

Up-Island Council on Aging Minutes of November 6, 2023

11 AM, In person at Howes House (1042 State Road, West Tisbury)

Meeting commenced at 11 AM

Present: Cynthia Mitchell, Select Board (2023), Chair Pro Tem, (WT), Sue Collins (Aquinnah), Peter Cook (Chilmark), Marie Larsen, Select Board, Vice Chair Pro Tem (Chilmark), Anna Alley (WT), Betty Farrow (Chilmark), Kathie Olsen (Aquinnah).

Staff members: Joyce Albertine, Director, Bethany Hammond, Assistant Director, Sue Merrill, Outreach Coordinator, Jennie Gadowski, Administrative Assistant.

Introductions: As this was the first in person meeting of the newly constituted Up Island Council on Aging Board, introductions were made.

Approval of Minutes: Because Anna Alley was the only board member, of the past Board, present for the December 2, 2022 meeting, Cindy Mitchell will check with legal counsel as to how to approve these minutes, and we will approve them and the other meeting minutes at the next meeting.

Election of Chair Pro Tem, Vice Chair, Clerk/Secretary: Anna Alley volunteered to be the Clerk/Secretary to take the minutes of this meeting so staff will be relieved of this task going forward. It was further agreed that all meetings will be recorded to help with this task.

In that this was the first meeting of the newly constituted Board, and several members are interim appointments, it was decided to ask Cindy Mitchell to continue as Chair Pro Tem until we have had a few meetings and are reorganized. Marie Larsen was elected Vice Chair Pro Tem. All approved of this plan.

Review with staff of current COA programs:

Jennie Gadowski, Administrative Assistant greets clients, answers the phone, prepares the brochures, monthly calendars, newsletters, coordinates medical equipment and emails board members. She has been in this position for 2 years.

Susan Merrill, Outreach Coordinator, helps clients get the services they need, such as medical transportation, fuel assistance, (SNAP) food stamps, coordinating home care, co facilitating the Parkinsons Support group, and other assistance as needed. She goes to the Aquinnah Town Hall and Aquinnah and Chilmark libraries to meet with seniors in their town. It was suggested that the dates and times of her visits in other towns be advertised in the town columns in local newspapers and listed in the town websites. She has a background in caring for people with dementia and Alzheimer's. She has been in this position for two years.

Bethany Hammond, Assistant Director assumes many of the Director's responsibilities when she is away, focuses on programming, coordinating speakers, fitness programs, trips and events. She is also a Shine insurance counselor. She has worked at the Council on Aging for ten years and has functioned in most of the positions at the Council on Aging during those ten years. She has been in her current position for nearly 2 years.

Joyce Albertine, Director, has worked at the Up Island Council on Aging for 37 years. She is a licensed social worker, community based, and worked for the State Department of Welfare prior to being hired as the assistant director. She has been the Director for 37 years. She is also a Shine counselor, which requires yearly training and certification. Unfortunately, she announced that she will be retiring in May of 2024, though she plans to continue volunteering as a Shine counselor. Thus the Board now has yet another major task to attend to in the coming months, hiring a new Director! Joyce credits the current staff with great coordination of tasks and informed the board that the staff, on their own time, have attended numerous learning opportunities to help them serve the seniors in the Up Island towns.

Review of upcoming Board scope of work:

Bylaws and Memorandum of Understanding between the three up island towns review and updating. Marie Larsen, Peter Cook, and Kathy Olsen agreed to form a subcommittee to begin this important work. Beth Kramer will be asked to join this subcommittee and Marie Larsen will be the chair. Joyce has never seen a copy of the memorandum of understanding, so Cindy Mitchell will ask the WT town accountant and clerk to see if they can find the document. Also, the copy of the Bylaws we were given is incomplete. So, a search for that document will also be undertaken. The subcommittee will try to meet asap and their meetings do not need to be posted. They will report back to the board at our next meeting.

Strategic Facilities Planning is urgently needed as the previous Howes House building committee has been suspended, yet there is a current contract with an architect ongoing. Therefore, a subcommittee of hopefully Beth Kramer, Betty Farrow and Sue Collins, with Beth as the chair will hopefully begin work soon. Other members of this subcommittee can be added as some of the applicants for board membership offered to help with this important subcommittee. Some members of the staff will be asked to join this subcommittee also.

Search for a new Director. This will be undertaken as soon as possible in January.

It is thought that each of the subcommittees should have at least one member from each of the Up Island towns participating. Additional members from the community can also be asked to participate.

Next meetings:

December 4, 2023, at 11 am – This will be this board's second meeting in which to continue reorganization and update on subcommittee progress.

Dec. 18, 2023, at 11 am – This will include Joyce's presentation of the budget which must be done in December. She reminded the board that the operating budget for the Up Island Council on Aging is split in thirds between the up-island towns, but the staff are under the direction of West Tisbury's Personnel Bylaws, in effect, employees of West Tisbury. Except for the janitor's position, which is part of a bidding process. West Tisbury's town accountant will attend that meeting.

This meeting was adjourned at 12 noon.

Respectfully submitted, Anna Alley, Clerk/Secretary