

Council on Aging November 6, 2024

Once a quorum was determined, the meeting was called to order.

Members present: Mary Anne Easley, Erin Lynch, Arlene O'Reilly, Lisa Sherburne, Linda Williams; Robert Kucharavy arrived later.

Members absent: Abby Camp, Rocky Fox

Staff present: Jerico Mele.

Approval of agenda: moved by Linda Williams, unanimously approved.

Minutes of the previous two meetings could not be approved as they had not been submitted. This item was rescheduled to a future meeting.

Guest speakers on the agenda (Mickey Rowland and Brenda McDonough of the Commission on Disabilities) had to cancel their appearance just a few hours prior to the meeting.

2024 Senior Expo wrap-up: Mary Anne acknowledged the outpouring of assistance and thanked everyone who volunteered — Arlene, Erin, Lisa, Rocky and co-chair of the event Linda Williams.

Initial comments by Mary Anne: We had hoped for 200 attendees like past Expos, but had only 100. However, written reviews, as well as unsolicited comments, have been overwhelmingly positive. The Expo planning committee held a debriefing meeting and a summary can be obtained from Laura Stewart. Mary Anne sent a thank-you email to school Superintendent Elizabeth Hallett and received an immediate reply inviting us to hold another Expo at the high school next year.

Linda said she spoke to every vendor and they were glad to be there. She suggested next year better coordinating flu and Covid shots to boost attendance. The Visiting Nurses, who provided flu shots, had only about 20 clients when they had planned for 100-150. Linda also noted some vendors, such as funeral homes, were not represented.

Jerico commented that attendance may have been low due to ambiguity about the Expo versus the hospital health fair, held within weeks of each other.

Lisa suggested the weather — a particularly beautiful day — discouraged people from an indoor event. People preferred outdoor activities.

Erin recommended better separation of vendors in the same business for more privacy. She said three home care agencies had been situated too close together.

There was discussion of moving the event to another time of year to separate it from the hospital health fair, but it was pointed out that fall was originally chosen because there are fewer competing events than in the spring.

Linda suggested that Expo advertising should include names of specific vendors.

Members expressed optimism that in time, with some improvements/modifications, the Expo attendance is likely to increase.

Health & Human Services report: Jerico said they'd been getting a lot of inquiries about short-term rentals. Registration date delayed again. They are working with the vendor to improve the system. HHS has ceased vaccine operations for the year except possibly a few homebound deliveries. They plan at least 2 or 3 clinics next year.

The Contract Review Committee is starting, with \$650,000 worth of grants for non profits. They have received 3 applications from senior-focused organizations, including a memory cafe and lunch program (Meals on Wheels and congregate lunch). Jerico is also working on tick-borne diseases, intending to introduce new mitigation strategies and education.

Laura's report of monthly Saltmarsh activities was distributed to COA members in advance. There were no questions for Laura.

Robert Kucharavy arrived directly from a senior-focused event by the NHA. He said invitations for seniors have gone out for December festivals at the Whaling Museum, and transportation is included for anyone needing it.

The NHA senior programs this year have included 6 senior centers on the Cape, with a total of 190 attendees. They plan to expand the program in 2025.

Robert announced that Elder Services will launch a one-week fundraiser in the spring ("Spring for a Meal"). Participating Nantucket restaurants will have tent cards on each table with a QR code that diners can scan to donate a meal to Meals on Wheels.

Mary Anne announced that Arlene is relinquishing her position as COA secretary. An election for a new secretary will be held at the next meeting.

After 38 minutes, the meeting was adjourned. Moved by Linda, second by Robert. Vote unanimous.