

Winchester Council on Aging
Agenda February 10, 2021 9:00 a.m.
Tom Howley, Presiding Chairperson

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1. Approval of January 13, 2021 minutes-see attached
2. Old Business
 - a. Current Covid-19 Operations
3. New Business
 - a. Jenks Covid-19 Vaccinations
 - b. CPR- Care Program Reassurance (see attachment)
 - c. Winchester Mt. Vernon House Funding Initiative
 - d. Budget (Town reduction request—EOEA request re staffing)
 - e. Strategic Pillars-Intergenerational Programing (see attachment)
4. Standing Reports
 - a. WSA-Rob Ain and Christine Kowalczuk
 - b. Transportation Committee-Joan Grenzeback
 - c. Housing Partnership Board update-Ted Martin
 - d. Minuteman-Margy McIndoe
 - e. Director's Report-Phillip Beltz-see attached
5. Date of Next Meeting- March 10, 2021
6. Adjournment

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Care Program Reassurance (C.P.R)

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Objective: To reach out to seniors in this time of social isolation to ensure their well-being and provide companionship through a telephone relationship.

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Time Commitment: Ideally the volunteer will call their designated senior(s) two times per week to establish a telephone rapport. If the senior and volunteer wish to speak three times a week and it is agreeable to both parties, this is acceptable as well. It is good practice to establish with the senior a consistent day and time that you will be calling, unless the senior requests an alternative method. In addition, The Jenks Center does require that volunteers attend a short Zoom training to ensure their understanding of this program and its objectives.

Communication: Ultimately the priority is to establish that the senior is well physically, mentally and emotionally. However, it is also important to engage the senior in pleasant and uplifting conversation for socialization and allow them to express their thoughts and concerns. Let them direct the conversation as much as possible. Many of these seniors have little or no interaction with others due to the current pandemic. Refrain from sharing too much of your own personal information as this is a senior-centered endeavor and should be focused on their interests and communication style. The volunteer should ask appropriate follow-up questions to promote further discussion and interaction.

Guidelines and Topic Suggestions:

1. With each call, it is important to establish that the senior is safe and doing well.

How are you feeling?

How is your appetite, are you eating well? Do you have food?

Are you sleeping well? Are you getting around your house okay?

Do you have family and/or neighbors that check on you?

Are you lonely?

Are you in touch with your doctor?

2. The following are topic suggestions to assist with conversation flow...

Where did you grow up? What was your occupation?

Did/do you travel often? Where was your favorite place?

Do you have children/grandchildren?

Did/do you have any pets? What kind? What is/was their name?

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What are your hobbies? (Books, TV, movies, sewing, games, cards, gardening, etc.)

What historical events have made an impact on your life?

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What are your favorite books/movies?

What were your favorite restaurants/stores when growing up?

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3. The above are meant to be suggestions for your conversations with the senior if needed. If a senior wishes to just "touch base" weekly and not have an extended conversation, do not press them with questions. Some seniors may appreciate just a quick check-in.

Follow-up with Jenks Staff:

-If at any time you feel a senior needs assistance or you are concerned, please contact the appropriate Jenks staff at 781-721-7136 and we will contact the senior directly.

-Please let Jenks staff know if you are unable to reach your senior.

-Please inform Jenks staff if you can no longer continue to call the senior or are having any difficulty with the senior. We are happy to help make any adjustments that may be needed for the senior as well as the volunteer.

-If you call a senior at any time and find that they appear to be in acute distress and/or suspect an emergency, immediately call 911 and then inform Jenks staff member.

-Jenks Staff Members may be reached at 781-721-7136

Philip Beltz, Director

Suzanne Norton, Social Worker

Colleen Wages, Nurse

Initial Script: The seniors will have given their consent and desire to proceed with this telephone reach-out program and will be expecting your call. Below is a script that should be helpful with your initial phone call to the senior.

"Hello, Mr./Mrs. _____! My name is _____, and I am a volunteer from the Jenks Center and wanted to introduce myself. I am part of the new volunteer program called _____. I can imagine it has been difficult lately to get out and socialize with others. If it's okay with you, I would like to call you a couple of times a week, check in with you and get to know you a little better."

While speaking with the seniors, be conscious of the fact that some may have no face-to-face contact with family or friends due to COVID-19. While others may have some contact with family or neighbors, we can be sure that all have had changes to their normal routines and lifestyles. The current pandemic has been especially hard for seniors. As they often are dependent on others for various needs like groceries, transportation, and house chores, they also depend on others for social interaction. If they have no family in the area, many seniors have had a caregiver who suddenly was not allowed to come care for the senior due to COVID restrictions. Many seniors found themselves alone and had no one spending time with them. This lack of human contact and socialization can be detrimental to the aging population.

Social isolation and loneliness are risk factors for physical and mental health illnesses. Depression is a common occurrence among the elderly and can be worsened in a situation like a pandemic.

It is important to listen to and acknowledge any feelings your senior may be experiencing. Validate their frustrations and concerns by using statements like "I see", "I understand", "It makes sense that you would feel this way", "It sounds like this has been a difficult time for you." Many times, it is most helpful for the volunteer to really listen and allow them to talk and voice their feelings.

Conversation that is bright and cheery can be a great diversion from the news they may be hearing daily. Exploring topics like hobbies, books, grandchildren and their childhood can be a great way to connect as they reminisce and share about their past.

Refrain from offering personal opinions as this can come across as judgmental, even with the best of intentions. Allow them to voice their thoughts and opinions freely. A simple, "I see" or "that sounds important to you" validates their statements without agreeing or passing judgement.

We, at the Jenks, appreciate your time and commitment to our seniors in these difficult and often lonely times. Please know that you are making a difference in their lives and are helping to keep them safe and connected to the community. Thank you!

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WINCHESTER COUNCIL ON AGING
MINUTES – via Zoom
January 13, 2021 – via ZOOM

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Attending: Tom Howley, Phillip Beltz, Michael Britt, Rebecca Dodge Watson, Joan Grenzeback, Wei Han, Ted Lamson, Martin, Margaret McIndoe, Jane Murray, Carol Thomas
Not Present: Rob Ain, Ruba Gnaratnam, Christine Kowalczyk

Tom called the meeting to order at 9:10. Amended Minutes of the December meeting were unanimously accepted.

Old Business

Covid-19: Phillip noted that daily operations have been reduced by 25% to 4 people at one time in response to the Town Manager's recent request. The nurse and social worker are available by appointment. One van driver is on sick leave and the other is making deliveries from En Ka's food pantry. Tom commended Phillip for his continuing leadership adapting to the challenges this pandemic presents to the Jenks center.

New Business:

Re-opening: Tom reviewed the latest draft of the Jenks Reopening Prerequisite document prepared by the Collaborative.

VOTE: It was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously that the Council on Aging accepts the current reopening document with the understanding that prior to re-opening of the Jenks Center the then current iteration of the document will be sent to the Board for its approval.

Covid testing and Vaccination: Phillip and Tom reviewed a letter they have sent to the Board of Health expressing the Jenks Center's willingness to be available if the town plans COVID testing and vaccination programs. They have asked the town to establish clear advance directions for the program.

Although no clear state and federal plans have been developed, it appears the first group for vaccination will be first responders. It is expected the next group will be people aged 75 and older. During the ensuing discussion, members recommended that the mechanics of any program be kept simple and use minimal, clear documentation to establish eligibility. It was noted that Mt. Vernon House has arranged with Walgreens to conduct three vaccination sessions when a vaccine becomes available. It is unclear who will do town vaccinations and where public housing and congregate housing residents will obtain vaccinations.

VOTE: It was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously that the Council on Aging encourages the town to develop an easily accessible vaccination program that includes all of the Town's Senior citizens.

Tom and Phillip indicated that as part of ongoing discussions with the Board of Health regarding the use of the Jenks for vaccination clinics they would convey the Board's sentiment as expressed in its vote.

Patron Survey: Phillip and Rebecca reported that the recent randomized survey calling program has not yet been successful. Although they suggested that wellness check-in calls be expanded, they recommended surveying patrons be laid aside until the center is closer to reopening.

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Mt. Vernon House Funding: Working with Steve Anderson, a member of the MVH board, a grant is being considered to offer food as part of upcoming socialization events. Events could include some of the following: a weekly movie with pizza or a sandwich, lunchtime dine-about-town events for a van of seniors, baseball (virtual) and hot dogs, continental coffee breakfasts. VOTE: It was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously that the Council on Aging authorizes Phillip to submit an application for a grant up to \$15,000, renewable annually, to develop an eating and socialization program for seniors.

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Pillars/Goals & Objectives: Tom reviewed the Council's Objectives for 2021. Wei noted the citizenship and intergenerational ESL classes are now available through the town's Chinese school and several local long term care facilities. Rebecca described progress being made on developing a intergenerational learning program in collaboration with the High School and Music School that may take place over April break by Zoom with a focus on jazz, cinematography and animation. Enhancing transportation services was mentioned as a 2021 priority. Tom noted that it is important to keep a careful record of the center's van usage during the pandemic. The van has been quite helpful reducing isolation among seniors and the WSA efforts to extend computer literacy should increase seniors' understanding of its availability. Other 2021 goals reviewed included Collaborating with the WSA and Trust to facilitate utilization of the Jenks for COVID testing and vaccination, supporting the WSA's efforts to provide greater access to technology, advancing Age Friendly Community priorities, strengthening partnerships with community organizations and ongoing COA board development.

Board Development – Tom commented the time to resolve upcoming term expirations and leadership changes is upon us.

Standing Reports

WSA: Christine and Rob were not present. Phillip reported that tax preparation volunteers are in place, awaiting a decline in surge of COVID prior to initiation.

Transportation: Joan noted the van now takes patrons to the En Ka food pantry a few days a week. She commented that seniors would like to have Uber vouchers as backup when the taxi service is unavailable.

Housing Partnership: Ted Martin reported that upcoming proposed zoning law changes may be obtained with a simple majority vote of Town Meeting rather than the 2/3 vote currently required.

Minuteman Senior Services – Margaret reviewed the recent MMS board vote to join a petition filed by Mass Home Care through the Division of Administrative Appeal to appeal a recent rate setting action by the Executive Office of Health and Human Services and Executive Office of Elder Affairs. As the Council’s representative to the Minuteman Board, she sought their approval of her vote.

Every two years, the Commonwealth reviews and sets rates for services to seniors. In November, the Commonwealth established rates through 2022. Mass Home Care feels the two offices did not meet their statutory responsibility to consider reasonable rates before setting the new rates and asks that three law firms be assigned to review the rates. Tom indicated that when more definitive information was available from Minuteman, including the wording of petition, it would be presented to the Board for consideration.

Director’s Report: Phillip had no additional report.

The next Council on Aging meeting, by ZOOM, will be Wednesday, February 10 at 9AM.

The Meeting adjourned at 10:35

Respectfully submitted,
Margaret McIndoe

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Join Us: The Jenks is Uniting Generations

The Jenks is making “intergenerational connections” a priority. Help us define and achieve this goal. With a three-year grant (2020 – 2023) from The Cummings Foundation to promote intergenerational programing, we have convened a Leadership Team of community partners representing more than 12 Winchester organizations. In addition we have developed affiliations with Andrea Weaver, intergenerational expert and Susan Rozmanith serving as contract manager.

The Leadership Team went through a series of trainings in November and December and now meets monthly for a two hour Zoom meeting with subgroups meeting more often. With Andrea’s coaching and companionship, we are planning a wide-variety of opportunities for the younger and older generations of Winchester to come together.

The first project launched was between the Jenks Center, Winchester High School and the Network for Social Justice honoring the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in which students and seniors shared experiences of confronting racism and how best to forge solutions to challenges in the future.

We would welcome additional participation from Winchester seniors willing to devote a few hours to work on a project with students who represent the best of a new generation. We invite you to join our Leadership Team or assist with the following projects this Spring:

- A crafts program which will take place in February and March - a crafts package will be delivered to your home and then high school students will lead you via zoom in making a craft
- High school students are preparing “Intergenerational Bags of Love” to be delivered to frail elders for Valentine’s Day
- Plans are underway for some gardening projects with preschoolers to take place in the spring
- Coming in April: A town-wide community celebration where people will watch a popular family movie at their leisure and then join together for a number of events
- Another group is exploring different ways to unite generations on walks around Town.

To get involved or for more information, please contact project manager Susan Rozmanith at s.rozmanith@gmail.com or 781-771-7211. Thank you for your consideration.

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February 03, 2021

To: Winchester Council on Aging Board

Fr: Phillip Beltz

Re: Summary Board Report-COA Director- January 2021

Staff Development/Personnel:

- COA staff continue presence at Jenks plus working remotely – ad hoc Zoom meetings.
- Due to surge of Covid in Winchester reconfigured staffing continued through most January however with planning of COVID vaccinations more staff and some volunteers needed.

Director Professional Development

- Weekly Zoom meetings with regional COA directors and Minuteman.
- Participation with WSA and WSAT board meetings and Collaborative meetings.
- Department head meeting with Town Manager with request for all departments to reduce 2022 budgets by 3%.

Program and Administration:

- With Winchester Board of Health and regional Board of Health consortium, planning of Covid vaccination clinics for vulnerable Winchester residents in February.
- With staff, development of February 2021 newsletter.
- Continued with Cummings Intergenerational program leadership meetings. Implemented partnership with Network for Social Justice and Winchester High School developing Dr. MLK project on "Radical Inter-Connectedness." Meetings with Jenks representatives: Lorin Mahoney and Betty Minassian. 38 participants.
- With staff, continuation of development of virtual programs.
- Finalized and submitted funding request of \$15,000 to Winchester Mount Vernon House for development of socialization events with food/entertainment.
- With Social Worker and Nurse, development of "volunteer telephone reassurance" "CPR" program with training to reach out to homebound seniors.
- Weekly meetings with Rob Ain and Christine Kowalczyk to foster communication.

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Community Outreach and Engagement:

- With Winchester Public Library community liaison, continued planning new program of Documentary Club with second feature Cyber-Seniors.