Council on Aging November 14, 2023 (presented on December 12, 2023)

The scheduled November meeting of the Council on Aging was held at the Bellingham Senior Center Chairperson Kay Page called the meeting to order at 11:05 am. The meeting opened with the pledge of allegiance to the flag followed by a moment of silence. All members of the Board were present. 11 persons from the public were also present.

**Secretary's Report** (Brenda Griffin): Motion to accept minutes was made by Tina Arsenault, seconded by Wendy Wright, with unanimous approval by the board.

**Treasurer's Report (**Tina Arsenault):

Monthly general fund financial report:

* Postage $716
* Electricity & Gas Heat $127
* Office Equipment & Contracts $132
* Professional Services $1,082
* Janitorial Services $455
* Office Supplies $370
* Operating Supplies & Equipment $256
* HVAC $4,685 \*this expense was out of capital money not municipal money per Josie

Town-30.12% of $267,397.00 spent as of 11-13-2023

* COA Gift Fund-current balance of $31,669.61
* Supportive Day -current balance of $37,236.40
* Elderly Recreation-current balance of $15,803.80 Discussion: \*used for instructors for classes from the $5 fee for attendees. Enhanced Fitness is supported from the COA Gift Fund. There has been a drop in attendance. Attendees are charged $100 and the COA Gift Fund contributes $50. Josie may talk with the YMCA staff regarding attendance and assess absenteeism.

Motion to accept the Treasurer's report was made by Wendy Wright, seconded by Glenna Laverdiere, with unanimous approval by the board.

**Report (**Kay Page):

Craft Fair-gorgeous day outside and a wonderful atmosphere inside. Both Friday and Saturday were great days. Poker Paul adds so much to the spirit of the attendees and volunteers. We made close to $6,000-no final numbers yet but it was most likely our most successful year yet. $1,800 from the raffle. The gift baskets are valued just under $300. The Like New Room made ~ $1,100 which is our most popular room. The Bake table was >$500-also the most ever that we’ve earned. All the food was sold out after we reduced the prices at 1pm. The kitchen made > $600-thanks to Bill and his crew. The menu was great and food delicious. Mitzi’s dynamites were a tasty hit. The Senior Strong t-shirts are being sold all year long at the senior center. Close to 461 people scanned in to the senior center in 6 hours. Generally, about 500 are scanned in a week. The Craft Fair earnings go into the COA Gift Fund. Thank you to all the volunteers.

Grant was written by Terri Graham for new tables and chairs for the dining room. We will hear by the end of November if the grant application is approved. The new (10) tables (long tables & puzzle table) that have legs that fold and a cart to store the tables. 140 chairs with and without arms would be vinyl to assist with cleaning. Terri applied for a $17,000 grant from MCOA SIG (Service Incentive Grants) under the Modernization section that creates a ‘convertible space’. Convertible space would allow for a theater like set up like a concert hall when we have the 30-piece ensemble perform. Pickleball lanes might be a future option. Glenna: what are we doing with the present furniture? Josie: I’m meeting with Denis this week with that question because they are government property. Can we sell them or donate them to another senior center.

Christmas Party on 12/9 at 12 noon. We are capping at 125-need to sign up. BESG and COA are working together. Price is $15.00. Meal is stuffed chicken breast with all the fixings.

**BESG Update** (Bill Eltzroth-President):

* Last Thursday there were 80 people. The last birthday party 8 did not show up but we must still pay the caterer. We may want to consider sending a bill for the meal to those that do not show up. BESG subsidizes the meals-we charge $12 but the cost ranges from $14-18. If people don’t pay, we pay the full amount. One woman cancelled her lunch but later offered to pay for that lunch which I refused.

**Discussion:** Tsune: Maybe we should collect the money when people signup and if they cancel within 48 hours, we’d keep the money. Bill & Josie: Collecting money ahead of time had been done in the past but sometimes mistakes were made. The reception staff already do so much with answering the phone, manning the cell phone for the drivers etc. We do not want to add this to their duties. Neither of us support collecting money at the reception desk. Tsune: maybe use the mailbox for the money instead. Most of the people come into the senior center during the week anyhow. Ray: At last month’s birthday party there were 76 names but only 62 attended (some cancelled) and there was one >90 who got a free meal. This month we have 2 over 90. Do we know why people don’t show up? Josie: We can make phone calls and remind people to pay. We’d need volunteers to make the calls. Let’s do that for the next birthday party and if they are a no show, we’d call back saying that we’d be sending a bill. Across the board, we all need to respect the deadlines and adhere to them. Bill: I just want everyone to have a good time. People need to be more responsible. The caterers generally add another 10% to the numbers we give them because they do not want to run out. We should keep track of who does not show up. Josie: On the day of the birthday party the front desk can call those who don’t show up telling them they can come pick up the food and pay the bill.

* New Year’s Eve is 12/30 at noon at the VFW. There will be a full bar, hors d`oeuvres and pizza. The VFW has been fully remodeled and looks great. The VFW supplies the bar tender for $50 so we don’t need to apply for a 1-day license which was only for beer and wine. $5/person and everyone needs to sign up.
* Boston Pops is sold out.
* Saturday in May will be Armed Forces Day which will be free to Veterans.
* Sincere thanks to all the helpers at the Craft Fair. People were very generous with their time and with donations.
* Donna Malia donated macaroni and cheese. And 10+ apple

**Director's Report** (Josie Dutil-Executive Director):

HIGHLIGHTS

Highlights: We hosted our first ever 60th birthday party and it proved to be a most effective way to introduce the senior center community to the youngest of Bellingham’s seniors. Of the 294 invitations sent out, we had 38 positive responses and 31 showed up. A new TV was purchased and installed in the Supportive Day Room to be utilized for programming. The TV that was there previously was not a SMART TV so we were limited in how we could use it. The TV that is on the stand in the coat closet will be installed in the exercise room this coming Thursday. There is an application on the TV with activities.

UPCOMING EVENTS-PROJECTS-SIGNUPS-NOTICES

· The senior center will be closed on Thanksgiving and the day after Thanksgiving (11/23 & 11/24).

· This coming Friday, November 17th at 1pm, Sean Fullerton will be performing in the dining room. Please sign up to let us know if you are coming.

· On Tuesday, November 28th at noon, the Hockomock Area YMCA’s DIG Committee (Diversity, Inclusion, Global Network) will be hosting a free lunch so that they can learn from seniors what the most pressing issues/needs are in your lives. The presentation will be on Agism before the Age Friendly program at 1pm. The Tri-chairs can invite 1pm program participants as well as the speaker. It will be a nice lead in to the subsequent program. Please sign up soon if you’d like to be part of this conversation.

· On Friday, November 30th at 1pm we will host a program called Julian to Gregorian….How our Calendar Changed.

· The Bellingham Lion’s Club is hosting their FREE annual Turkey Luncheon on Saturday, December 2nd from 11:30-1pm, but you must sign up as space is limited. This is a sit-down luncheon.

· We are in the early stages of forming our PrideFest Committee and hope to begin meeting regularly next month. If you are interested in being more involved this year, please see me. The program will be on June 29, 2023.

· My apologies for the parking lot reconstruction. We were not made aware that it was happening. The state is creating an accessible sidewalk from the street. If the police detail (not Bellingham officers), are not doing their job just toot to them. The plan is that the reconstruction will take 3 weeks but due to the good weather they may finish ahead of time. This is the result of a DPW grant from the state which helps us with our Age Friendly Initiative.

**Other Business /Public Segment:**

Wendy: I’d like to revisit the Enhanced Fitness and attendance/financial concerns. Attendance is done by the YMCA which they must maintain. If patrons are chronically absent, they should be charged the full price? Josie: Yes, they will be charged the full price. If attendance meets the YMCA requirements for submission of class results, the participant will be reimbursed the additional portion in the form of a credit towards their registration for the next 16-week session. The COA Gift Funds used are contributing to the health and well-being of our seniors.

Wendy: There will be a huge fair at the high school on December 2 with 150 vendors.

Bill: We invited Kay to the BESG monthly meeting on Friday which was very enjoyable.

Bill: I’ve had initial conversations with the Police Association which plans to provide a Corned Beef and Cabbage meal for 125. Location is undecided but they reached out to me to get entertainment.

Tsune: Walking Club meets every Friday. At the 126 Center Street location, we are finding many dog poop bags just being placed on a big stone. I’ve contacted the Municipal Center but they said that it is not their responsibility and to contact the Trail Committee. Suggestion: Ask her husband who has many community contacts which may direct next steps.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 on a motion by Wendy Wright, seconded by Tina Arsenault with unanimous approval by the board.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Griffin-secretary