

Minutes of COA Board Meeting – November 18, 2015

Board Members present: Mary Keenan, Carol Airasian, Dorothy Jean Brown, V.V. Martin, Linda Moffitt, Bertha Anderson and Alice Wadden

Members excused absence: Pat Gold & Burt Greenburg

Staff Members present: Caryl Fox and Debbie Dunn

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm by Board member, Mary Keenan.

1. Board members reviewed the minutes of the previous meeting. Dorothy Jean Brown made a motion to approve minutes and Linda Moffitt seconded. Passed.

2. Financial Statements:

The Food Pantry has been doing its annual fundraising and received some generous donations this month. The Project Bread grant funded the Stop and Shop gift cards for Pantry clients. They were purchased for distribution this month. The Marshall Home grant was used by the seniors who were not able to take the shuttle bus when it was being repaired.

3. Case Worker Summary:

Caryl discussed the responsibilities of the COA part-time case worker. Marina sees about 15 clients a week, at their home or in the Center. Her caseload of about 25 includes many phone calls to the client, their families or agencies involved in problem-solving the situation. She helps people apply for fuel assistance, food stamps, Mass Health, elderly housing and the Marshall Home fund. She has gotten assistance for 2 potential hoarders, helped access housing for people with serious medical conditions and advocated for individuals in critical financial situations. Marina speaks fluent Armenian and Russian which enables her to assist people that, otherwise, might not get the help they need.

4. Snow Shoveling Project:

This grant funded project is coordinated by Ken Woodland and was very successful as a pilot program last year. Supervised middle school students provide free snow shoveling for seniors and individuals with disabilities. Because most of last year's clients want to receive service again, this winter, Ken was only able to accept a few new people.

The Senior Center maintains a list of landscapers who do snow removal for fees. Everyone is hoping the winter will not be as severe as it was last year!

5. Emergency Assistance Programs:

Watertown residents of all ages can request help with a bill which is paid through the emergency assistance line item. The maximum is \$100.00 and the fund can only be used once in a 12 month period. The money is always paid directly to the vendor, not the client. The most frequent request is for assistance with a utility bill. We have also helped with rent, food and other needs. Those who ask for help have limited income, are experiencing difficult circumstances and have problems meeting basic expenses. The Salvation Army Fund is used occasionally but because there are stricter requirements, it often cannot be used.

6. The meeting was adjourned at 6:20 PM.

Submitted by Caryl Leslie Fox