

KINGSTON COUNCIL ON AGING ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
JUNE 10, 2025

Meeting called to order at 11:30 a.m. at the Kingston Senior Center and broadcast on Local Seen with Zoom available for those not able to attend. Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Board Members Present: Caty Starr-Chairman, Donna Weinberg-Vice Chair, Deb Bruno (Associate Member), Lucy Colletta, Maureen Elwood (Zoom) and Kathy Studley. Those absent: Mary Harriman, Joan Hutchison.

Other members present: Holly Nighelli, Director, Kingston Council on Aging. Guests included Joe Favaloro and Austin Sennett.

Announcements: Chair, Caty Starr, announced that there are several volunteer positions at the Kingston COA not limited to Meals on Wheels, Café help, Computer Skills and for the Senior Tax Work Off Program. If any are interested in being a volunteer, please reach out to the Director of the COA. Note that the email of the COA Advisory Board is coa-ab@Kingstonma.gov.

Open Forum: Our guests, Joe Favaloro and Austin Sennett, former COA Advisory Board Members, both highly praised Caty Starr for all her qualities and effective leadership during her 10 years of dedicated service to the COA, starting out as a Meals on Wheels Driver, graduating to the COA Advisory Board as a member, Secretary, Vice Chair and Chair.

Secretary Report: A motion was made by Maureen Elwood to accept the Secretary Report from the May 13, 2025, COA Advisory Board Meeting. This was seconded by Kathy Studley. All were in favor.

New Business:

1. Holly Nighelli said she would speak about the Age and Dementia Working Group under her Director's Report ahead in this meeting. Kathy Studley, a member of this working committee, along with Holly, stated she was very impressed at the great job done by OCPC on the survey questions planned, and how productive the group has been during this process the last couple months.
2. Caty Starr, Chair, discussed the Board of Selectmen meeting updates. Deb Bruno was appointed June 3, 2025, as the new Associate Member of our COA Advisory Board. She has already been sworn in and is now a member effective immediately filling the vacancy on our Board. Gail De Thomaso, also has been appointed on same date above, June 3, 2025. Her term as a regular voting member of the COA Board is effective July 1, 2025. She will be sworn in at that time. Kathy Studley and Donna Weinberg are scheduled to be reappointed for another Term at the upcoming Select Board Meeting, June 17, 2025, following the same Process, their new term effective July 1, 2025.
3. Caty passed out the latest updated version of the COA Code of Conduct to our Board Members. Holly had recently updated this to reflect a change recommended by the Town Counsel in July, 2024. The Board of Selectmen approved this change at their September 24, 2024 meeting.

(New Business continued...)

4. Caty Starr passed out the latest Open Meeting Law Guide Handbook revised December, 2023, by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Caty discussed the importance of abiding by these laws and recommended that our Board review them. Caty also stated that Board Members, whether in person or by phone, with a majority of other Board Members, other than one on one, not discuss business between each other. This is called a deliberation, considered a violation. Also discussed was that a Board is not allowed to talk, during a Board meeting, about any other item that does not appear on an agenda. As far as Open Forum, we are able to listen but not to address the subject of the speaker unless they request to place on a future Board agenda and discuss at that time. Caty, also stated that proper notice is to be given posting an upcoming COA Board meeting agenda, 48 business hours prior to meeting not including Holidays and Weekends. Where our meetings are held on a Tuesday, now that the Town Hall is closed on Fridays, the agenda needs to be posted no later than the Thursday before.
5. Caty discussed the absentee rate at our COA Board meetings. She stressed the responsibility of a Board Member to make a commitment to show up to a meeting for the sake of the rest of the Board unless there is a medical reason, not able to attend on Zoom or have extenuating circumstances. She stated that the Chair needs to be notified ahead of an absence. If any Board Member cannot commit to attending our meetings, and have numerous absences, they need to resign so that other interested applicants can fill these vacant Board positions and are able to commit to the duties of a Board member. Attention is to be brought to any of these cases of absences and be discussed at our Board meeting with possible communication to the Select Board. Caty reminded our group to review our Policies and Procedures regarding this subject matter. It states that if there are three or more absences in a period of six months, non consecutive, it needs to be addressed. We will revisit this subject at our July meeting.
6. Due to the schedules and conflicts of the appointment dates of our new and reappointed Board Members timelines, a motion was made by Kathy Studley to move reorganization of our Board Members and vote for new officers at our July 8, 2025 meeting. By that time, after their effective date of July 1, 2025, all Board members will all be duly appointed and sworn in by that time. Donna Weinberg seconded and all in favor. Caty Starr also asked our Board to think about our policies and the responsibilities of Board Members Officers, Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary when preparing for next meeting. The Chair is to preside, organize and prepare for our meetings. The Vice Chair is to preside upon the absence of the Chair. The Secretary is to record minutes and submit to Town Clerk after approval by our Board. As of July 1, 2025, where there are no official officers or Chair voted upon yet, Caty made a motion to allow Donna Weinberg to preside over our next July meeting. Maureen Elwood seconded, all in favor. Caty also made a motion to nominate Donna Weinberg, who was willing, to be Secretary at this July meeting, Maureen Elwood seconded, all in favor.

Director's Report: See report attached. Holly Nighelli spoke about the following:
Programs at COA:

- May 30, 2025 – Friday - We relaunched the Kingston TRIAD with a meeting and a visit from Plymouth County Comfort Dogs. Also joining this event was District Attorney Tim Cruz, three comfort dogs and their handlers to discuss this program and its positive impact on the community.
- June 5, 2025 – Thursday – A great time by all at our COA Summer Kick Off Party Luncheon with music from “That 60’s Band”, cheeseburgers with chips and treats from the Ice Cream Truck. The COA Friends funded the music and ice cream.
- June 12, 2025 – Thursday – Father’s Day Luncheon planned this week with the COA Friends holding a special raffle for the Dads.
- Holly announced that our new Assistant Director, Stacy Driscoll, has been working on adding some new programs to our mix, including educational opportunities, trivia & games and exercise classes.

Age & Dementia Update:

- Holly stated that the monthly working group met on June 2, 2025, with 9 people attending, including Holly and Kathy Studley from our Board. Joanne Zygmunt of OCPC led the meeting by Zoom. The group reviewed the survey, requested changes and gave suggestions specific to the needs of Kingston. Joanne will edit the survey making the suggested changes to be able to discuss at the next July meeting. There is still conversation ahead to determine the timeline of the launching of survey in July or August.

Café:

- There were 345 meals served in the month of May, 2025, not including the 84 meals served at the Mother’ Day Luncheon.

Transportation:

- A new part-time van driver, Sean Lee, a Kingston resident, started last week. He has begun training taking rides on the van, learning the manifests and reporting system, and will attend GATRA training on the week of June 16, 2025.
- Holly is still interviewing for two more additional van drivers.

Chairman's Report: Caty Starr spoke about how grateful she is having volunteered at the COA for these past ten years. She stated it was quite an opportunity and learning experience having made many friends. She thanked us all for choosing her to be part of the Kingston COA.

Old Business:

1. Friends Representative update has been tabled to a future meeting.
2. COA Building Usage Agreement (rental agreement) and application review has been tabled to a future meeting.

Other Business: None at this time.

Next Regular Meeting: Next regular COA Advisory Board meeting to be held on Tuesday, July 8, 2025, 11:30 a.m., at the Kingston Senior Center.

A motion was made to adjourn meeting at 12:30 p.m. by Caty Starr seconded by Maureen Elwood. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Weinberg, Vice Chair COA Advisory Board and Interim Secretary