

**COUNCIL ON
AGING
MEETING
MINUTES**

April 6, 2015

Upton Senior Center – 2 Farm Street, Upton, MA 01568

In Attendance: Chair Myra Bigelow, Vice Chair Maria Griffin, Members Richard Provost, Grace Wadsworth, Annette Castonguay, Betty Consigli, Department Specialist Bernadette Denson, Social Service Coordinator Jessica D’Amato, COA Director Janice Nowicki, visitors Gladys Mckinstry and Shelly Ryan. Secretary Judi Blanchard was not able to attend.

1
2 The monthly meeting of the Council on Aging was called to order Monday, April 6, 2015 at 9:04
3 a.m. by Chair Myra Bigelow. The March 2nd meeting minutes were reviewed and a motion was
4 made to approve. Motion was seconded, unanimous vote of the Board followed.

5
6 **DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

7 Janice discussed the many events held at The Center in February despite the snow and cold
8 weather. The Birthday Bash was well attended. The Art Projects continue with the children
9 from Miscoe’s afterschool program. The Men’s Club Supper was delicious as usual. The last
10 day for AARP tax preparations is April 10. Senator Moore’s office held office hours in March but
11 April’s hours are cancelled due to Patriot’s Day. Mike Harris from State Representative David
12 Muradian’s office was at The Center holding office hours.

13
14 Jill Carey did a great job organizing and hosting “The Spring Fling”! We are looking forward to
15 making this an annual event. Jan’s sister, Patricia Read presented “Keep Your Brain Sharp”. Pat
16 will be helping with the Stroke support group and will be presenting additional programs in the
17 future. Participants really enjoyed the class taught by Darrell Crowell, painting a beautiful
18 ocean scene. We plan on having Darrell back in the near future to teach another class. Johnny
19 Diamond was wonderful with 40 people in attendance. Jan booked him for our Christmas party
20 on December 18th. The Saint Patty’s Day party went well. Bernadette’s daughter created the
21 scavenger hunt clues and her son came up with some trivia questions which the seniors
22 enjoyed.

23
24 Jessica is taking training to become a Certified Shine Counselor. Jessica & Alan have passed
25 their 6 month probationary period and are official staff members.

26
27 The Annual Volunteer Recognition is planned for April 13 in conjunction with Tri Valley.
28 Invitations have been sent. The Police Department spaghetti supper on April 16 has a lot of
29 responses so far. The Anti-clutter Program is coming April 17. Grace’s son is organizing a special
30 birthday celebration at the Center this Saturday April 11th from 1-3 in honor of her 90th
31 birthday. All are invited. The Creature Teacher intergenerational program will be happening on
32 April 24. May 4th is the Mother’s Day celebration.

33
34 The bus repairs were done early; the van was only off the road for a few days. The “find the
35 bunny” idea that Jessica suggested for the newsletter was a hit! We’ll announce the prize

36 winner in the upcoming newsletter and continue with this feature in May. The newsletter takes
37 a great deal of time. We'd like to find a volunteer who can help with it, perhaps under the
38 senior tax work-off program.

39
40 Jan attended the Read Across America event at the local elementary school, reading to 1st
41 graders. She also attended a boot-camp on how to do intergenerational programs.

42
43 A lot of us attended the Open Meeting Law training. One thing learned is that we need to be
44 more specific on our agenda as to what we'll be talking about; we can improve on this.

45
46 Jan has been going to the ongoing meetings and talking with the library trustees and
47 commission about the possible building of a combined library/senior center. Progress is being
48 made. Jan was also interviewed for a taped episode of Be My Guest to be aired on the local
49 cable channel. You can watch it on the town website anytime. She also attended the town's
50 department head meeting.

51
52 **SOCIAL SERVICES REPORT**

53 SMOC has dwindled down. Funds are starting to deplete. May 1 is the extended shutoff date.
54 SNAP, formerly food stamps, was busy this month. Jessica assisted people with their
55 paperwork and made phone calls to facilitate the process.

56
57 The Walking Club goal was for 25 participants. Unfortunately we have not been successful in
58 reaching that goal. Brooke McDonald is our new walking champion. She is very enthusiastic
59 and has a Master's in Public Health. The Club meets Wednesday afternoons at 1. Meetings are
60 have been held here at the Center with walks around the senior center and Millhaus and a
61 healthy snack afterwards. Brooke is trying to get people motivated to walk additional days on
62 their own through incentives (water bottles, t-shirts, etc.), and to partner with walking buddies.
63 We have spoken with BVT but the snow has been an issue and the timing does not work out for
64 use of their track while school is in session. We have until June 1 to use the funding we
65 received. It's a work in progress. We'll have another walking kickoff day on the track once it's
66 available. Betty suggested perhaps we could advertise it again in the Town Crier, and perhaps
67 young mothers would want to join too. Jess said that we have spoken to Holliston Senior
68 Center about their Walking Club. They have faced similar challenges. Options are limited with
69 the snow. We are trying to get the word out that anyone can participate at any level of fitness.
70 Brooke helps set individual goals and motivate people to go at their own pace. But we only
71 have her here for an hour each week. The goal is to have people buddy up to continue on even
72 after the walking club ends.

73
74 Jessica's SHINE training continues until the end of April with a test on April 30. There is a lot of
75 information being covered and she is learning things that will help her do her job better.

76
77 Jessica, Grace, Myra, Maria, and Norma attended the Golden Pond Tour, which went well.
78 We have a durable medical equipment supply in the shed. We are always taking donations in
79 good condition and keep a running a list of who has borrowed what. The VNA RN Denise is

80 making a contact list for us of agencies which provide legal advice and other assistance in the
81 community

82

83 There was a motion to accept both reports. The motion was seconded and unanimously
84 approved.

85

86 **OLD BUSINESS**

87 Jan is working on the budget. The schools are looking for an override. The town meeting is
88 May 7. The vote is May 18. If that override doesn't happen the other town departments will
89 be affected and hit hard. Jan had increased her program amount from \$5,000 to \$6,000 but
90 Blythe asked her to cut it back to 5000 again. We are doing fine finishing out the budget year
91 because our Social Services position was unfilled for so long, Jim is a volunteer, and the two
92 drivers we hired are making about \$5 less per hour than the prior ones. We had a big water
93 heater repair bill of \$1,580. Upcoming expenses will include fixing the My Senior Center
94 system, and the dishwasher. An exterminator is also needed for ants. We need a new faucet in
95 kitchen. Good news is that the town absorbed \$500 deductible for the van. We'll squeak by.
96 Jan encouraged all to review the override and make an informed decision. There is no update
97 on the building of a new senior center.

98

99 **NEW BUSINESS**

100 Jan introduced Shelly Ryan. Shelly is the Cub Scout troop leader that arranged the donation
101 which helped us fund the recent magic show. Jan passed around a thank you for all to sign for
102 the scouts, and invited the troop to come to the upcoming animal show. Shelly works at the
103 Hopkinton Health Center. She is interested in joining the board. Jan reviewed that she must
104 attend two COA meetings first and if she is still interested we'll vote to recommend that she be
105 appointed. Then the Board of Selectmen would need to approve. Jan felt Shelly would be a
106 good addition for furthering our intergenerational programs. She said we'll also be putting the
107 word out on the mother's blog in town to seek more new board members.

108

109 We've been asked to sponsor a candidates' forum for the two candidates for Selectmen. Jan
110 can't be involved in any of this. It would have to be an individual commitment of the COA
111 board members to do this. It would be held at Nipmuc. They'd like it to take place soon. A
112 discussion was held about what this would involve. Betty's concern is that if we do it, it looks
113 like we're trying to get a certain candidate in. Betty suggested that the Bloomer Girls or Upton
114 Women's Club or another group in town might be more appropriate. Jan said we don't need to
115 determine who ends up doing it; we only need to decide whether we want to get involved or
116 not. Discussion continued and Myra said from what she could hear, as a group it sounds like
117 we'd prefer not to take this on due to the amount of work and the short timing.

118

119 Joan Varney made a \$1,000 donation to our donation account for fuel assistance from Upton
120 Women's Club. The check is in the Treasurer's office until it is approved by the Board of
121 Selectmen at their meeting on April 7. Representatives of the Upton Women's Club will be at
122 the meeting as well so that we can thank them. The idea of Upton becoming a "purple
123 community" will also be addressed at that meeting, as presented by Betty Benoit.

124
125 Jan spoke with Helen about the low Tai Chi attendance. We still get only 3 people or so. 6 or so
126 have dropped out. We'll take June, July, August off and try to build back up for September.
127 Helen is willing to come in early to help people who are new to it.

128
129 There was a request to change the COA Board meeting time from 9 to 10:30. Jan asked for
130 discussion about timing and whether to meet over the summer. Jan suggested that we do
131 meet during the summer. Different times and days were discussed for meeting, plus the impact
132 on Tai Chi timing. A motion was made to change the meeting to Mondays at 10:30. This was
133 voted on and accepted. Jan recommended we make this effective in June to give people notice
134 in the newsletter. So there will be no Tai Chi conflict until Sept and we can decide if we want
135 Helen to come earlier.

136
137 Myra needs a Men's Club supper volunteer to check names. Betty volunteered to do it. There
138 was an issue with parking at the Dance Studio for the last supper. Jan will speak with the owner
139 over there before the next supper to avoid the problem next time.

140
141 Myra asked if our visitor Gladys wanted to make any comments; she did not. There was a
142 discussion of how good the TriValley spaghetti supper was.

143
144 A motion was made to adjourn and seconded. Unanimous vote of the Board followed. The
145 meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m. The next meeting of the COA will be held Monday, May
146 4, 2015 at 9:00 a.m.