

CALL TO ORDER Chairperson Deb Lincoln called the meeting to order at 9:30AM.

Present Deb Lincoln (Chairperson), Susan Doherty (Director), Pete Lincoln, Jim McGuigan, Diane Nowd, Betty DiGiacomo, Cathy Beale, Judy Tarbell, and Cheryl Moisan.

Excused Jane Rabbitt and Susan O'Sullivan

Guests Lunenburg Selectperson, Lou Franco, George Martin, and Eagle House Supporters Rep., Marilyn Tally.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Lincoln thanked Lunenburg Select Board member, Lou Franco, and other volunteer town officials for all their efforts with developing a Senior Tax Relief Plan for the Town of Lunenburg.

Ms. Lincoln welcomed and introduced George Martin to the board as a prospective member to the Council on Aging Board.

MINUTES APPROVAL Mr. Lincoln questioned a comment in the February minutes regarding the Eagle House Supporters new board member. Ms. Talley responded that the new member is Nicole Waters and she will be the Assistant Treasurer. Ms. DiGiacomo moved to accept the February 14, 2023, as presented. Mr. Lincoln seconded. All approved, motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Opinion from Town Council Regarding Offering Legal Advice:** Ms. Lincoln stated that she had requested an official document from Town Council inquiring why the Council on Aging cannot conduct a workshop to help Lunenburg elders with filling out Tax Abatement forms. Attorney Adam Costa replied with a memorandum which cautioned and recommended that the Council not assist taxpayers with any appellate process or offer guidance in advance thereof, citing possible liability not only to the Council but to the Town as well. (See attached). Discussion ensued among the board regarding Town Counsel advice and the board determined that only as private citizens, they can help people fill out abatement forms and that they would not use Council on Aging resources or act as representatives of the Council on Aging in any way.

CURRENT BUSINESS

1. **Discussion: Communication with Lunenburg Residents:** Ms. Lincoln spoke about how to better communicate with Lunenburg residents regarding Lunenburg Activity Center programs and services. Ms. Doherty mentioned that there was a post card mailing done during the pandemic to Lunenburg households with a person living there age sixty and older. Board members were shown a copy of that post card and agreed that an updated version should be created and mailed to residents 50+.
2. **Discussion: Warrant Article for May Town Meeting/Senior Tax Relief:** Mr. Franco reported that drafting the Senior Tax Relief proposal has been a difficult process and still needs finishing touches applied before it can become a warrant article for Annual Town Meeting. He stated that regarding eligibility for the program it has been decided that a person must be a property owner and living in the home for at least 15 years. The credit will be mirroring the Massachusetts Circuit Breaker Tax Program model of up to \$1200.00 and will still need to pass at Annual Town Meeting and also at the State level before it becomes official.
3. **Council on Aging Board Member Search:** Prospective Council on Aging Board Member, introduced himself and stated that he currently serves on the Lunenburg Capital Plan Committee and is a former member of the Lunenburg Finance Committee.
A letter will be sent to the Select Board recommending the appointment of George Martin to the Council on Aging Board.
4. **Council on Aging Board Member Orientation Package:** Ms. Lincoln requested that the board bring their orientation packages to the April meeting for updates.
5. **Council on Aging Board Members Town Email:** Ms. Lincoln encouraged board members to continue working with their Town emails and if assistance is needed, they should contact her.
6. **Lunenburg 300th Celebration:** Mr. Lincoln stated that although the 300th celebration will not happen until the year 2028, the board should begin thinking of how to involve the Lunenburg Adult Activity Center and suggested that special monthly programs should be organized at the center to coincide with the celebration.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- **FY24 Formula Grant:** Ms. Doherty stated that Governor Healey has included in her FY24 budget an increase from \$12 to \$14 per elder in Formula Grant funding. This will need to be approved at the State level and confirmation of the increase won't be available until Fall.
- **Council on Aging FY24:** All requested Council on Aging FY24 budget increases were approved by the Town Manager. Increases will be voted on at the May Town Meeting and if passed, will be effective on July 1, 2023.
- **Capital Plan:** No report.
- **Building & Grounds Report**
 - The center closed on March 14th and 15th due to power outages and snow removal.
 - The steam table which is no longer used was put out to auction on Municibid and sold for \$525.
 - There is a new Facilities Manager for Lunenburg, Chris Ruth.
 - Capital Plan has \$90,000 reserved for a generator at the center. The Director will contact the facilities manager to see what the status is on purchase and installation.
 - No updates on the recreation area bid packages. Ms. Doherty will contact the engineer to see what the status is.
- **Upcoming Events:** The Discovery Center for Civic Engagement will be hosting a "Volunteer Job Fair" on September 13, 2023, from 4-7PM at the Lunenburg Adult Activity Center. Various Non-Profits will be invited to attend to share with attendees' information on volunteer opportunities in their organizations.

EAGLE HOUSE SUPPORTERS REPORT

Ms. Tally presented to the board the latest fundraising idea that they are working on in conjunction with the Lunenburg Skate Park group. A calendar will be developed and sold containing prizes to be drawn on each day in the month of June 2023. If this campaign goes well, there is a potential for both the Supporters and Skate Park group to receive \$3,000 each.

NOTICES & COMMUNICATIONS None

BOARD COMMENT

Mr. Lincoln welcomed Ms. Beale and Mr. Martin to the Council on Aging Board and commented on the importance of being a COA board member.

Mr. Lincoln stated that he would like to have all board members be present at the May meeting for a group photo.

Members were reminded that when a COA meeting is cancelled the policy is to reschedule it to the following week.

ADJOURNMENT

Being no further business, Ms. DiGiacomo moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Lincoln seconded.

All approved, motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 10:55AM

UPCOMING MEETING SCHEDULE

April 11, 2023, 9:30am

Respectfully Submitted

Susan Doherty, Director, Lunenburg Council on Aging



Mead, Talerman & Costa, LLC
Attorneys at Law

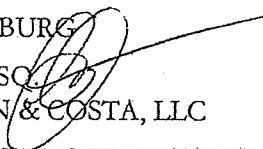
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MEMORANDUM

TO: MICHAEL-RAY JEFFREYS, CHAIRMAN
SELECT BOARD
TOWN OF LUNENBURG

FROM: ADAM J. COSTA, ESQ. 
MEAD, TALERMAN & COSTA, LLC

CC: HEATHER LEMIEUX, TOWN MANAGER
TOWN OF LUNENBURG

SUBJECT: OPINION ABOUT OFFERING LEGAL ADVICE

DATE: FEBRUARY 28, 2023

Reference is made to the above-captioned matter. In that connection, you have inquired about the advisability of the Council on Aging conducting a workshop, seminar or other informational meeting or gathering with respect to the process of and procedure for appealing tax abatement requests recently submitted to the Board of Assessors, if denied.

I would caution against and recommend that the Council not assist taxpayers with any appellate process, or offer guidance in advance thereof. Proceedings before the state's Appellate Tax Board (ATB) are quasi-judicial in nature; an explanation thereof or assistance with preparing, submitting and/or presenting one's case to the ATB will inevitably require the Council to give, or else could be interpreted as the Council providing, legal advice. The unauthorized practice of law in Massachusetts is prohibited. See G.L. c. 221, § 41. Further, if advice or recommendation(s) by the Council are relied upon to a taxpayer's detriment, liability could arise therefrom, not only for the Council but, consequently, for the Town generally.

Please let me know if you have further questions about the foregoing.

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