



Concord COA Board Meeting minutes
January 17, 2023

The COA Board Meeting took place at the Harvey Wheeler Community Center and via Zoom.

Present: Susanna Bedell, Rod Riedel, Grazia de la Cruz-Bardenheuer, Paul Levine, Carol Ann Hannan (Chair), and Lauren Barretta (COA Interim Director). Teri Stokes arrived late.

Absent: Kathy Hanley, Christina Kendrick,

Guests: Karlen Reed, and Dave Hayes

Review of Minutes

The minutes from the December meeting were reviewed. Susanna questioned the number of households with cable and whether they were all Comcast. Karlen Reed confirmed that there are 4,400 households with cable and Comcast is the only provider.

Susanna made a motion to accept the December meeting minutes. Rod seconded the motion. All in favor:

Paul Levine	yes
Grazia de la Cruz- Bardenheuer	yes
Carol Ann Hannan	yes

December meeting minutes were approved.

Interim Director's Report

- Open positions: The positions of Assistant Director and Administrative Assistant have not been posted by the town. This is probably due to the ongoing classification and compensation study for all town positions. The Board members expressed concern over the delay in posting the positions and suggested contacting the town manager or deputy town manager to move the process along. Being without employees in these positions is frustrating and may lead to burnout of other staff members.
- One of the van drivers has resigned to pursue other interests. The other drivers will cover the open shifts. Another driver will be recruited.
- Middle School Building Project: The COA hosted an informational meeting on the Middle School Building Project. Twelve people attended and had a lively discussion. Depending on the results of the special town meeting on Thursday, the COA may host a second informational meeting.
- Support Groups: The COA is currently offering a six-session support group on coping with the Pandemic. The past special focus support groups have been well received. Next up will focus on depression and sadness.
- Holiday donations: Various volunteer charity groups donated supplies and time to provide gifts for seniors. The National Charity League, a mother-daughter group used donations of greenery to

create 50 arrangements that were then delivered to homebound seniors. The Concord Bahai Youth Group created "Surprise" gift boxes that contained soup, coco, cards, socks and other useful items. These were distributed to seniors. The National Charity League has taken charge of the bulletin boards in the lounge. They provide interesting, themed displays such as winter trivia.

- Annual Report: The COA report for the Town's Annual Report has been submitted. In FY2022, there were 3,000 seniors active at the COA, 176 seniors used the van service for 4,000 rides; the social services assisted 700 individuals, and outreach personnel provided 10,000 service interactions.

Liaison reports were provided prior to meeting.

Of note, the house on Commonwealth Avenue, across from the prison, broke ground recently. This project was 5 years in the making. Rick Eiffler led this effort. Habitat for Humanity has taken over the project and will provide materials and labor for construction.

Health-related news articles

Susanna drafted two articles on health-related topics. One is on hypertension and the other is on physician burnout and how it effects patients. The Board members gave feedback on the articles. Rod suggested that another option is to write a letter to the editor of the Concord Bridge or Concord Journal on important topics. In the future, the COA nurse can provide ideas for articles that relate to upcoming COA events and issues of current interest to the community. Articles reference services provided by the COA and contact information.

Ageism

We live in a social context of implicit ageism, bias and stereotyping. Are there things we can do in Concord to push back and bring awareness to the bias against and negativity towards growing older. Some ideas include:

- Become involved with the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Commission and ask to include "age" in their mission.
- Contact the Planning Board regarding the "Age Friendly Town" designation and find out where this initiative stands. The aim of the Age Friendly Town proposal was to focus on transportation and housing. The 5-year anniversary of this designation is in March.
- Find ways to intermingle young and older people. Is the high school Sages and Seekers program still running?

Meeting adjourned at 5:42.

LIAISON REPORTS FOR JANUARY 2023 COA BOARD MEETING

Concord Housing Authority - Rod Riedel

Construction of subsidized housing unit (2BR house) at 367 Commonwealth Avenue has begun and the foundation has been poured. Habitat for Humanity is responsible for construction and construction costs.

(Observation: CHA initiated this project and has now led this effort for approximately 5+ years.)

PEG Access - Christina Kendrick

Minuteman Media Network will be posting the COA schedule. The COA time will probably be from noon to 1. We can highlight events and look at education, speakers and other things.

Concord After 60 – Teri Stokes

The Steering Committee met on Tuesday, January 10th and voted to purchase a new remote speaker microphone unit for our meetings. It was also decided to have a Zoom capacity at our monthly meetings to support members who could not come in person.

Sunday, January 15th 1:30 – 4 PM was the first hybrid in-person meeting with a Zoom connection. It was an outstanding meeting with very full in-person audience at the West Concord Union Church. Speakers were three state legislators: MA Senator Mike Barrett and MA Representatives Carmine Gentile and Simon Cataldo. There was very active audience participation in a wide-ranging discussion following the three introductory speeches. Topics ranged from needing more diversity in the town to tax and school issues and affordable housing for young families and older seniors to unregulated home owners associations for condos in town and bringing more younger members on to town committees.

February's monthly meeting on Sunday, February 19th will be in-person at West Concord Union Church. The speaker will be Holly Kuovo who will present "Plant the seeds now to Live more Actively in your 70's, 80's, and 90's." She will discuss the best changes you can make to improve the quality of your life and remain independent longer.