

COUNCIL ON AGING BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Meeting Minutes

Date: Friday, August 1, 2025

Present: Neeraj Wadhera, Pina Mingace, Daisy Monsalve, Ellen Ellis, Brad Bortner, Marian Bremer.

Council on Aging Staff present: Ashley Speliotis, Molly Pagliuca

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: 11:05am
2. Approval of Minutes
 - Minutes approved by Brad Bortner, seconded by Pina Mingace
3. New Business
 - Next steps for the implementation of recommendations from the Community Survey
 - Board reviewed recommendations from the Senior Community Survey, recommendations were summarized by topic and Marian proposed to focus only on marketing for this meeting.
 - Board discussed signage for the Holland St. Senior Center as feedback was shared that the center was difficult to find both from the outside and once inside the building.
 - Discussion also focused on the recommendations surrounding marketing for the center. Reviewed current outreach of google reminders, social media, and print materials. Discussion focused on word-of-mouth advertising as the best form of advertising.
 - Ashley is meeting with the web team next week to discuss updates to the website. As the COA does not update the website, discussion was held as to intentionally keeping the website with broad information.
 - Staff have already implemented programming focused on financial literacy and caregiving based on recommendations from the survey.

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Wording will be included in flyers detailing that these programs were created based on the survey.

- The creation of open or drop-in hours to be hosted by Board Members.
 - While survey recommendations have been shared, and staff are working to implement new programming, the hope is to continue to gather feedback from the community. One way the Board can do this is to host drop-in hours. The Board shared they would like to host these drop-in hours once per month, in the morning, during an active time at the center. Board members will use a tracking sheet and the data will be compiled and sent to the appropriate City Department.
 - Board voted unanimously to begin drop-in hours in September.
 - The Board spoke of an alternative plan to host City Wide listening sessions as well. All voiced agreement but discussion was held as to whether these sessions should be times when participants can give broad feedback, or if they should be topic specific. Discussion was also had regarding if Board members felt comfortable hosting large scale listening session.
 - Board decided to continue discussion following the implementation of the drop-in sessions.

4. Directors Report

- Blue Cross Healthy Times Article
 - The Somerville COA was featured in the Blue Cross Healthy Times Summer Publication.
- Mayor's Senior Picnic
 - The Senior Picnic will be on September 9th from 11am until 1pm. Board members are once again encouraged to volunteer for the event.
- New Board Members
 - We will soon be advertising for the three open positions on the Board.

5. Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 12:11pm

6. Next Meeting: September 5, 2025 at 11:00am