

**APPROVED APRIL 8, 2021**

**COUNCIL ON AGING  
P.O. BOX 243, 36 Muddy Pond Road  
Sterling, MA 01564**

The Sterling Council on Aging Board meeting was called to order electronically by online Zoom meeting on Thursday, March 11, 2021 at 5:32 pm and Liz Pape recorded the minutes. A quorum of directors was present, and the meeting, having been duly convened, was ready to proceed with business.

**1. Open Meeting**

**2. Roll Call**

**PRESENT**

Kevin Beaupre, (2022) Chair  
Nancy Castagna (2023) Member  
Meg Chase (2022) Member  
David Cosgrove, (2022) Treasurer  
Joe LaGrassa, (2021) Member  
Deb MacLennan (2021) Member  
Liz Pape (2023) Secretary  
Sue Protano, (2023) Member

**ABSENT**

Sheila Battles (2021) Member

Veronica Buckley, Director

**3. Review/Approve Minutes and Treasurer's Report**

February 11, 2021 meeting minutes approved as filed.

Motion by Pape, LaGrassa seconded, to table Treasurer's Report until it can be updated and presented at April meeting.

- Passed unanimously.

**4. Building Committee Update**

Richard Maki of the Building Committee reported that the garage construction is progressing. The roof and the partition for the storage area has not been completed due to a plywood shortage. The doors and electrical work are on schedule.

**5. Review Annual Calendar**

There were no revisions to the COA Board Activities Annual Calendar.

**6. Public Session**

Richard Maki asked if MA had any announcements about senior centers opening either fully or partially. Veronica responded that nothing had yet been announced. Veronica also stated that MCOA had offered employee training by Zoom.

Richard Maki and Veronica Buckley met with MART about the use of vans in coordination with the needs of other regional COAs. In the past, COAs have typically pushed back against the concept of regionalization of transportation services because they want to keep that service personalized to their town's seniors. MART services 22 towns and has been successful at getting grants for transportation services. Sterling will participate in a regionalization pilot with Lancaster, Bolton and Shirley. Kevin Beaupre noted that Sterling is the only town in the pilot with more than 1 van and is concerned that Sterling will be providing the majority of transportation services to the other towns.

David Cosgrove expressed concern that some Sterling Senior Center events "sell out" quickly and may be frustrating seniors trying to participate. Veronica suggested noting in event announcements that the event sign-ups will remain open until capacity is reached.

**7. Director's Report**

- Two candidates were interviewed for the Meal Site Coordinator vacancy and were not a good fit. The position will be readvertised.
- COVID registrations are now being tracked as an Event Statistic. Many of the Outreach Coordinator's hours are now tracked as Event Statistics. 818 registrations were done in February. Approximately 150 Sterling seniors were enrolled in the March 10 vaccination clinic at Rutland. About 110 enrollments for the March 23 and 24 clinics were done this week. Sterling Senior Center also transported seniors living at Sholan Terrace to the clinic in Leominster.
- The vans are being used about 45 hours because there has been an increase in face-to-face medical appointments as opposed to telehealth meetings. The senior center has transitioned from transporting "things" to transporting seniors.
- The Annual Report has been submitted for distribution at the Annual Town Meeting.
- There is an article in the April newsletter about increasing the volunteer force prior to re-opening the Senior Center.
- The Stuffed Chicken Grab-n-Go has about 180 sign-ups, and the St Patrick's Day Grab-n-Go has 190 enrollments.
- Deb MacLennan is doing a Take-n-Make this month.
- The Cheer-up Cards initiative got great support from the community. However, the distribution of the cards ran up against the vaccine clinic registration effort and cards were not as well distributed as they should have been. All seniors over 80 did get a card. Veronica stated this is a great program and will do it again next year.
- Veronica is concerned that wages for Senior Center staff are low and is meeting with the Finance Committee to adjust van drivers' salaries to Grade Level II. She has been advised that there will be a town-side Classification and Wages Study, which should address all staff positions at the Senior Center.

Motion by Cosgrove, Chase seconded, to approve Director's Report.

- Passed unanimously.

**8. Future Topics** – At the April meeting, the COA Board will provide input to be sent to the Town Administrator on the performance of the Senior Center Director

**9. Next Meeting** – The next monthly COA Board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 8, 2021 at 5:30 pm by remote.

#### **10. Adjournment**

Motion by Cosgrove, Chase seconded, to adjourn at 7:38 pm

- Passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Pape  
Secretary  
Attachments –

## COA Board Meeting March 11, 2020

### Director's Report for Feb 2021

#### Event Statistics from 02/01/2021 to 02/28/2021

Category	Duplicated	Unduplicated	60 and Over Guests
Congregate Meals	752	175	33
Fitness/Exercise	107	37	33
Health Screening	16	15	0
Social Event	11	11	4
Support Services	818	446	0
<b>Total Event Signins</b>	1704	573	70

Support Services reflect registration for 1<sup>st</sup> dose and 2<sup>nd</sup> dose for 75 plus.

#### VAN REPORT FEB 2020

Van 1 23 Riders 113 trips Van 2 15 Riders 76 trips  
Approximately 45 hours of van services used for delivery in February.

#### UPDATES

**COA Annual Report** attached for your review. Submitted on 2/19.

**Covid Vaccine Report and Plans:** Working with advanced registration link from Rutland, transportation provided for 4 of the Sholan U75 to Leominster on 3/2 and again on 3/30.

#### **Vol and outreach reports**

##### **Report on past events:**

Stuffed Chicken Grab n Go served 180 including volunteers

Cheer for Older Adults

##### **Upcoming Events:**

March 17<sup>th</sup> St Patty's Day Grab n Go; Take & Make

Senior Center Wages discussion with TA, meeting with FinCom March 13

##### **Reopening Update:**

Volunteer and staffing update

**OUTREACH STATISTICS FEBRUARY 2021**  
**Services provided between 02/01/2021 and 02/28/2021**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Duplicated</b>	<b>Unduplicated</b>
<b>Assessment/Well check</b>	32	29
<b>Case Management/Advocacy</b>	38	34
<b>Crisis Intervention/Support</b>	1	1
<b>DME Medical equipment/loan</b>	5	5
<b>General Information/Referral</b>	7	7
<b>Healthcare service</b>	1	1
<b>Isolation Intervention</b>	2	2
<b>Nutritional support</b>	11	11
<b>Referral from Community</b>	1	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>80</b>

<b>Interaction</b>	<b>Duplicated</b>	<b>Unduplicated</b>
<b>email</b>	3	3
<b>Home Consultation</b>	15	14
<b>Office Consultation</b>	3	3
<b>Phone Consultation</b>	77	63
<b>Totals</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>80</b>

Outreach statistics are down this month because many hours were spent booking COVID vaccines and not documented under my statistics but instead under senior center event.

**Volunteer Report for Feb 2020**  
**Volunteers between 02/01/2021 and 02/28/2021**

**Volunteer Service**

<b>Type</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Duplicated</b>	<b>Unduplicated</b>
admin - computer	42.75	10	1
Board work	11.25	8	7
Bread Run	6	3	1
Cards	3	1	1
Committee work	1	1	1
COVID Vaccine			
Outreach	47.25	13	5
Entertainment	4.5	3	1
Instructor	5	2	1
Meal Site	125	39	7
Meal Site Delivery	53	28	12
MOW	29	18	4
Office coverage	57.5	13	6
<b>Totals</b>	<b>385.25</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>39</b>

April newsletter outlines the need for front desk volunteers and meals drivers as first step towards reopening.

# Council on Aging 2020 Annual Report

2020 was the year of the pandemic. It was also the year we found new ways to remain true to our mission to maintain the health and well-being of the Sterling seniors and to assist them in maintaining their independence.

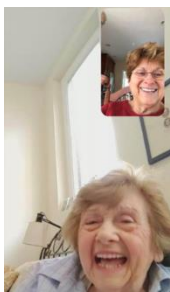
On March 16th, we suspended all recreational and social programming and focused on providing essential services to our population. These services included meals on wheels, home delivered and grab & go meals, grocery shopping, pharmacy pickups, toilet paper deliveries, check in calls, transportation services and outreach services. Our Senior Center was always staffed and a live person always answered our phone.

Outreach services were complicated by the inability to conduct the usual home visits and office visits. We were concerned about the isolation, especially for our more vulnerable and those with dementia and their caregivers. We were concerned about unmet needs. Staff and volunteers went to work calling all seniors 70 and above and younger seniors who may have needed assistance. By the end of the year, 1170 seniors were provided with outreach services that included well checks, telephone assurance, application assistance, case management, home care referrals, health benefit counseling, medical equipment loans, assistance with food pantry, SNAP benefits, fuel assistance and more.

The Massachusetts stay at home advisory for older adults continued through June. By July, the Senior Center began outside exercise programs at Peg's Pond and social / recreational programming on the covered patio. By limiting the number of participants and strict adherence to mask wearing, social distancing, COVID screening of participants and good hand hygiene, these activities continued safely through the end of October. Plans were made to transition programming indoors, but COVID transmission numbers soared through the fall. Essential services such as the Elder Keep Well Clinic and Foot Care Clinic continued indoors. All exercise, recreational and social programming continued on remote platforms or was suspended for the winter. 935 seniors participated in our programming in 2020.



To the extent possible, the Senior Center sought to recreate our traditional events with COVID restrictions. Muffin Mondays at the Center became an outreach program to bring needed socialization and fun to seniors at their doorsteps. Traditional dinners became grab and go meals serving more than we could ever serve inside! Our annual classic car show became a rolling rally featuring over 50 classic cars cheered on by spectators who lined the streets. Our flu clinic became a drive-through clinic with the assistance of Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) monitoring traffic flow. Our Halloween party became a drive-through event with a no-touch candy chute. Our holiday concerts were taped and played on SLCT. We ended the year with a New Year's Eve appetizer grab and go.



The Senior Center was keenly aware of the vast divergence of technology interest and abilities within our population. Zoom, online grocery orders, pharmaceuticals by mail order were new and necessary options for many. Family, community and Senior Center support provided the tools to help interested seniors navigate these platforms. The Center recognized the segment that did not embrace this technology, and utilized phone contact and print media through our newsletter to provide vital information.

Our volunteers have always been the backbone of our organization and this year was no exception. 115 individuals provided over 5300 hours of service in the kitchen, delivering meals on wheels, delivering our home cooked lunches, answering our phones, and assisting with events, friendly phone visiting and programs. When masks were



recommended, our volunteers cut and sewed and found alternatives for hard-to-find elastic. Masks for men, women and children were donated and distributed at a fever pitch. The Senior Center extends a heartfelt thank you to all of the volunteers who participated this year. We would like to give special recognition to those in the kitchen where physical distancing was challenging.

The COA/Mart accessible vans operated daily Monday through Friday throughout the year utilizing strict COVID sanitation and screening procedures. 1878 rides were provided in 2020 primarily to medical appointments, grocery stores and pharmacies. With the permission of MART, vans were also used to transport goods such as food pantry, meals, pharmacy items, groceries and durable medical equipment. Our electric car was also used to deliver meals and goods.

The COA Board worked with the Director to support strong COVID safety guidelines throughout the year. The support, recommendations, and guidance of the Board was invaluable in determining how to move forward each month. Although the Friends of Sterling Seniors (FOSS) were stymied in their fundraising efforts due to COVID, they continued to support the Senior Center. Gracious contributions allowed them to fund

some programming as well as several of the grab and go efforts such as the Veterans Day Luncheon.

In addition to the program services already mentioned, the following programming was also offered during March - December of 2020:

Exercise: Yoga, Pilates, Tai Chi, Line Dancing, Senior Strong, Going Steady Balance Class, Pickleball.

Health Promotion: Elder Keep Well Clinic, Flu Clinic, Foot Care Clinic, SHINE Counseling, Durable Medical Equipment Loans, Parkinson's Support Group, Caregiver's Support Group.

Nutritional Support: Meals on Wheels, Home Delivery and Grab and Go Options for Congregate Lunch for Those Needing Assistance with Food Preparation, Special Event Grab and Go's, Food Pantry Delivery, Grocery Shopping Assistance, Free Pepperidge Farm Bread Pickup, Application Assistance for SNAP and Food Pantry.

Recreational / Social / Educational Programs: Bingo, Knitting and Crocheting, Armchair Travel, Dull Men's Club, History Club, Book Club, Ukulele Club, Art Classes.

Newsletter: 12-page monthly color publication was mailed or emailed to all Sterling Seniors on a monthly basis. In April a one-page flyer was substituted to provide timely, print information.

The Council on Aging / Senior Center would like to thank all the various organizations and businesses that partnered with us throughout the year: Sterling DPW, Sterling Fire Department, Sterling Police Department, Conant Library, Recreation Department, Board of Health, FOSS, Wachusett Rotary, Veterans' Services, Grange, Garden Club, Sew What Club. The Center would also like to thank all our local farmers, big and small, who donated fresh produce and more throughout the growing season, and all the residents who generously gave donations to support our meals program.



In closing, the Senior Center was the recipient of incredible support from too many to mention! We are extremely grateful and hope that we have demonstrated our gratitude in the way we have served our community.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Veronica Buckley, Director  
Sterling Senior Center