

# **COUNCIL ON AGING BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

## Meeting Minutes

Date: Friday, December 5, 2025

Present: Brad Bortner, Pina Mingace, Mirian Bremer, Daisy Monsalve, Ellen Ellis, and Neerag Wadhera, Maclise Jean

Council on Aging Staff present: Ashley Speliotis, Connie Lorenti

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: 11:11am
2. Approval of Minutes
  - Minutes approved by Pina Mingace, seconded by Neera Wadhera
3. New Business
  - Report from Board of Directors Drop In Hours
    - The third session of the Drop-In Hours was held in November led by Tania. Tania did not have any seniors attend this session. Plan is now for a board member to attend the Coffee and Conversations group on January 15<sup>th</sup> at 10:45am. Board will then decide about February at the next meeting.
  - Report from Listening Session and discussion surrounding upcoming sessions.
    - Listening session occurred on November 19<sup>th</sup> at the Ralph and Jenny Center. One community member was in attendance and two members from MassSenior Action larger group attended. Additionally, Councilor Mbah was in attendance.
    - The group focused on the topic of digital literacy. Current digital literacy programs were reviewed, participants requested drop-in hours to be held at the Cobble Hill Apartments although discussion also centered around a lack of interest from residents in the past.
    - The next Listening Session will be held on December 17<sup>th</sup> at SomerNova, 15 Properzi Way.

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- Board spoke about proposing a planning meeting following the next listening session to discuss marketing and making clearer objectives for the listening sessions.
- Report from new member interviews.
  - Candidates, Leslie Hergert, Dan Cronin and Chris Lindgren have moved forward for approval from City Council. The hope is for them to join the January meeting. Candidate John Caruso has also been approved as a volunteer to the board.
- January meeting schedule
  - Board voted unanimously to postpone January meeting until January 9, 2026.

## **4. Directors Report**

- Update on Transportation Services.
  - Transportation services provided by SCES through federal funds to the congregate meal program will be ending on January 1<sup>st</sup>. The City has approved an expansion of the Senior Taxi Program to include two rides per week for Somerville residents to a senior center. The COA will be able to provide residents from Cambridge 1 ride per week through a small Title III grant until funds are expended.
- Update regarding SNAP
  - Due to the Government shut down and SNAP temporary shut off we have seen a dramatic increase in referrals for food assistance. The City has directed almost a million dollars to food security. A portion of this money was directed to the Senior Transportation Program to allow seniors to access hot meals. Additional funding was provided to SCES for emergency food cards and Instacart orders.

5. Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 11:53am

6. Next Meeting: January 9, 2026 at 11:00am