

Council on Aging (COA) Advisory Board

Minutes from Meeting Monday April 13, 2026 at 9:00AM

At Lowell Senior Center

Roll Call/Sign - In: In attendance: Richard Demers, Frank Baskin, Maxine Farkas, Gilda James, Beverly Gonsalves (Recorder) Andy Hostetler, Molyka Tieng, Erin Gendron & Judy Huber. Aurora Erickson acting for Director Kim Gagnon.

II Pledge of Allegiance

III. Approval of the March 9, 2026 minutes: First by Judy, second by Maxine, all others were in favor.

IV. Director's Report: Aurora Erickson sitting in for Kimberly Gagnon. Aurora gave an update on the new Heritage. Hopefully It will be printed and ready for June. The new printers are contracting with the advertisers. Frank asked if there are any problems with the advertisers, but there is not. Richard said that there is the mini version of the Heritage downstairs. It can be picked up at Tara's desk.

V. Chairperson's Report

Frank spoke about the new lease written up for twenty years. Maxine said that no one knows what is going on. Maxine said that currently there are no grants but some are coming up and she will know how to write for them. Maxine also spoke about the meeting & presentation she had with the Friends Board. She went over the list of programs for the Senior Center and presented her proposal how the two Boards could work together. Ken Ashley who attended the LCOA March meeting mentioned that someone had said that the Friends were not friendly, but at the Friends meeting Rita Mercier said that Friends are friendly. It was also mentioned that the City should be paying for things for the Senior Center, not the Friends Board. Richard mentioned that the Friends Board members are overly protective of the Board.

VI Committee & Liaison Reports:

a. Grant updates: Maxine said she would be willing to teach a class on grant writing. She does not know how much will be received for 2027. Aurora is the Program Director but she does not get anything. She has nothing to work with. The Program "On the Move" generates the most money. Aurora provides a large range of activities. The City budget is getting worse, other city budgets cover their Senior Centers. Molyka said that Friends should cover what LCOA does not.

b. Outreach Committee:

Liaison reports/connections with other local/regional agencies.

c. Healthy Aging Committee

Andy mentioned that the "HAPPY TO CHAT" bench will be presented on Thursday, May 15, from eleven am to one pm. There will be staff at the bench for information and questions. The meeting for the Age Friendly is held on the fourth Monday of each month at ten am.

d. Senior Center Working Group report. In 2023 Maxine raised \$42,000.00 for the Art Program. She wanted to show Friends how to raise money for the Senior Center. She has focused just on this Senior Center. She has offered free classes. She would like a room for the Art Program.

Richard said that the Senior Center should be available for the working people later in the day but it is not in the city budget. Maxine said that the money is not there, have to find it elsewhere. The Senior Center is short staffed. Aurora said that Friends could bring in more money.

7. Items for Discussion:

Old Business

a.

I. BHOAP Behavioral Health Outreach for the Aging Population, will have funding for the fourth year in a row.

b. ii Changes to Mass Health

Frank said that Mass has no money. Contact your State Reps. on the issues, Tara Hong, Vanna Howard and Rodney Elliot.

8. OTHER

9. Adjournment

First by Maxine second by Molyka, all others were in favor

Next meeting: Monday May 11, 2026 @ 9:00 AM