**Scituate Council on Aging Board of Directors Meeting**

**Thursday, February 9, 2023, 5:30 p.m.**

**In attendance:**

Chairman JD Miller, Vice-Chair Susan Drevitch-Kelly

Board members: Janice Lindblom; Dee Dwyer;Leslie James;Laurie Brady;Marie Fricker;

Pat Carleton, and Susan Pope

South Shore Elder Services Liaison Joan Powers

FOSS Liaison Kenzy Vandebroek

The meeting began with approval of the minutes of the COA January 12, 2023 meeting.

**Announcements:**

New Hires: The Center has hired a new transportation coordinator Kelly Walsh, who will officially come on board in March.

The next topic on the agenda was a thorough discussion of the recent meeting held at the Senior Center on municipal aggregation. Scituate has obtained a bulk purchase of electricity with five to six surrounding towns in order to lower the electric bills of residents and businesses in the community.

National Grid will remain the provider for the town, but Scituatehas arranged a significantly lower rate than the previous standard of 33+ cents per kilowatt. Unless residents opt out of the new plan which charges 16.7 cents per kilowatt with 10 percent going to renewable energy, they will be automatically enrolled into it. They must notify the town to request a basic plan of 16.3 cents per kilowatt with no money going toward renewable energy or a more expensive option of 17.9 cents per kilowatt with 100 percent going to renewable energy. The new rate of 16.7 cents goes into effect on the March 1 billing cycle. This rate is guaranteed until December, 2024.

For more information there is a tab for Community Electricity on the town website. “None of us have done this before but it’s a great opportunity to save money in your budget,” said Chairman Miller. “It helps your checkbook.” “National Grid is still the service provider for Scituate,” added Vice Chair Susan Drevitch-Kelly. “But Community Choice Electricity, the vendor of the program, bids on the rate with suppliers, based on market conditions, and obtains savings for all of us.”

**Transportation News**

There is a change to the GATRA Sloop public transportation service in town. Scituate has been provided with GATRA public ride service on a set schedule for designated stops, but beginning in the month of February, the program is an “on-demand service” and will schedule pick up and drop off for passengers requesting through a dispatch phone number of a mobile “app” instead of looping around town.

**Center Activities/Happenings**

No trips were planned by the center this winter, but staff are currently coordinating with Cohasset, Hull and Norwell to organize excursions for April through December 2023 through a new travel company, Tours of Distinction.

Two informational workshops took place on-site in January—“Decluttering to Destress” with Anita Ahearn, and “New Year New You” led by Susan Drevitch-Kelly. Bob Jackman’s classes continue to be sold out with close to 30 attendees in both morning and afternoon sessions.

Lifelong learning added a new opportunity with Britain’s War Series with David Barret attracting 25 participants for the 8-week course. With plunging temperatures and icy roadways, the center took a break from entertainment in January, but more are upcoming as spring and summer arrive.

Other popular activities continued to be the lunch program, which brought 200 diners into the banquet hall in January, the much-loved Art for Your Mind series, the Lift Your Spirits classes, Balance for Life, chair yoga with Elizabeth, cardio machines and the Men’s Breakfasts.

A festive Valentine’s Day celebration with music is planned for February 13. St. Patrick’s Day activities are ramping up with the luncheon and parade to look forward to.

**Liaison Reports:**

Joan Powers discussed the South Shore Elder Services February 7 meeting, which provided a detailed financial report with a discussion of the budget process. Joan distributed an informational flier entitled “Mass Home Care” and talked about the continuing shortage of home care staff to meet the growing demands of the burgeoning elder population in Massachusetts. The need of Bay State residents for home care is expected to rise 33 percent between 2020 and 2030.

Joan talked about the delivery of her organization’s Meals on Wheels program to 45 residents in Scituate, and mentioned the need for senior apartments on the South Shore is greater than ever.

St. Luke’s will hold its monthly community dinner on Sunday, February 26 at St. Luke’s Church in Scituate. The bill of fare is beef stew and cherry pie, in honor of George Washington’s birthday. Forty-five people attended the community dinner last month.

Kenzy Vandebroek reported that the FOSS (Friends of Scituate Seniors) Board of Directors will have a general meeting on March 21. The group has a 95 percent return rate on requests that they send out for events, memberships and donations.

FOSS, which was a key player in raising funds for the construction of the new Scituate Senior Center, provides free coffee for all of the activities in building. The group has contributed $2,800 for coffee in the last six months. “For a lot of people, just walking over to the senior center in the morning or afternoon for a cup of coffee is a great chance to be social and get out of the house on a winter’s day,” said Kenzy. “We also provide the Hershey’s kisses, which are a crowd favorite.”

Upcoming events in the planning stages by FOSS include quarterly afternoon concerts to be funded with money from the Jim Young Memorial fund and landscaping for the Betty Johnson Memorial tree and bench outside the center.

An antique car show and cookout is scheduled for the senior center’s back parking lot on the 10th of June with free admission and photo ops with Model Ts and other early-era vehicles. Donations are welcome but there is no fee for admission.

Back by popular demand could be the second annual FOSS “High Tea” fundraiser to be held in in the banquet hall of the center. Last year’s event sold out almost immediately with 54 people attending, some of them purchasing whole tables. Petit sandwiches and delicacies will be crafted by the center’s own chef and displayed on three-tiered pedestals rimmed by flowered tablecloths like the traditional British tea.

FOSS also plans to host an event similar to the harvest dance held last fall with music and dancing, and a new performance of the widely-acclaimed acting troupe who performed the sold-out Julia Child evening last year.

“FOSS was more focused on charging money for events when we were raising funds to build the center,” said Kenzy. “But now we’re doing more outreach and programming for the community. We also work with the food pantry, and are exploring ways to reach seniors who can’t come into the center. About a third of the people in Scituate are over the age of 60. That is a pretty high percentage for such a small town.”igh

Not only does FOSS provide all of the coffee at the senior center, but the group also donated the first aid kits that are found in all of the rooms in the building.

**Campaign for Accreditation**:

JD Miller discussed the process that will enable the Scituate Senior Center to receive accreditation for a five-year period. Some local centers are already accredited, and the Scituate COA will embark on a thorough self-analysis of everything it does, how it manages its budget, how it collaborates with the community, and basically what the center does best, what could be improved, and its goals for the future.

Nine small subcommittees, totaling about 35 people (Board members, community representatives and center staff), will meet over the next few months to address each of the nine “Senior Center Accreditation Standards,” as outlined by the National Institute of Senior Centers.

Each designated group will delve into their assigned topic.

The Nine Standards Subcommittees are as follows:

1. Purpose and Planning (Susan Drevitch Kelly, Linda Hayes, Caitlin Coyle, Karen Canfield);
2. Community Connections (Marie Fricker, Kim Stewart, Gordon Price);
3. Governance (Pat Carleton, Linda Hayes, Larry Guilmette);
4. Administration and Human Resources (Janice Lindblom, staff member Jill Johnson, Linda Hayes, Town HR Director Bob Clark, Anita Ahern);
5. Program Planning (Susan Pope, Jessica Souke, Lucille Sorrentino, Ann Vegnani and Denise Price);
6. Evaluation (Dee Dwyer, Jen Adams, Bill Geary);
7. Fiscal Management (Leslie James, Linda Hayes, Jim Canavan, Val Baker);
8. Records and Reports (Laurie Brady, Linda Hayes, Katherine Hogan, Kenzy Vandebroek);
9. Facility (JD Miller, Bob Chessia, Town Facilities Director Kevin Kelly, and Joe Annese)

Each Board member was given a description of their subcommittee’s specific standards with a series of guidelines and questions about what they will be evaluating. Each committee will complete an action plan— what are we doing well? What could we be doing better? Where do we envision our center in the future. What is going on in other centers?

Individual subcommittees will meet several times, then present their findings and initiatives in a meeting that includes all nine standard groups.

Chairman JD Miller and Vice-Chair Susan Drevitch-Kelly announced that the board’s next step would be to finalize the members of the subcommittees and to hold an orientation session with all groups involved on March 2. The information from each committee will be consolidated and submitted to the National Institute of Senior Centers by the deadline date of June 30, 2023. If granted, the accreditation will last five years.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:39 p.m.