

KINGSTON COUNCIL ON AGING ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
JULY 8, 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: Donna Weinberg-Presiding Chair, Lucy Colletta, Gail DeThomaso, Maureen Elwood, Kathy Studley and Deb Bruno (Associate Member).

Other members present: Holly Nighelli, Director, Kingston Council on Aging. Guests included Joe Favaloro, Austin Sennett, Pauline Dodd, Kimberly Sprague and Sarah Urtz.

Announcements: Donna Weinberg 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. For those who wish to contact our COA Advisory Board, please note our email: coa-ab@Kingstonma.gov

Open Forum: Joe Favaloro, former COA Advisory Board Member, highly praised Joan Hutchison who just resigned from COA Advisory Board after fifteen years of her remarkable history and service as a Board member.

Kimberly Sprague and Sarah Urtz, team members of the Kingston Public Library Foundation, spoke about their all volunteer non-profit organization and how this group raises funds to supplement what the Town of Kingston gives to the library in addition to the Friends of the Library and the Staff. Their funding helps the library with resources, technology, special programming and select long-term improvements. Their recent accomplishments include: Updated Children's Room, funded technology for Teen Room and recently receiving a large T-Mobile Grant used to update lobby furniture and the Kids Room. They passed out a card with a QR code for donations and encouraged all to check out the Library.

Pauline Dodd expressed her interest joining our Board and has submitted her letter of interest to the Town. Pauline is a current member of the COA, the Book Club, and attends classes at the COA. She is retired from her career as a special needs teacher.

Secretary Report: A motion was made by Maureen Elwood to accept the Secretary Report from the June 10, 2025, COA Advisory Board Meeting. This was seconded by Lucy Colletta. All were in favor.

New Business:

1. Donna Weinberg discussed the Reorganization of our Advisory Board. As voted last month, Donna is today Acting Chair and Secretary. Donna announced the terms of our current Board Members as of July 1, 2025: Donna Weinberg-2028, Gail DeThomaso-2028, Lucy Colletta-2027, Maureen Elwood-2026, Kathy Studley-2028 and Deb Bruno (Associate-Non-Voting)-2026.

As planned, the Board nominated and voted in new officers. Maureen Elwood made motion to nominate Donna Weinberg for Chair, Kathy Studley seconded and all in favor. Lucy Colletta made a motion to nominate Gail DeThomaso for Vice Chair, Kathy Studley seconded and all were in favor. Maureen made a motion to nominate Deb Bruno as Secretary in a non-voting capacity as Associate Member. Lucy seconded and all were in favor. All newly elected officers have accepted. Donna Weinberg and Gail DeThomaso, Chair and Vice Chair, will begin their office effective today. Deb Bruno will begin her office as Secretary effective next Advisory Board meeting, August 12, 2025.

2. Donna discussed with Board the latest resignations, including Caty Starr, former Chair, Mary Harriman and Joan Hutchison. All here today wished them well, thanking them for their contribution to Board. Caty served 10 years at COA, 9 years on our COA Board in all capacities from Secretary, Vice Chair and Chair. Mary Harriman has been a member for the last two years. Joan Hutchison has been a member of the COA and Board for almost 15 years, serving in all capacities as Secretary, Vice Chair and Chair. Donna stated that it was Joan and Joe Favaloro who persuaded Donna to join Board three years ago. Our Board, now five members, has a couple openings. For those interested, visit our monthly Board meetings to express interest.
3. An updated contact list of Board Members was passed out by Donna. All reviewed and approved.
4. Holly said she would discuss Age and Dementia Working Group under her Director's Report.
5. Donna commented on how, in the past, our Advisory Board held Office Hours an hour prior to Advisory Board meetings. She asked the Board if these hours could be returned to benefit the COA, and what were the group's thoughts moving to a Thursday, instead, our busy day of the week at the COA. After discussion, the group all agreed it was a good idea to bring back these hours changing to the last Thursday of each month. The group also thought it would help Kathy Studley with her Age and Dementia Working Group pass out the paper surveys at the COA during that time. A motion was made by Maureen Elwood to return the Office Hours to the last Thursday, starting July 31, 2025, from 10:30 to 11:30, for the next couple of months. Gail DeThomaso seconded and all were in favor.

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

- New programs and activities are being brought to Senior Center, this month, including Singo, Musical Bingo and a new fitness class Head to Toe Fitness, including strength training with light weights/bands, flexibility, balance, breathing and stretching with or without use of a chair. All abilities welcomed. A free demo class offered on Friday, July 11, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. Regular classes begin following Friday, for \$5.00 @ 9:00 a.m. More plans ahead.

Age & Dementia Update:

- Holly stated that the monthly Working Group met on Monday, July 7, 2025, with 9 people attending, including Holly and Kathy Studley from our Board. Joanne Zygmunt, of OCPC, led the meeting by Zoom discussing methods to promote and distribute the survey. They will be using a variety of sources for this purpose including the town website, Facebook, SLR newsletters and events around Kingston. Print versions of survey will be available as well as a digital version that can be accessed with a QR Code. The final version will be distributed to the Working Group by July 19, 2025, then out to the public until the end of September.

Café:

- There were 303 meals served in the month of June, 2025, closing out the fiscal year having served 3,222 meals in all.

Transportation:

- The COA has a new part-time van driver, Deborah Jenkins. She has begun internal training taking rides on our van, learning manifests and reporting system, and will be attending GATRA training soon.
- In FY 25, we provided 3,575 rides to seniors through our transportation program.

Outreach:

- Jenny Styers has been busy in the community visiting agencies that we partner with including food pantries, assisted living facilities, faith organizations and more. She has also been researching grant opportunities for outreach programs and initiatives that she would like to implement.

Chairman's Report: Donna Weinberg stated that she is pleased to have been voted as Chair, and is happy to move forward in a positive direction for the COA working with Holly and the members of the Board.

Old Business: None at this time

Other Business: Lucy Colletta asked that we remember the Texas floods victims and their families.

Next Regular Meeting: Next regular COA Advisory Board meeting to be held on Tuesday, August 12, 2025, 11:30 a.m., at the Kingston Senior Center.

A motion was made to adjourn meeting at 12:07 p.m. by Lucy Colletta and seconded by Maureen Elwood. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Weinberg, Chair COA Advisory Board and Interim Secretary