

# **COUNCIL ON AGING BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

## Meeting Minutes

Date: Friday, June 6, 2025

Present: Pina Mingace, Daisy Monsalve, Ellen Ellis, Brad Bortner, Marian Bremer, Tania Mederios.

Council on Aging Staff present: Ashley Speliotis, Connie Lorenti, Natasha Naim

Location: This meeting was held in person at the Holland Street Senior Center, located at 167 Holland Street, Somerville, MA 02144. These meetings are open to the public and all are welcome.

The Council's primary responsibility is to advise the Council on Aging in the promotion and implementation of programs and services to address the needs of the community's older population.

1. Call to order: 11:12am

2. Approval of Minutes

➤ Minutes approved by Marian, seconded by Ellen Ellis

3. New Business

➤ Lucilia Prates-Ramos, Statewide Director, Massachusetts Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP).

- The Senior Medicare Patrol is a federally funded program which came to MA in 1999. It is currently comprised of 5 volunteer members and works to protect, detect and report healthcare errors, fraud and abuse.
- Much of their work is to help people understand their benefits, they also work closely with the SHINE program.
- Lucilia spoke of the difference between Medicare Fraud, Errors, or Medicare Abuse. She also spoke about how often errors in billing occur and detailed the multiple ways billing errors can be made, including upcoding or upbilling drug diversion and durable medical equipment.
- Board voted unanimously to bring presentation to the wider community.

4. Directors Report

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- FY'26 COA goals.
  - COA goals for FY '26 reviewed. Goals include:
    - Focus Areas: Public Health and Education. Promote public education and awareness of caregiving experiences and provide education regarding direct support for caregivers in Somerville.
      - Continue facilitating the Memory Café program while evaluating routes for expansion.
      - In addition to our current caregiving support programs, host a social event to provide caregivers with the opportunity to socialize while enjoying an afternoon of entertainment.
      - Host a Caregiver's Resource Fair as an opportunity to connect the Council on Aging with family caregivers, and to provide a new way to provide information and assistance for caregivers.
    - Focus Area: Mobility. Strive to decrease transportation as a barrier to accessing routine medical care and secure nutrition.
      - Continue to provide, on average, 675 rides per month for seniors to access secure nutrition at local grocery stores, medications at local pharmacies and routine medical care in surrounding communities.
      - Conduct a yearly evaluation of the program to ensure the program meets the needs of Somerville's older adults and to ensure that funding and staff capabilities can adequately account for programmatic growth.
    - Focus Area: Public Space and Natural Environment. Through diverse social programming, broaden activities that support active aging.
      - Collaborate with other city departments to bring COA and COA-supported programming to locations other than the Senior Centers. For example, support intergenerational recreation space at the Founders Rink, and increase social work and outreach coordinator's office hours at senior housing facilities throughout the city.
      - Host quarterly programming for newly retired residents or residents considering retirement. Topics will include financial planning, and health insurance coverage.
- Somerville Senior Community Survey: Presentation May 23rd.
  - Board discussed having a separate meeting to discuss the survey results: placed on the August agenda.
- Blue Cross Outreach Article

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- Blue Cross has reached out to the COA. They appreciated the letter sent in by the Romanoff's and have interviewed both the Romanoffs and Ashley. The article will be published in the Spring edition.
- Discussion surrounding July Board Meeting
  - July meeting currently scheduled for July 4, 2025. Board unanimously voted to meet again at the next scheduled meeting on August 1, 2025.

5. Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 12:30pm
6. Next Meeting: August 1, 2025 at 11:00am