Council on Aging Meeting March 12, 2024 (presented on April 9, 2024)

The scheduled March meeting of the Council on Aging was held at the Bellingham Senior Center Chairperson Kay Page called the meeting to order at 11:05 am. The meeting opened with the pledge of allegiance to the flag followed by a moment of silence. All members of the Board were present with the exception of Mingming He, Member at Large. 13 persons from the public were also present.

**Secretary's Report** (Brenda Griffin): Motion to accept minutes with unanimous approval by the board.

**Kay Page:** The selectman reappointed to the COA Board Mingming He, Kay Page, Dave Dunbar and Tina Arsenault. Dave Dunbar will become the Treasurer and Tina Arsenault, at Large Member.

The Treasurer is an elected position and must be voted in by the board.

Glenna Laverdiere moved to elect Dave Dunbar as Treasurer. Tsune Roberts seconded Glenna’s motion. A roll call vote ensued with the board stating their name with a yes or no vote.

* Glenna Laverdiere voted yes
* Brenda Griffin voted yes
* Kay Page voted yes
* Tsune Roberts voted yes
* Wendy Wright voted yes
* David Dunbar voted yes

Kay Page: the vote was unanimous. Congratulation Dave and welcome to the board.

**Treasurer's Report (**David Dunbar):

* COA Gift Fund-current balance of $27,036.00
* Supportive Day -current balance of $40,461.00
* Elderly Recreation-current balance of $14,820.00

Motion to accept the Treasurer's report was made by Wendy Wright, seconded by Glenna Laverdiere, with unanimous approval by the board.

**Chairman’s Report (**Kay Page): The Valentine’s Party was a great success. Lots of fun and the food was great. The Senior Grab & Go lunches restart April 2. Grab & Go lunches will be available on Tuesdays and Thursdays. $5.00 for Bellingham residents and $10.00 for non-residents. If anyone knows of any shut-ins who need lunches, let us know because we’d love to help. Bill: do Bellingham residents need to be BESG members? Kay: no, they just need to be Bellingham residents.

* Health Fair: May 3 from 10-1pm. It was excellent last year. Need to sign up for free lunches starting in April. There are 50 lobster rolls, 50 meals from Cornerstones in Milford and 50 meals from Enclave in Franklin.
* Ladies Tea: May 7 from 12 noon to 2:30 pm. The entertainment will be a surprise. There will be a small fee of $5 to cover sandwiches, tea, desserts and the entertainment. Wear your hats from last year, your fascinations and pearls. Invite family and friends to join you.
* Pride Fest: June 29 from 10 to 2pm. This is the second Pride Fest which has grown considerably. It was a fun day last year and we are hoping it won’t rain.

**Director's Report** (Terri Graham for Josie Dutil-Executive Director): January/February 2024 Summary – Presented at March 12th, 2024 Meeting

**HIGHLIGHTS**

Highlights: We should all be so thankful that we have made it this far into the Winter months without much snow, but how about that rain?!?! We were introduced to a fabulous female singer, Alex Connolly, in January and will now have her on the schedule quarterly – keep an eye out for her on the calendar as she is a must-see performer! Our dining room was filled with love on February 15th as the BESG and COA co-hosted our annual Valentine’s party. I capped off the month of February with 3 of our board members (Brenda, Wendy and Dave) on a visit to the State House lobbying on Older Adult Lobby Day. Representative Soter gave us the best tour as part of that fabulous day.

State House: Dave Dunbar-Mike Soter drove us to the State House. We talked with him the entire way in and out. When we got to the State House there must have been about 500 people in the Great Hall. All the organizations presented their sponsored bills for this year and next year. After the presentations, all the attendees headed to their senators & representatives to lobby support for their bills. One of the most interesting things that I learned during the tour was that William Howard Taft was too wide to fit in the front door of the State House so the entrance had to be widened.

Wendy Wright-The best part was being trapped in the car with everyone and enjoying coffee on the way into Boston. At the end of every legislative presentation, everyone was let go to go lobby for your cause. We had a grand tour of the State House by Mike Soter who gave us all the background stories. My favorite was the cod fish which hangs on a wall behind the legislators. Currently it is facing in one direction which reflects the majority in power-the Democrats. Maybe in the future (if never) it will then face the opposite direction.

Brenda Griffin- I was struck by the significance of the COA Formular Grant which provides funding to every town and city across the state based on the census of elders in each locale. The present funding is $14/person. The FY25 request is to increase the funding to $15/senior. An example was provided depicting one person attending one senior center 429 times in 1 year {exercise classes, counseling, Fuel Assistance, computer classes and nutrition classes). Based on the $14 Formula Grant that senior center received $0.03 cents for each encounter. I’ve written my representative and senator requesting their support for this Formular Grant bill increase. I’ve distributed the handout that I received from the Massachusetts Councils of Aging and would ask that all of you consider doing the same. [Becca.rausch@MaSenate.gov](mailto:Becca.rausch@MaSenate.gov) and [Michael.Soter@Mahouse.gov](mailto:Michael.Soter@Mahouse.gov)

Kay: Eva and I are talking about a visit this summer to the State House by train.

UPCOMING EVENTS-PROJECTS-SIGNUPS-NOTICES

• Thank you to the Bellingham Police Department for bringing back the very popular Corned Beef and

Cabbage dinner at the Coachman’s taking place tomorrow, March 13th at 11:30am. Hopefully you are

already signed up as the roster is full!

• Please join BC/BS for a presentation on Medicare and Medicare Advantage plans this Friday at 1 pm. The Medicare world is so complicated and we are fortunate to have an expert come to present and answer any questions you may have – we hope you consider taking advantage of the opportunity.

• And a big thank you to Representative Mike Soter for bringing the Rise Up Initiative into our building in

the form of a FREE sit-down Easter meal on Thursday, March 28th.

• Singer Mike Dardis (heard he is amazing) will be here on Friday, March 29th at 1pm to give a free

concert – we hope many of you join us! Mike sings and plays the keyboard.

**BESG Update** (Jim Fitzpatrick, BESG Vice President):

* March 13 Bellingham Police Departments Corned Beed and Cabbage dinner at the Coachman’s. All reservations are filled up.
* April 2 the Grab & Go Meals resume. We hare happy to deliver meals to Bellingham residents.
* April 11 the cookouts resume from 4-5 pm with hamburgers, hot dogs and a surprise
* April 25 is the March/April Birthday party. March birthday party postponed due to Mike Soter’s Rise Up Initiative featuring an Easter luncheon.

Trips:

* May 16 trip to Cape Ann
* July 10 trip to Cape Code on the Train Tour which includes lunch
* August 13: Journey Through the Decades (Connecticut) with performances at the Aqua Tour Club
* October: Sight & Sound Theater
* December: Going to the Pops which is a fantastic trip and show

**Other Business /Public Segment /New Ideas:**

Tsune Roberts: Free 3-month cancer survivor program called” Livestrong “at the YMCA. Many people hide their diagnosis. One of the first things you learn is to exercise and become as healthy as you can. I attend with others from Depot Court. Jackie from LIVESTRONG will be at the Health Fair. [www.Hockymca.org](http://www.Hockymca.org) is the website for more information.

Abby Cirioni: How do I get hold of the free playing cards? Brownie: I have over 50 packs available. Just let me know how many you need.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 am on a motion by Wendy Wright seconded by Dave Dunbar with unanimous approval by the board. Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Griffin-secretary