Kingston Council on Aging
Secretary Report
Advisory Board Meeting
July 11, 2023
Approved by Vote at meeting on 8/8/2023

Meeting was called to order at 11:30
Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
Thank you, PAC TV,

Board Members present, Austin Sennett- Vice Chairman, Donna Weinberg, Joan Hutchinson, Caty Starr - Secretary, Maureen Elwood, via Zoom
Also Present: Mary Beth Lawton- COA Director, Mary Hayes, Kathleen Studley, Edie Durand

Open Forum – Moment of silence and thank you for Joyce Santos as she heals.

Secretary Report - A motion to accept the June Secretary's report was made by Maureen and seconded by Joan. All in favor.

Directors Report - Mary Beth gave us information to review and the criteria/guidelines to follow should the board decide to pursue renaming the building.
- Mary Beth gave us a copy of the Conflict of Interest Open Meeting Law Ethics from the Town of Kingston. Conversation regarding the swearing in of Maureen and Joan. The meeting was paused so that Mary Beth could find out if they need to be sworn in in order for the meeting to continue. The meeting pause was extended while we waited for the Town Clerk, Paul Gallagher, to swear in Joan and Maureen. Meeting continued.
- Conversation regarding Open Meeting Law and Conflict of Interest with Paul Gallagher.
  - Agenda format - best to separate New Business from Old Business from Other Business (other business can be of an urgent nature). New Business can be discussed and voted on at the same meeting, or the decision making can be forwarded to the next meeting as Old Business to allow for board members to think about the topic. New Business will be discussed. Old Business may not be discussed, but could be if needed to.
- For Board positions, Paul mentioned we could hold nominations in one meeting (May meeting) and then hold voting in June meeting. This would enable everyone to consider who they wanted to vote for.
  - Agenda item requests should be handled directly with the Chairman and not in group emails.
  - Discussion about in person Open Meeting Law training. Paul indicated that he could set up an in-person training for us.
  - Mary Beth indicated she would follow up with Tricia at Town Hall to find out who is up to date with training and Conflict of Interest Law and who needs to take it. Paul will be checking on the requirements.

- Mary Beth discussed the meeting/training that several board members took in June. Training is something that we all want and need and asked for additional training in the future.
- Patio area has been cleaned and refreshed thanks to volunteer, Gretchen.
- In working on the upcoming Age and Dementia project, Mary Beth has been working with Martha on support group/workshop for LGBTQ and Dementia support group to start in the Fall.

- Mary Beth met with Karen Peterson from BID. Martha will be partnering with the future social worker for Kingston to start program based on mental health.
- Reminder that the proposed developer for the Sacred Heart land redevelopment will be giving a presentation at the Board of Selectman's meeting on 7/11.
- Lunch program - Joyce is unable to be in the kitchen for the foreseeable future. Mary Beth is working on an interim plan for food service. Based on budget reasons, the current Thursday lunch program is not working. And, there is no desire to have Old Colony Services fill in the gap with their lunch services. Instead, Mary Beth believes this may be a good opportunity to try new ideas. After visiting a few other senior centers, she mentioned the idea of trying to go to a cafe style meal service instead of a planned lunch. The cafe style would be on-demand, allowing people to come at any time of day while the kitchen is open and get a sandwich etc. She proposed having two cooks on staff to enable this. Current volunteers would be utilized to help with the cafe, as well. How many days/hours the cafe is open would need to be decided. Regular Thursday lunches will continue through the month of August while the proposed changes take shape. She asked us to think about a new name for the cafe. Our board supports the idea of the cafe.

Chairman's Report - Austin asked us to review the Anchor newsletter and he mentioned the amount of programs provided at the center great. He said is it currently done well but there is room for improvement. Some of the current programs may need to be changed/moved to provide more space for additional programs. Room dividers were discussed.

- Austin read the Chairman's report.

Question about The Special Events line item on the budget - this line item has gone away, but the money was moved to Programs for the new budget. Also, if one line item is over budget and another is under, there is flexibility to use money from other line items.

Board of Selectman letter - Mary Hayes was on board previously for 7 years and took a year off. She has applied to become a board member again. Joan made a motion to nominate Mary to the board for a 3 year term. Seconded by Maureen. All in favor. Austin asked Caty to prepare a letter for the Board of Selectman that indicates our boards' support to have Mary join.

Policies and Procedures - Caty explained the reasoning behind why the P&S need to be updated. Because the By-Laws have changed and been approved, there are sections within the P&P that should match.
Mary Beth commented that the section that mentions reviewing and approving expenses being submitted by the director should not be applicable. Discussion about this language is in the final By-Laws. Mary Beth mentioned the board voted in favor of allowing the director to review and pay all budget/expenses without our board approval. Caty agreed that that vote had occurred, but it was not at a time during By-Laws conversations, and therefore it was an oversight that this language remained in the final version of the By-Laws. - it has since been researched and the vote to allow all expenses/budget items to be handled by Mary Beth took place during the September 2022 meeting(copy attached to this report). We signed a form at that meeting. This change did not make it into the final By-Laws. At this time, we can update the Policies and Procedures to reflect this change, and then the By-Laws will need to be updated again whenever the next town meeting takes place. Article 9 - Board Staff relationship. All communication should be through the COA Director, also needs to be updated in the final P&P.

Other Business - Associate Member Initiative will be moved to next meeting.

Suggestion Box - Austin asked what everyone's opinion about whether to have one. Mary Beth mentioned that no other department within the town has a suggestion box. Instead she would like people to utilize the in-boxes on each staff member's door to bring questions, ideas, comments directly to the appropriate person for the subject matter. If they don't know who to ask the question of, they should default to Mary Beth's box. She would like to see our board offer time once a month, or so, to meet and ask us questions. She believes this format will help eliminate the negativity received within the suggestion box. Donna would like to see some format that people can leave us comments without the negativity. Joan mentioned she can remember very few suggestions that were not complaints about people or gossip. If a person has a problem, they need to go directly to that person/department. Joan also agrees that our board needs to be more visible. Maureen is in agreement with Mary Beth and Joan and get rid of the box. Caty said the suggestion box has really only been a complaint box. She does feel however, that there needs to be an opportunity for people to speak about their issues if they are not comfortable bringing them to the Director. Austin reinforced that if the suggestion box were to stay, nothing can be addressed without a person's name signed on it. Caty mentioned as food for thought, that our board does not have an inbox of any type. There is currently no way for people to reach anyone on our board without them catching one of us in the building. Maybe we consider changing the suggestion box to be a communication/in-box for the board. This way we would be able to then set up a time to discuss whatever the concern is with the person. Austin suggested that we table this discussion until the next meeting.

Team training on 6/24 - this was discussed earlier in the meeting.

Remembered: Brad Norman

Next meeting will be August 8, 2023 @ 11:30 at COA Senior Center and/or ZOOM

Motion to adjourn was made by Joan. Seconded by Caty. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Caty Starr, Secretary