

**COUNCIL ON
AGING
MEETING
MINUTES**

July 6, 2015

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

In Attendance: Chair Myra Bigelow, Secretary Judi Blanchard, Vice Chair Maria Griffin, Members Betty Consigli, Richard Provost, Grace Wadsworth and Annette Castonguay, Social Service Coordinator Jessica D’Amato, COA Director Janice Nowicki, Department Specialist Bernadette Denson, and Upton resident Shelley Ryan.

1 The monthly meeting of the Council on Aging was called to order on Monday, July 6, 2015 at
2 10:35 a.m. by Chair Myra Bigelow. The June 1 minutes were reviewed and a motion was made
3 to approve. Motion was seconded; unanimous vote of the Board followed.
4

5 **DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

6 Jan reviewed the highlights of activities from June. The Center received quite a few donations
7 towards the food drive we did for Hunger Awareness month. The June Birthday Bash was well
8 attended, and the seniors enjoyed the Donald Duck themed trivia contest. The Father’s Day ice
9 cream social was well attended as well. Seniors also enjoyed our candy making activity in June,
10 as well as Strongeagle Daly’s flute playing. We have had a good response to using the van to
11 transport people to the Thursday night concert series at Kiwanis Beach; it’s a good opportunity
12 to get our van out into the public and let people know it’s available.
13

14 A new Strength and Stretch exercise class is starting up in July. The instructor, Wendy, brings
15 her dog along to add some fun interaction for the seniors. The class will be free to seniors for
16 the first five weeks (thanks to the Formula Grant); we will then gauge the response and decide
17 whether to continue it.
18

19 Seniors who painted wine classes and made jewelry with Emily in June really seemed to enjoy it
20 so we’ll be bringing her back in July. Save the date for our upcoming 35 Year Anniversary
21 Celebration for the Upton Center on July 10, Birthday Bash with Wizard of Oz theme on July 20,
22 Picnic with Singers on July 24, and various other socials and activities detailed in the newsletter.
23

24 We did well with our FY2015 budget, and were even able to transfer some to the Fire
25 Department which was in need of additional funds. The van’s mechanical issues have been
26 repaired and the June inspection sticker was received.
27

28 We are still trying to hire another bus driver. We had one applicant who has been qualified by
29 the Personnel Board. We’ll move on to the interview stage next.
30

31 Jan was busy with town meetings in June, including meetings on June 10 and 24 regarding the
32 combined library/senior center proposal. She also met with the Librarian a couple of times to
33 discuss the proposal further. She attended a benefits training as well.
34
35

36 **SOCIAL SERVICES REPORT**

37 We assisted three families with the Welfare Fund in June. Jessica gave some background on the
38 application and review process. Regulations for the fund require that applications for funds be
39 made by someone outside of an individual's household. Jessica and Jan then meet with the
40 individual to learn more about their need. A recommendation is then made to the Board of
41 Selectmen, which then accepts, denies or modifies the amount.

42
43 Jessica continues to assist individuals with SNAP. She is also attending required monthly SHINE
44 trainings.

45
46 We'll be starting up a new Weekly Wellness series at 12:30 on Wednesday's beginning in
47 August. If you have input on ideas or speakers, please let Jessica know. Jessica plans to use the
48 VNA as a resource for these talks as well.

49
50 Our Walking Challenge had a good turnout. We're continuing with weekly walks at times that
51 seem to work well for our walkers. Richard inquired about the ability to change the weekly
52 walking route. Jessica clarified that the walkers in the group are free to choose their own
53 routes; the initial group walk was just set as a sample for them.

54
55 There was a motion to accept both reports. The motion was seconded and unanimously
56 approved.

57
58 **SPECIAL REPORT on LIBRARY/SENIOR CENTER**

59 Betty Consigli provided a special report regarding the joint COA/Library meeting which she and
60 Jan had attended. Jan informed those at the joint meeting that she would prefer to refer to the
61 COA as Elder Human Services (EHS). There was no quorum at the joint meeting, so no votes
62 were held. Only 4 of the 9 architectural firms who participated in the initial walk through
63 actually filed applications. Of those, only 3 were complete applications. The applications will
64 be reviewed and rated on a scale to be discussed at the next meeting at Town Hall on July 8.

65
66 Betty reported that one issue being considered is whether the final committee should be a
67 combination of the current library feasibility committee and EHS. The Selectmen feel EHS
68 members should be included. Some members of the library feasibility committee might wish to
69 bow out if it is a joint committee. The discussion was detailed in a newspaper article which
70 Betty shared. This topic will be further discussed at the July 8 meeting. Additional open issues
71 on this topic include where the new building would go. Betty will continue to attend these
72 meetings and keep us informed.

73
74 Jan mentioned her discussions with the Library Head have also included issues of how best to
75 merge/share space, and whether staffing needs should be addressed together or separately.

76
77 **OLD BUSINESS**

78 Updates on old business items were covered in the Director's report above.

79

80 **NEW BUSINESS**

81 The FY2016 Budget is complete.

82

83 As a follow-up to her attendance at our meetings, Shelly Ryan expressed interest in joining the
84 COA Board. Shelly said “I want to be involved in the town. I want to find a way to give back,
85 and I enjoy working with Seniors.” A motion was made to accept Shelly’s request to join the
86 Board. It was seconded and unanimously approved. Recommendation to appoint her to the
87 Board will now go to the Selectmen for approval at their July 21 meeting.

88

89 A question was raised about where the upcoming picnic will be held on July 24. It will be
90 indoors, although we also hope to access the patio if the weather is nice.

91

92 A question was raised as to whether individuals on the COA Board can also be in the Friends of
93 Elders group if we make one. Jan reviewed the fact that the COA can’t do fundraising directly
94 for the COA, but a Friends group can. An individual could be a COA Board member and a
95 member of the Friends, helping behind the scenes (but not hold office in the Friends).

96

97 A motion was made to adjourn and seconded. Unanimous vote of the Board followed. The
98 meeting was adjourned at 11:31 a.m. The next meeting of the COA will be held on Monday,
99 August 3 at 10:30 a.m. Myra will not be here for the August COA Board meeting; Maria will
100 lead that meeting.