

Concord COA Board Meeting minutes
February 18, 2021

The Board Meeting took place using Zoom. The meeting was recorded.

Present: Andrea Zall, Rod Riedel, Ginger Quarles, Susan Bates (Select Board Liaison), Patty Keane, Carole Cushing, Carol Ann Hannan (Chair), Kristin Nelson, Teri Stokes, Christina Kendrick, Margaret Hoag (Minuteman Liaison).

Absent: Michael Rudd

The meeting was called to order at 4:04 p.m.

Approval of Minutes. The minutes were approved by a roll call vote.

Rod Riedel: yes
Kristin Nelson: yes
Christina Kendrick: yes
Teri Stokes: yes
Patty Keane: yes
Carol Ann Hannan: yes
Carol Cushing: yes

Minuteman Report (Margaret Hoag). Margaret reported that MMS has not been able to fully meet client's service plans because of a lack of workers. This combined with the fact that there is no adult day health has resulted in a budget surplus which must, in the end, be returned to the state. The board will be conducting a review of the Executive Director, Kelly Magee Wright. This year, Minuteman is responsible for updating the Area on Aging Plan (which happens every four years). This year's needs assessment and focus groups will focus on unmet needs in minority communities.

Concord Housing Authority (Rod Riedel). Rod reported that the meeting included an extensive discussion of the NMI/Starmet site. CHA didn't talk about definitive recommendations but there was considerable opposition to housing at the site and a suggestion to swap activities of other low-use town sites to the NMI site. There was also a discussion about collaborating with West Concord Pharmacy to vaccinate folks at the Everett housing. Ginger confirmed that this will happen if and when the pharmacy gets vaccines.

Disability Commission. Ginger reported from Lauren that the Disability Commission also had a lengthy presentation related to NMI/Starmet site. In addition, the commission has some funding and is deciding if they will have a grant application process to distribute that funding.

Concord after 60 (Teri Stokes). No report.

Concord Housing Development Corp. (Michael Rudd). Michael was not available to report.

NMI/Starmet (Kristin Nelson). Kristin reported that the committee is finalizing the report on March 5 and receiving feedback via their website until that time. They have already addressed the preliminary COA feedback by removing references to a "senior center" at the site in favor of community spaces that could allow for a variety of uses including specific COA activities or events.

Board of Health (Patty Keane). No report. February meeting was cancelled.

Public Works (Rod Riedel). Rod reported that there was a presentation about the significant work that goes into snow removal. For example, with the 20 inches that recently fell, Public Works plowed 44 miles of sidewalks. There was also a discussion about trash removal and an announcement that town rates will see a significant increase this year (although they will still be cheaper than private, commercial removal). The town is currently negotiating with waste management and hopes to execute a longer, multi-year contract that might offer better rates than an annual contract.

PEG Access (Carole Cushing). Carole reported that there was a discussion about the difficulty in getting information about PEG access programs since it is only available on their website. It would be easier to identify programs if there was a tv guide on the stations but they said that this is not possible. They also noted that they are considering including a media center in the new middle school being built in Concord.

Transportation. No report.

Chair Report. Carol Ann relayed news from committees at the Chair's breakfast. Public Works reminded everyone that fire hydrants have to be dug out in snowstorms. Public Health noted that they are requesting more COVID vaccine doses but have gotten no response.

Select Board Report (Susan Bates). Susan mentioned that there will be a preview town meeting on February 27 at 9 am. This will be an opportunity for individuals/committees to give a general overview of warrant articles that they would like to propose. The town warrant will open soon after that. The full schedule of the process can be viewed on-line.

Finance Committee (Andrea Zall). Andrea noted that the recent meetings have been guideline meetings which are less relevant to COA business. Town budget information is too preliminary to be useful to share at this point.

Director's Report. Ginger reported primarily on the COVID vaccine since it is the primary concern for all:

- Concord's Board of Health was preparing to receive 100 vaccines/week. This is a low amount relative to the number of seniors in Concord but was the plan. In spite of a system crash when registration was opened, the clinic went very well and the COA was able to deliver the first 100 doses. At this point, DPH intends to give a second dose to those 100 people (although that may change).
- Effective March 1, Massachusetts will no longer be giving any first doses to any local public health departments except to 20 high-risk towns. Instead, the state is redirecting vaccines to the mega sites and will open more mega sites every week.
- Pharmacies may be getting doses although it is unclear whether those will end up going only to pharmacies in the high-risk towns.
- The state has announced that people could bring a companion to the mega site and the companion would receive the vaccine. The COA has had many offers from volunteers willing to be a 'companion' but the COA has decided to only accept these offers if the individual is willing to be a long-term volunteer. The volunteer could be required to fill out an application and complete a criminal background check.

- As of today, vaccine eligibility changed to individuals 65 and older; those with 2 or more underlying health conditions; or residents of public and private low-income and affordable senior housing. The eligibility change crashed the state's system.
- Ginger has reached out to Concord state reps to advocate for our seniors and to suggest that doses continue to be made eligible through local communities, not just the mega sites, particularly since Concord has a tent set for vaccinations campaigns.
- Ginger is worried about homebound seniors but noted that the state seems to be making a plan for them. She has heard that they may be waiting for the J&J vaccine which (as a single dose) may be easier to implement through home visits.
- COA van may start taking 2 people at a time to one of the closer, large vaccination sites (Natick or Worcester). In addition, the COA has 6 people willing to drive individuals to vaccination sites.
- Just before tonight's meeting, Ginger had a good meeting with the CC Community Chest allocations committee to talk about the work of the COA. This is part of the request process for next year's money.
- The COA has received another donation of 1000 masks from the Rotary and will do a drive through activity to give them away, as they did before.

Other.

Carole noted that the Boston Globe is partnering with MIT Aging Lab and recently had a great article highlighting the fact that seniors are valuable resource!

Motion to adjourn. The motion to adjourn was made by Carole Cushing. The motion was approved by a roll call vote.

Rod Riedel: yes

Kristin Nelson: yes

Christina Kendrick: yes

Teri Stokes: yes

Patty Keane: yes

Carol Ann Hannan: yes