

Harvard Council on Aging
Board of Directors Meeting
February 21 2012

Present: Lucy Wallace, Fran Nickerson, Pam Frederick, Connie Larrabee, Mike Peters , Sharon Briggs, Katie Petrossi, Bonnie Sweeny, Debbie Thompson

Absent: Carlene Phillips

Guests: Marie Sobalvarro, Rick Maiore

Call to order: 4 p.m. at Hildreth House.

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

The treasurer's report was approved as submitted. Sharon said there are still some accounting corrections to be made, but that the numbers in her report are solid. Two new forms have been designed: (1) to report and track credit card expenses so data entry will reflect appropriate town budget accounts, and (2) to collect data, track, and report Revolving Account expenses and revenue associated with COA trips.

Tax Relief Update

Marie Sobalvarro and Rick Maiore explained three initiatives being considered to provide additional property tax relief for elderly residents. The first is a new tax exemption based on similar programs in Hamilton and Sudbury, and would require passage of a home rule petition by Town Meeting and the legislature. The second is an extension of the existing state circuit breaker, which would provide up to \$970 in local property tax relief to qualified residents. The third is a provision that would allow a proxy to perform tax work-off duties for someone who is physically unable to do the work.

Rick, who heads a committee studying the issue, said the goal is to have a broad array of programs to benefit the greatest number of recipients. He asked for the board's opinion and recommendations. The selectmen are considering the proposals and must decide whether any or all of them will be on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant.

After a brief discussion, board members agreed that we are clearly in favor of the proxy provision, but need more information about the other two before making a recommendation. All three could be on the Warrant, and the COA would be expected to address the issue.

New Business

Lucy reported that a draft warrant article for the proposed new part-time clerk/receptionist at Hildreth House has been submitted, and that the position will not need to be reviewed by the Personnel Board. The job will include dispatching the MART van, scheduling drivers, preparing reports, and doing other MART – related work, as well as general clerical and receptionist duties. Funding for the position will come from MART.

Hildreth House Renovation and Construction

After lunch on Tuesday, March 6, the COA will sponsor an informational program about the proposed renovations and addition to Hildreth House. Architect Drayton Fair will explain the conceptual plans and respond to questions, comments, and/or suggestions. The program is scheduled from 1 to 2 p.m. at Hildreth House.

Director's Report

Following up on an earlier decision to help keep Hildreth House more presentable, board members volunteered to periodically clean various rooms. Lucy and Bonnie will take responsibility for the kitchen and pantry; Connie will work on the parlor, upstairs hall, and front stairway; Katie will clean the computer lab, Pam will handle Bill's office, and Bonnie will take charge of the living room cleanup, hopefully with the help of volunteers from the National Honor Society. Debbie will contact Bromfield Principal Jim O'Shea about Honor Society participation. Debbie and Maria gave the dining room a good cleaning a month or so ago, and both of their offices were thoroughly cleaned prior to their relocation in the fall.

Eighteen people have signed up for the tax work-off program, one of whom will manage the program. A few are still without job assignments. Lucille Hughes and Lisa Robinson will continue cooking the Thursday lunch, taking alternate months.

The next monthly newsletter will be the last one mailed to anyone who has not specifically asked for mail delivery. Otherwise, newsletters will be available electronically and/or in printed form at the library, General Store, Town Hall, and Hannaford's in Ayer.

The COA post office box (#615) was up for renewal so Debbie decided to save the \$58 cost since we receive mail at Town Hall. The Friends of the CO post office box is still active and Debbie is looking for someone to take charge of the key and check the box periodically.

Maria will be on vacation for two weeks starting February 20, and Bill will be away for two weeks starting February 27. Deb has a list of people who have volunteered to help and will call them as needed.

Debbie will be on bereavement leave on Friday, February 24; Bill will cover the office from 9-3.

Video Project

Mike has finished filming and editing is in progress. The video will be shown on Harvard's cable channel, and there was also talk of a regular COA cable show, which could include a dramatic rendition of the monthly calendar. Or not.

The next COA board meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 19, 2012 at 4 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 6 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Connie Larrabee