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Council On Aging Board Meeting Agenda

Date:

Tuesday, October 24, 2023 - 10:00am

Senior Center Community Room at the Bolton Country Manor, 600 Main St.

Related Event:

Council On Aging Board Meeting

Council On Aging Board Meeting Agenda 10/24/23

10:00am -10:05am Citizen's Comments

10:05am - 10:15am Reading of Minutes from September 2023 COA Meeting

Approval of September 2023 COA Minutes

Financial Report

10:15 – 11:30pm FOBS Update

Review letter re: STRP funding

Discuss methods for senior tax relief

Cookies with Seniors program

Outreach/Program Coordinator's Report

Other Board Concerns and Discussion

Director's Report

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Town of Bolton C.O.A. Meeting
October 24, 2023

Meeting at the Senior Center

Members Present: Panny Gerken, Chair; Alice Roemer, Barbara Brown, Tom Byron, Chuck McCormack, Corinne Mackie, Janet Smith
Heather Goodsell, FOBS Mary Ciummo

A quorum being present, the meeting opened about 10:03 AM.

The minutes from the September COA meeting were approved.

Financials: normal, except fuel assistance requests have been more than expected.

FOBS: FOBS, along with others will come up with something for property tax assistance following the approval of the new High School. Nov. 14 is the Thanksgiving dinner at Davis Hall. Need help setting up, serving, and pumpkin pies. Dec. 16 is assembly then delivery of 60 Christmas baskets, at the Public Safety Building, help needed. FOBS has applied for 2 Cultural Council Grants for next year.

The draft letter to our state congressional members asking for property tax assistance for seniors will be completed, and Panny will sign the letter on behalf of all COA members.

Certain items were discussed: how to get Bolton senior events into the local paper; new Town Manager will be in place after June; "Cookies for Seniors", where a volunteer goes to a senior's home and they make cookies together.

Heather's Outreach report: See handout: National Grid and Clinton Dental are coming; First Tuesday of each month is grief support. December 5th is the Christmas luncheon: sign up now. MART is doing well. MART has a grant to set up a bus route, 6am to 10pm, picking up at specific spots and at houses. Fuel assistance has started with new folks. Apply thru MOC, there are new higher income cutoffs. RCAP reports with the new construction coming, there will be 16 new parking spaces right in front, on RCAP property. Some Master Plan info was reviewed.

Next COA meeting is November 28.

The meeting adjourned at 11:28.

Respectfully submitted: Tom Byron

Bolton Council on Aging
October 2023 FY2024

<u>Category</u>	<u>Total Year Budget</u>	<u>Spent Year-To-Date</u>	<u>Spent %</u>	<u>Balance Remaining</u>
Town Warrant				
<u>Fixed</u>				
Salary	\$ 56,117.00	\$16,187.85	28.85%	\$ 39,929.15
Wages	\$ 42,026.00	\$12,123.00	28.85%	\$ 29,903.00
Software Support	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 1,190.00	99.17%	\$ 10.00
Building Lease	\$ 4,551.00	\$ 2,641.00	58.03%	\$ 1,910.00
Cable/DSL	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 367.60	30.63%	\$ 832.40
Telephone	\$ 600.00	\$ 83.42	13.90%	\$ 516.58
Subtotal-Fixed	\$ 105,694.00	32,592.87	30.84%	\$ 73,101.13
<u>Discretionary</u>				
Purchased Services	\$ 3,800.00	\$ 1,600.00	42.11%	\$ 2,200.00
Supplies	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 354.37	7.87%	\$ 4,145.63
Subtotal-Discretionary	\$ 8,300.00	\$ 1,954.37	23.55%	\$ 6,345.63
Total Warrant Spending	\$ 113,994.00	\$34,547.24	30.31%	\$ 79,446.76
<u>Grant</u>				
Lisa- Extra 3 hours	\$ 6,859.00	\$ 1,796.29	26.19%	\$ 5,062.71
Fitness/Balance	\$ 4,680.00	\$ 764.00	16.32%	\$ 3,916.00
Classes-Art/Garden Therapy	\$ 6,450.00	\$ 1,200.00	18.60%	\$ 5,250.00
Holiday Luncheon	\$ 1,200.00	\$ -	0.00%	\$ 1,200.00
Transportation/misc.	\$ 1,065.00	\$ 747.84	70.22%	\$ 317.16
Total Grant Spending	\$ 20,254.00	\$ 4,508.13	22.26%	\$ 15,745.87
State Grant Balance 2023	\$ 12,349.00			
50% 2024 State Grant	\$ 8,598.00			
Total State Grant Available	\$ 20,947.00			\$ 20,947.00
 FY 22 Earmarked Fund	 \$ 19,640.00			
 Fuel Assitance Balance	 \$ 6,567.62			
 GO Bolton Balance	 \$ 8,292.00			

October COA Meeting
Outreach/Program Minutes

We have several upcoming events, & workshops that I hope will be very beneficial to our seniors.

- National Grid will be here 11/29 to meet one on one with clients about ways to reduce their energy bills.
- Clinton Dental will be here to discuss the importance of good dental hygiene on 11/15.
- RHR Real Estate will be doing another session of teaching people how to sell their treasures on 11/9.
- Nashoba Board of Health will be starting a Grief Support group on the first Tuesday of every month here at the Center. This is drop in, and will be held in the library upstairs.
- Reiki will also be starting back up on the first Tuesday of each month.
- The November cultural trip is to the American Heritage Museum in Hudson, the December trip will be to the Worcester Art Museum.
- Fitness classes, arts and crafts, lunch trips and nurse visits are all happening at their regularly scheduled times.

I am also beginning to take reservations for the annual holiday luncheon on 12/5 which will be held at The Old Mill in Westminster this year.

I have also booked our next bus trip which will be on December 13th to the Newport Playhouse. Cost will be \$90 for Bolton Seniors, and \$95 for all others.

I ended up submitting 2 cultural council grants. One was to bring the Museum of Russian Icons here. They have a mobile program that seems really interesting and is something different. The other grant I applied for was with Pop up Art School. This is the company that did the Felting class. They attracted a great crowd and I thought they would be worth having back.

Open enrollment is upon us. SHINE and Integrity have set aside days to meet with Bolton residents about their health insurance. They are also available to meet at other times if the days they are here don't work for certain individuals. Everyone should get an insurance "check-up" during open enrollment, so spread the word!

The MART pilot program is going well. The software has been updated and new updates are happening regularly. MySeniorCenter presented the new software at the MCOA conference recently and gave a big shout out to all the COA's that have helped in the development of the program.

MART was also awarded a grant to help subsidize transportation in rural areas. We are very lucky to be part of that area. The COA, Parks & Rec, the Library and Don/Jenny have been meeting with MART to get this program going. MART will be supplying the vehicle and the driver and riders will book these rides directly through MART. Nothing is finalized yet, but it seems like there may be set days to take riders to Highland Commons, a route along 117, and possibly some of the local charter schools. This will give people the opportunity to access public transportation from 6am till 10pm every day. Rides would need to be scheduled 24 hours in advance. More details will be coming.

I have already begun to get calls and emails about fuel assistance. I am updating the forms this week and will be mailing out the renewal for the town's fuel assistance program at the beginning of November. MOC has opened their portal for recertifications as of 10/1. New applicants can begin applying on 11/1. I am happy to help anyone apply for fuel assistance. If you know someone, send them my way! Income limits have increased, so folks who may not have qualified before, may qualify now.

The Parks and Rec Halloween walk/Trick-or-Treat lane is this Sunday. I got really fun non-candy treats again this year. I need help handing out treats on the day of. I plan to arrive around 1PM, the walk begins at 2 and we should be wrapped up by 3/3:30. It is such a fun event and the kids are adorable!

In Lisa's absence I met with the head of maintenance at RCAP and went over the plans for parking once the new construction begins. I explained to him where the developers would like to create parking on the RCAP property. He checked with his supervisor and she said giving them the easement to create 16 spaces out front won't be a problem.

Representative Kate Hogan
Massachusetts State House
Room 370
Boston MA 02133

Dear Representative Hogan:

Recently, voters of the three towns comprising the Nashoba Regional School District (Bolton, Stow, Lancaster) approved a Proposition 2 ½ override to fund the construction of a new High School, at an estimated cost of \$241,714,926, with the Commonwealth funding approximately 26%. This is expected to add between \$1,500 - \$1,750 to Bolton residents' annual property taxes over the next thirty years, barring any additional unforeseen costs.

Although many Bolton residents likely can afford additional property taxes, an important segment of our senior and veteran population cannot. This includes those with fixed and lower incomes who are already experiencing financial hardship due to higher inflation. The Bolton Council on Aging (COA) and the Town of Bolton currently assist local seniors through various outreach programs and services (e.g. Fuel Assistance, Food/ Staples Pantry, Emergency Fund, and health and life counseling). Some Bolton seniors also are eligible for certain state and national programs, such as the Senior Circuit Breaker and Senior Tax Rebate Program (STRP), and Meals on Wheels. However, we fear that these programs will not be enough.

As members of the Board of the Bolton COA, we request your assistance in helping our low income seniors who will be severely impacted by the impending school funding costs, specifically by: 1) working with your legislative colleagues to increase the maximums for work-off programs such as STRP; 2) advocating for additional, innovative tax relief and support programs for seniors; and 3) identifying other state resources that may be made available to help offset higher taxes and living costs.

We realize that you have many priorities; but, we would appreciate your support and any ideas you may have to address our concerns. We welcome a discussion with you on how best to proceed.

Sincerely,

Bolton Council of Aging Board of Directors

Panny Gerken, Chair
Tom Byron
Barbara Brow
Corinne Mackie

Charles McCormack
Mary Roemer
Shirley Sefton
Janet Smith