Council on Aging Meeting December 12, 2023 (presented on January 9, 2024)

The scheduled December 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 with the exception of Tina Arsenault, Treasurer and Stephen Racicot, Associate Member. 9 persons from the public were also present.

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

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

Monthly general fund financial report: Financials

Town – 36.62% of $267,397.00 spent as of 12-7-2023

* Postage $471.14
* Electricity $0 (all department electricity bills go the Town Hall for payment)
* Gas heat $391.57
* Office Equipment & Contracts $132.72
* Professional Services $985.62
* Janitorial Services $419.42
* Office Supplies $191.10
* Operating Supplies & Equipment $538.00 \*Dig Safe bill for the kitchen expansion
* COA Gift Fund-current balance of $32,357.61
* Supportive Day -current balance of $40,364.76
* Elderly Recreation-current balance of $15,388.80

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

**President’s Report (**Kay Page):

The Christmas party was absolutely wonderful. Great job by BESG and COA. It was a lot of fun. Thanks to Peggy and Eva. Jim was the BEST SANTA. Pleased to see new attendees to the center. One attendee remarked that everyone was so pleasant, she felt she was part of a Hallmark Movie.

The COA and BESG boards and Josie are going out to lunch on 1/9/24 at Lowell’s at 12:30 after the Coffee Hour and COA meeting. Please RSVP the invitational email.

**BESG Update** (Jim Fitzpatrick-Vice-President):

* BESG New Year’s Party will be at 12 noon at the VFW. Refreshments will include pizza, appetizers and a cash bar. Gatra approved the use of vans for the New Year’s Party-we just need to secure a driver.
* January birthday party being planned
* Developing list of trips for next year but no prices yet. The always popular Boston Pops will be one of the trips

**Director's Report** (Josie Dutil-Executive Director): November 2023 Summary – Presented at December 12th, 2023 Meeting

**HIGHLIGHTS**

Highlights: We enjoyed another successful Craft Fair with close to 500 people coming through the doors. Town Pizza provided lunches for our drive by lunch program for the first time and the food was very well received. Happy to include them in our rotation until our kitchen is built. November is the beginning of the holiday season and is a month the absolutely flies by each year with 3 days that the building is closed. And as soon as the Craft Fair was over, raffle baskets were on display again for the Christmas Party raffle. And the building got decorated to get us all in the festive spirit. Great job Eva and Guy with the raffle baskets.

We were granted $5,000 from the MCOA grant. Terri has put in the order for the dining room tables and chairs. The VFW will take our tables and chairs in another week.

The roof leaked yesterday in the front hallway. Crew will be in tomorrow to fix the roof.

**UPCOMING EVENTS-PROJECTS-SIGNUPS-NOTICES**

• The senior center will be closed for Christmas and New Year’s Day this year, both days are a Monday.

• Please consider joining us this coming Thursday for our Rainbow Café at 2:30pm – would love to share

some holiday cheer with our members of the LGBTQ community.

• This coming Friday is my mother’s 90th birthday so I will be heading north to help her celebrate.

• Next Thursday, December 21st, Muriel Edmund will be doing a presentation on Grandparents Raising

Grandchildren at 1pm. If you know of anyone in that position, please consider issuing them an invitation.

• Join us on Friday, the 22nd for some Christmas Caroling with Cocoa and Cookies presented to us by a

local Daisy Troop.

• The Drive by Lunch program will break for the months of January and February – depending on

weather in March, we may bring it back then.

**Other Business /Public Segment:**

Wendy Wright: I realize that I’ve brought this up before but after experiencing an injury the last few months, we should consider getting at least 1 higher toilet in the restroom. The handicapped stall is fine. Even handles added to each stall would help (there are bars in the 1st and last stall). Josie: Will investigate getting bars for the stalls without them and identify the associated costs and financing.

Bill Eltzroth: The Christmas Party was very successful. There were no glitches that I was aware of and thanks to the BESG and COA Board. There were no ‘No Shows’ and a few cancellations. I’m working on dates for next year’s Christmas party and want to do a survey to see whether people prefer the party be on a Thursday or Saturday. Discussion:

* Before COVID the parties were on Thursdays
* Recently the entertainer was only available on Saturdays
* Previously a YMCA survey elicited responses from seniors that weekends were the longest part of the week for them and they were very interested in becoming engaged with big groups
* We seemed to have more people the last 2 times (post COVID) and people who we’d not seen during the week.
* Some people work during the week and cannot attend weekday events
* Some people are unable to attend on the weekends due to family commitments & holiday parties
* It is easier to set up for Saturdays because we have all day Friday to set up. Thursday events require setup after Bingo which requires setup into the evening.
* We just want people to be happy and there will always be some who will be disappointed.

Survey of COA Board demonstrated a preference for Saturdays. Survey of BESG Board members in attendance identified December 7, 2024 for next years party which would include a Pearl Harbor remembrance.

Denis Fraine: Retired October 20, 2023 but is back working PT (20 hours/week) while the interviewing continues. Kitchen Update: I apologize for the delays but we will make it happen

* There were delays due to utility connection issues-electricity
* Close to proceeding with the pad-hopefully before it snows
* Have design, layout and finances
* Completion date will be easier to identify once the pad is in and hopefully be able to get the kitchen framed before snow fall. It is all weather dependent.
* We have to get the bids and contractors signed before 12/2024.
* Monies are committed and we have other funds so there is a cushion in place.
* Tim will drive the process.
* I will be available for future updates.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 am on a motion by Wendy Wright, seconded by Brenda Griffin with unanimous approval by the board.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Griffin