

Senior Center Committee of Commission on Elder Affairs Notice/Agenda

The Senior Center Committee meeting will be held on:

Tuesday February 14, 2023 at NOON via ZOOM: Members who cannot attend this meeting should contact Amy at 508-799-1232 X48013 or watersa@worcesterma.gov.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82406698925?pwd=dTdYbXJRMkdNRFJ2MjJDRlgYbDVXdz>

[09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82406698925?pwd=dTdYbXJRMkdNRFJ2MjJDRlgYbDVXdz) Meeting ID: 824 0669 8925 Passcode: 590965

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Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kes844Dfl>

AGENDA

- I. Senior Center Committee Chair
 - a. Call to Order / Approval of minutes for January 10, 2023
 - b. Confirm date and time of next meeting-March 14, 2023 at noon on zoom.

- II. Elder Affairs Staff Reports and Recommendations
 - A. Finances
 1. Public and Private Funding
 2. Program Allocations
 3. Leases
 4. Development

 - B. Operations
 1. Staffing
 2. Facility and Grounds
 3. Programs
 4. Reopening/Closing

- III. Public Comment (up to 2 minutes each)
- IV. Adjournment

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REPORT TO COMMISSION ON ELDER AFFAIRS
Senior Center Committee Meeting Minutes January 10, 2023

Present: Richard Shea-Chair, Caroline Sullivan, Kathan Horne, Fran Langille, Facely Henriquez, Patty Hainsworth, and Amy Waters

Richard called the meeting to order at 12:02 on zoom. The minutes of the November 8, 2022 meeting were approved (m/s/a). The next meeting was confirmed for Feb 8, 2023 at noon.

Amy reviewed and the committee discussed the FY'24 budget request submitted to the city administration. It includes a request to make part-time temporary elder group coordinators into two full time regular employees. It also includes upgrading eight positions. The requested salaries would be covered by increased state COA funding. Key justifications reviewed:

- As of 2020, there are 37,079 Worcester residents age 60 and older. This is a **27% increase** from 2010.
- The pandemic and economic trends are exacerbating stresses already impacting seniors e.g. housing, financial and food insecurity; physical and mental health challenges; isolation etc.
- Language barriers impede access to resources to meet basic needs.
- There is a relationship between discrimination and health. Residents experiencing discrimination are also facing crucial barriers to accessing healthcare and basic needs. Groups who are already suffering health consequences of structural racism, such as Black, Latinx, Asian and indigenous populations are facing discrimination more than Whites. (MDPH Covid 19 Community Impact Study 2022)
- Worcester Senior Center participants identify as: 12% Asian, 6% Latino & 6% Black/African. (msc.net)
- FY'22 senior services assistance units: 9,491 which is a **58% increase** from FY'19 (pre-pandemic). After general senior center information, the highest categories of requests were related to: Health, Benefits, Food, & Housing.
- Over two years from the start of the coronavirus pandemic, the workplace remains in a state of severe disruption. The economy has 4 million more jobs than workers to fill them. Employees are quitting in large numbers. Companies are finding it hard to find workers. (US News 3.17.22)
- As human service workers, Worcester Senior Center/Elder Affairs employees continue to display a remarkable level of dedication and caring, sometimes in the face of life-threatening circumstances.
- Elder Affairs positions have not been assessed and regraded since FY'14. Ten years of mounting responsibilities have ensued since then. While 3 clerical and technical positions were added in this period, the core team of human service professionals carried on with the essence of the work.
- There are 5 employees on the last step of their grade, leaving a much reduced financial incentive for longevity on the job. Maintaining their valuable

knowledge and expertise should be prioritized. Unfortunately, we already lost a 6th long term employee to retirement as of 1/4/23.

- In addition to the need cited for expanded senior services, the Elder Affairs staff have taken on new and growing responsibilities in the past year, e.g.:
 - Development and administration of new indoor Fitness Center as well as outdoor Fit Lot.
 - Development and continuation of Senior Center without Walls remote programming and services (hundreds of videos on TV Channel 192, Facebook, YouTube & website; hybrid zoom programs; assisting seniors to connect through technology.)
 - Integrating an average of 30 new registered Senior Center participants per month.
 - Tracking and managing over 6,300 people/month entering the Senior Center as counted by Sen Source.
 - Continuing to respond to the pandemic, preventing and containing outbreaks, providing education and resources and hosting clinics.

Amy noted that the request for city tax levy funding only included \$32,655 for new tax/fringe plus a potential increase in the Fitness Center contract. The projected use of COA state funding also ensures adequate resources to continue supporting current programs for FY'24 and beyond. ***The Senior Center Committee voted unanimous support for the FY'24 budget request as presented (m/s/a).***

In addition, Amy reviewed the status of leases/licenses for tenants of the senior center. The following tenants are due for renewal as of April 1, 2023: RSVP, Senior Companion, Wellness Works Yoga, Pastoral Counseling and Our Deaf Survivors Center. ***The Senior Center Committee voted unanimous support for offering these tenants a one-year license extension (m/s/a).***

Patty reviewed the following building and grounds related purchases/renovations being worked on in conjunction with the Dept. of Public Facilities: steamer for kitchen, signage, fixing external door, shades/windows in lunchroom, refreshing first floor carpets, path to Fitlot, additional picnic table, external kitchen door steps, renovating the 4th floor over the offices, renovating the 3rd & 4th floors over the fitness/wellness centers, lighting for the solar panel area of the parking lot & eventual development of the rest of the vacant portion of the building. Also being researched for purchase: computer lab chairs, laptop shelving, smart TV for wellness center, Older American's Month program subsidies and other special programs, as well as privacy seats for the lobby.

Patty reported that the holiday programs were successful and some of the new programs include somatic movement, astrology speaker, overeaters anonymous, JCC film festival, sex and aging speaker, black history trail speaker, and the REC winter market starting. Students are on board to help with programs and respite care. She noted that a new library kiosk will be installed soon and she is working on various items for the fitness center which as of December has 243 members. Responding to Richard's question, she updated the committee on current pandemic protocols at the center. The meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m.