

## COMMISSION ON ELDER AFFAIRS

Minutes of March 27, 2017

MEMBERS PRESENT: Theresa Eckstrom, Chair; Sandra Bisson; Robin Bahr Casey; Meg Coffin; Thomas Cullinane; Njeri Gichohi; Paul Johnson; Nghia Le; Richard Pinkes ; Gail Schuyler; Mary Warren

MEMBERS ABSENT: Matthew Fonseca; Ursula Hanus; Elizabeth Nguyen; Excused- Christopher Evans

GUESTS & STAFF PRESENT: Susan Maedler, Catholic Charities; Amy Vogel Waters, Patty Hainsworth; Linda Wincek-Moore; Saideh Mahdavisefat

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. Introductions were made and Mary Warren was welcomed as the newest member of the Commission.

The Commission minutes of Feb. 27, 2017 were approved as mailed. m/s/a

The Senior Center Committee Report of March 21, 2017 was approved after discussion. (m/s/a) The discussion was initiated by Paul who asked why the FY 18 budget is reviewed by the Senior Center Committee and not fully discussed by the entire Commission as it concerns more than the Senior Center. Amy, Theresa and Tom clarified that the Senior Center Committee reviews the Program Budget for programs both inside and outside the senior center and that the Commission is apprised on budget issues at every meeting. When it comes closer to the start of FY 18 and more is known about probable funding sources, then the Committee makes recommendations for allocations in their report to the Commission. The Senior Center Committee is an open meeting and anyone is welcome to attend.

The Commission approved mailing the attached letter to state legislators regarding the Council on Aging budget line item m/s/a Amy noted that the City Manager has agreed to sign the letter this year. Tom asked if Commission members, as constituents, should be talking to their own legislators on the matter. Theresa agreed and it was noted that the contact information is on posted on the bulletin board.

Susan Maedler reported on the Catholic Charities Senior Employment Program and answered members questions. The program serves people age 55 and older who meet income eligibility and need assistance with employment. They are place in non-profit and government organizations to work 20 hours/week receiving minimum wage and training. The maximum number of years for participation in the program is 4. The goal of the program is for participants to obtain unsubsidized employment. The Senior Center currently benefits from 5 senior aides.

Amy reported and the Commission discussed the following: The status of various funding sources for FY 18 are unknown, although planning has begun; The Friends Group is trying to be innovative and making partnerships for fund raising; Focus Groups for the Central Mass Agency on Aging needs assessment will be held at the senior center; The Technology Center in the computer lab has opened and the Mass. Assoc. for the Blind has 18 clients using it; Funding for the Centro Inc. Latino Program will not be allocated for FY 18, and they have decided to no longer meet at the senior center as of this month; There is a Latino Club 60+ still meeting at the center; Ascentria lost their Buhtanese Coordinator, and has recently hired a new person; Updated copies of the Senior Center Guide were distributed to members for their review; There was discussion of possible ways to market the center; Amy reported that the

parking lot issue is settled and renovations should begin in July; Sarah Bateman, the new Veteran's Agent for the city, toured the center last week and hopes to have office hours here and do some joint programming.

Patty reported on: programs and invited members to the Volunteer Recognition to be held on April 12; There will also be a Volunteer Recognition at City Hall April 25; The St. Patrick's Day event went very well; A recent cancer screening was very well attended; There were almost 100 people at the Friday Flick last week; Earth Day Clean-Up will be April 6<sup>th</sup> if anyone is interested in helping out; There is no start date for the clinic renovations yet; the new dishwasher was installed.

Linda spoke on the activities of the Senior Service staff: The Diabetes Self-Management program is very successful this session; Yung is teaching Your Health is Golden designed for Vietnamese elders; The Senior Center will attend the Elder Care Fair in May; Staff will also attend the Opioids & Substance Abuse conference in May.

Saideh reported on the Arabic Elder Group activities including the celebration of the Persian New Year.

The meeting adjourned

March 27, 2017

DRAFT

Dear (personalized to state legislators)

The Worcester Commission and Division of Elder Affairs is one of 349 Councils on Aging (COAs) dedicated to promoting healthy aging in the Commonwealth. Funding from line item #9110-9002 provides essential grants to COAs statewide. On behalf of Worcester's 29,000+ seniors, we express our gratitude for the legislature's FY'17 increase of the formula for COA grant distribution from \$9 to \$10 per municipal resident age 60 and older. This substantial local aid totaling \$289,814, goes a long way towards assisting seniors to maintain their economic security, health and independence through their interaction with our Senior Center programs, activities and services.

The Commonwealth's investment in the operation of our vibrant, multi-cultural, focal point senior center is key to our ability to provide senior services, as well as developing and coordinating programs. It is a cornerstone to our success, supplementing core municipal funding and partnerships with over 200 organizations and instructors to provide hundreds of different programs annually. We provide cutting edge services such as evidence-based programs including "A Matter of Balance," "My Life, My Health," and "Healthy Eating for Mature Adults." Further, we continue to maintain the Senior Support Team, an innovative collaboration between public safety, health and human service organizations which outreach to thousands of vulnerable seniors identified in crisis. This grant also helps to support the services we provide for newcomers to our diverse city such as those from Iraq, Syria, Bhutan, Nepal, Vietnam, China, Latin America, Puerto Rico, and more.

Councils on Aging and their Senior Centers promote healthy aging, lessening the need for more costly health and long term care services. **With the growing senior population, it is prudent that the legislature maintain level funding (\$14.2 m) for line item #9100-9002** despite, or perhaps because of, these uncertain economic times. Thank you for your continued support and consideration. Please feel free to contact Amy Waters at [watersa@worcesterma.gov](mailto:watersa@worcesterma.gov) or 508-799-8063 for further information.

Sincerely,

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Edward M. Augustus Jr.  
Director  
City Manager

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Theresa Eckstrom, Chair  
Commission on Elder Affairs

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Amy Waters,  
Elder Affairs