

COUNCIL ON AGING BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Meeting Minutes

Date: Friday, January 9, 2026

Present: Brad Bortner, Pina Mingace, Mirian Bremer, Daisy Monsalve, Ellen Ellis, Maclise Jean, Dan Cronin, Chris Lindgren, Leslie Hergert

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: 11:06am
2. Approval of Minutes
 - Minutes approved by Brad Bortner, seconded by Ellen Ellis.
3. New Business
 - Department of Mobility: Rishika Dhawan and Luis Quizhpe
 - The Department of Mobility presented as a focus group to solicit feedback on how they can hear from seniors, how they can gather more information about their needs, and how they can spread the word about upcoming projects. They have used feedback from seniors to make such changes as the bike lanes by Clarendon Hill and traffic routes by Pearl St. Park.
 - Board provided feedback that, in general, they are not aware of projects on side streets/parking changes until the work occurs, and a sense that community feedback is not incorporated into the plans. Suggestions included: more aggressive advertising and engagement, the plan for Somerville's streets should be updated, more education about bike/scooter safety, increased enforcement regarding bikes, suggestion of signs sharing information about the projects be posted at the work sites.
 - Conversation also focused on ways to incorporate feedback once the project has been completed and providing information on intersections that are still considered dangerous.

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- Board proposed to have mobility return to the COA as a focus group for the public to engage in.

4. Directors Report

➤ Review of Community Listening Session

- Session two was held in December with Ellen and Pina in attendance. One community member joined along with members from MassSenior Action. The focus of the conversation was on the McGrath Highway restructuring and the proposal which does not include a pedestrian footbridge. Group shared there is a public meeting and they are still taking public comments. Group spoke about the Senior Taxi Program expansion and feedback was shared about other programs such as The Ride and Door 2 Door. Group also discussed the snow shoveling program and concerns with plowing bus stops, sidewalks and cross-walk entrances when it snows
- Next meeting is January 20th at 1pm at Brady Towers.
- Next Board Drop-in Hours will be on January 22nd at 10:30am during the coffee and conversations group, Brad has volunteered.
- Other events the board is invited to are: January 29th—St. Theresa's school will be visiting during Bingo; January 30th the COA will be celebrating the Active Agers Program with the Dance Party and visit from MCOA.

5. Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 12:16pm

6. Next Meeting: February 6, 2026 at 11:00am