels delivered on the same days, which would give homebound seniors a break from frozen entrees.

Debbie is certain there are residents who qualify for these meals who aren't getting them, and the board agreed that more publicity about the program could help.

A new MART van driver has been hired and will hopefully complete his required training by December.

H.E.A.T applications are up on the town website, and we also have Farm Workers applications for state fuel assistance for qualified residents.

Debbie's shoulder surgery is scheduled for December 28th. She will be out for two weeks, with Bill and Maria filling in as needed, and will handle payroll and emails on her home computer.

Hildreth House Renovation and Expansion

Lucy reviewed a list of Hildreth House requirements for code compliance as well as accommodation of existing programs and expansion for future needs. The list will be used to begin formulating designs for renovation and expansion. The list includes: a covered entrance, gathering and reception space, 4 offices, a small conference room/wellness office, a computer lab, a classroom for 30 people, a dining room for 50 occupants and storage space for tables and chairs, a catering kitchen, small parlor, game room, handicap-accessible bathrooms on both floors, storage room, an elevator, and fire-safe stairwells at both ends of the building. The kitchen, dining room, bathrooms, and elevator would probably all be new space.

Electronic Attendance: After January 1, 2012, board members can participate in meetings electronically as long as a quorum is physically present. State law allows electronic attendance for reasons of illness, disability, or physical distance.

The next COA board meeting is scheduled for December 19 at 4 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Connie Larrabee