

**Nantucket Council on Aging
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 4, 2026
(Corrected at March 4, 2026 meeting)**

Members present: Chair Robert Kucharavy, Vice Chair Erin Lynch, Mary Anne Easley, Diane Flaherty, Kelsea Gray (arrived 3:07) Arlene O'Reilly, Lisa Sherburne, Linda Williams

Members absent: Rocky Fox

Staff present: Jerico Mele, Laura Stewart

Guests: Guest Speaker Rachel Mandle, Executive Director, The Residences at Sherburne Commons; NCEA President John Copenhaver

As a quorum was present, Chair Robert Kucharavy called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m.

The agenda was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

The minutes of the December 3, 2025 meeting and the January 7, 2026 meeting: approval moved by Linda Williams, second by Mary Anne Easley, unanimously approved by roll call vote.

Chair Kucharavy introduced the guest speaker, Rachel Mandle, Executive Director, The Residences at Sherburne Commons.

Ms. Mandle assumed her position in January 2022 after many years in management positions with the Town of Nantucket. Sherburne Commons became a non-profit in 2014 and currently has a 10-member board with broad community representation.

Sherburne Commons is an independent living community for residents age 55 and older. It consists of 52 residences, including cottages and apartments. There are 20 cottages (2 are 2-bedroom/first floor only and 18 are 3-bedroom/2 floors) and 32 apartments. Fourteen of the apartments are efficiency units, without a full kitchen or washer/dryer. While essentially all units are currently occupied, one is used as a guest suite for family visitors. Four of the apartments are designated "low income," and all efficiency apartments are eligible to be "affordable" through an income verification process.

Linda Williams expressed concern that Sherburne Commons was originally conceived to include assisted living units, which is no longer the case. Sherburne Commons transitioned in mid-2021 to a new model; instead of its own nursing staff, it has contracted with Best of Care, an independent agency, which has its office in the building. Best of

Care provides a 24/7 on-site aide who can assist any resident, with no minimum time requirement. This model, now being adopted at other senior living communities, is more cost-efficient and more responsive to residents' individual and changing needs.

Sherburne Commons currently has two vacancies: one cottage and one studio apartment. They maintain a waiting list (currently 20 people) for each type of unit. Occupancy for the last few years has been 94% - 100%. Ms. Mandle recommends interested seniors join the waiting list early, about two years in advance of moving, to make a smoother transition.

Sherburne Commons has revived its residents' association, which is focused on activities and engaging with the community. Current activities include a memory cafe, book club, chair yoga and a bridge club. They have upgraded their IT infrastructure to support community events, and they are encouraging more contact with the broader community.

The average age of current residents is 79-1/2. The youngest is 56, and the oldest is about to turn 100. The average length of residence is 4-1/2 years.

A COA member asked if they accommodate short-term rentals for seniors in recovery. Yes, when they have a unit available. Generally, this occurs about three times a year.

It is a pet-friendly community. Many residents have a cat or a dog.

Ms. Mandle concluded her remarks at 3:44 p.m.

Erin Lynch announced that Best of Care is participating in a new Medicare program for people with memory changes and those who support them. There is no cost for the GUIDE (Guiding an Improved Dementia Experience) program. Call Best of Care at (800) 310-5800 to determine eligibility and get answers to questions.

Laura Stewart's Saltmarsh monthly report was in members' pre-meeting packet. Linda Williams moved to accept the report; Mary Anne Easley second; unanimously approved by roll call vote.

Jerico Mele reported on Health and Human Services activities, including the expansion of the Saltmarsh Senior Center, which will be covered in detail at the COA's March 2026 meeting. He also reported on the successful vaccine events by Stop & Shop Pharmacy held at the mid-island store. He reminded members who have not completed the required ethics training for all Town boards to do so.

As there was no further business, at 3:53 p.m. Linda Williams moved to adjourn, Robert Kucharavy second; all approved.

#

