**North Reading Council on Aging**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday, January 23, 2024**

**Attendees:**

Daniel Greenberg, Chairman, Maxine MacPherson, Clerk, Valerie Schiavone, Member, Suresh Rao, Member, Kimberly Manzelli, Director Senior Center, Margie Salt, Member

1. Meeting called to order by Dan Greenberg.
2. Dan provided an update on a variety of issues concerning the Senior Center.

* Van transportation remains a serious problem. Most of the needs are being met with one van. A second, old van is used when it works. Worst problems are on Mondays. The Center has had to rent a mini van at about a $100 and also rent a wheelchair accessible van with driver at a cost of $400.
* The Transportation Committee met and discussed the van problem. However, they are divided between buying a used, old van or buying a brand-new van. Now appears the state will not provide enough grant money to purchase a new van.
* Dan mentioned that there was no response to the ad for a backup driver. Kim updated the Council on this. She spoke to a driver candidate who has experience and will, hopefully, put in an application.
* Building problems – Recent wet weather has caused cracks in the ramp used to enter the Senior Center. The Town came out and patched the cracks, but this is a temporary measure. The solution is replacing the entire ramp and also putting in an automatic door opener. Kim said there may be an ADA grant for the opener, but not to repair the ramp. (Additional info in Director’s Report).

1. Senior Center Director’s Report

**Program Update:**

—Aldersgate Church “Mondays on the Move” programming proved to be a successful pilot program with additional outreach to seniors. Last date for grant funding is 2/26/24. The Board of Friends of NR COA have voted unanimously to continue to fund rent at Aldersgate Church weekly, at $150 per week for 13 additional weeks ($1,950 Total). The day at Aldersgate will change to **Thursday** beginning March 7 through May 30th.The driver Screened volunteer driver group for medical rides has been implemented, and program is successful (108 volunteer medical rides filled from June 2023- December 2023). **The** Program and Transportation Coordinator position has been filled as of 1/3/24, Jackie Quinn is now full time and will oversee volunteers as well.

**Facilities:**

Exterior Renovation Project in process

Ramp exhibiting damage from ice/water, temporary repair completed, project request submitted to Capital Committee by Facilities to have engineer review ramp to see if it can be modified or replaced. (Means a committee will be setup with an engineer and will take a long time).

Awaiting notice of award for handicap door buttons and flooring replacement, the latest promise is that we should hear from the state by Friday this week.

Will consider implementing programs at other off-site space.Masonic Lodge and Congregational Church have offered. The challenge will be staffing multiple sites.

**Budget:**

— Monday yoga class funded by Friends of NRCOA through 6/2024. 39 classes, $50/class, $1950 total. Continue funding?

— Budget hearing with Town will be scheduled in early March. Asking for a 22% increase.

oRequest for Town to fund Aldersgate rent ongoing from September through May for programming in FY2025 Budget Proposal

oRequest for van driver pay to be increased to $21/hour (average within surrounding communities).

oRequest for funding of wages for our Outreach Coordinator from partial grant funding to full Town funding. Town funding will cover increased hours worked from 20 to 35 hours. This role is crucial to the Department of Elder Services and will allow for the Program and Transportation Coordinator position to remain formula grant funded once and if the transportation grant funding ends.

**Grants submit/received**

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oCultural Council  - several grants funded for this year

oMCOA - Modernization grant awarded (software/kiosk) and in process

1. No old or new business.
2. Next meeting will be February 20, 2024 at 5:30.

Meeting adjourned.

Minutes submitted by

Maxine MacPherson