

KINGSTON COUNCIL ON AGING ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
SEPTEMBER 9, 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-Chair, Gail DeThomaso-Vice Chair, Lucy Colletta, Maureen Elwood and Kathy Studley.

Other members present: Holly Nighelli, Director, Kingston Council on Aging. Guests included Pauline Dodd and Kimberly Emborg, Board of Selectmen (Zoom).

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: Kathy Studley gave thanks to the Friends for funding both the cost of the Bombshell Betty event the previous week along with the ice cream truck. Lucy Colletta suggested bringing back the Suggestion Box in the lobby.

Secretary Report: A motion was made by Maureen Elwood to accept the Secretary Report from the August 12, 2025, COA Advisory Board Meeting. This was seconded by Gail DeThomaso. All were in favor.

New Business:

1. Age and Dementia Study Update to be discussed under Holly's Director's Report.
2. Pauline Dodd's request to join our COA Advisory Board as a voting member was discussed. Her letter of interest was sent to the Board of Selectmen back in June, also attending our monthly meetings since. A motion was made by Kathy Studley to recommend Pauline be a voting member. Maureen Elwood seconded and all were in favor. These results will be sent to Board of Selectmen to place on their upcoming meeting agenda for approval and appointment.
3. A discussion was held regarding handicapped parking for special large events held at the COA. Kathy Studley and others have been approached by seniors with physical issues that attend these larger events, having to park farther away due to no close parking spots. Suggestions were made by the Board to Holly. Holly will investigate further to see how this situation can be remedied for the future.
4. There was a brief discussion regarding the search for a Secretary on our COA Advisory Board. At the present, there are no members who are able to commit to this report. Donna made a motion that we table this discussion until the next meeting, in the meantime looking for someone to do the job. Maureen Elwood seconded and all in favor. Donna stated that she would help out for now and prepare this report until another person found for the job.

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

Age & Dementia Update:

- The Age & Dementia Friendly Working Group met on September 8, 2025. The town-wide survey, launched on August 13, 2025. To date, the COA has received 466 completed surveys, including 404 online and 62 paper collected. Public events that advertised this survey were WATD radio on August 16, 2025, an article in the Kingston Living magazine, September edition, St. Joseph's Parish-coffee after mass on September 7, 2025 and the Kingston Public Librewery Event on September 14, 2025. This survey will stay open through the end of September hoping to boost participation from men and Veterans.

Outreach:

- Holly passed out a outreach assistance chart provided by Jenny Styers showing the top ten areas of outreach assistance that were provided in the month of August, the top three being the Grab and Go Program, Shine and the Farmers Market. Moving into the fall, Jenny will be assisting our SHINE counselor with Open Enrollment and aiding seniors who apply for the Fuel Assistance program with South Shore Community Action Council. In addition, she included a list of other important outreach reminders and activities.

Programs:

- This month the COA is offering Singo, Train Your Brain, craft classes, movies, local history presentation with Nick Coutoulas, a lunch and learn event, cooking demonstration and welcoming a new line dancing class and new instructor. There will also be a vaccine clinic in partnership with the Health Department on September 16, 2025, 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
- The COA has been collaborating with the Library, Recreation and Health Departments to come up with ideas, similar to "Kingston Community Fun" committee that worked together from 2018-2020. The group is fine tuning a plan for four events in 2026, offered throughout town and incorporating intergenerational ideas as well as public safety and health and wellness.
- The Senior Tax Work Off Program documents for 2025-2026 program year will be available at the end of September. Applications and supplementary materials will be available at the Senior Center and on the town's website.

Transportation:

- The COA provided 393 rides through our transportation program in the month of August. The COA also had five new riders.

Café:

- The Café Evergreen served 420 meals in the month of August. This included the lobster roll luncheon on August 14 and the boxed lunch provided for the Bombshell Betty event.

Chairman's Report:

- Donna checked with the Board to make sure they were all receiving her communication, agendas, etc., needed to prepare for Board meetings.
- Donna also reminded group to make sure they were all up to date on Conflict of Interest/Ethics Training required by all in the municipal sector.
- Donna passed out a sheet reviewing some current scams using Artificial Intelligence.

Old Business:

1. There was a discussion regarding the COA Advisory Board Office Hours. These hours were agreed upon at a previous Board meeting, to be held at the COA from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., the last Thursday of August and September in order to distribute the Livable Kingston Action Plan Survey. Since the Survey will be over at the end of September, our Board discussed the need to continue these hours after that. Gail DeThomaso made to motion to move this discussion to our October meeting. Lucy Colletta seconded and all in favor.

Other Business: Lucy Colletta asked that our Board say a prayer wishing Margaret Spalluzzi well and sadly missed by all at the COA.

Next Regular Meeting: Next regular COA Advisory Board meeting to be held on Tuesday, October 14, 2025, 11:30 a.m., at the Kingston Senior Center.

Motion to adjourn meeting at 12:04 p.m. made by Kathy Studley, seconded by Gail DeThomaso, and all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted, Donna Weinberg, Chair COA Advisory Board/Interim Secretary