Council on Aging (COA) Advisory Board

Minutes from Meeting October 19, 2026 at 9:00am

at Lowell Senior Center

I .Roll Call/Sign - In: In attendance: Richard Demers, Maxine Farkas, Gilda James, Beverly Gonsalves (Recorder) & Andy Hostetler,Frank Baskin & Erin Gendron. Also attending Director Kim Gagnon. Excused Judy Huber and Nancy Judge.

II: Pledge of Allegiance:

III: Approval of the September minutes. First by Maxine Farkas, second by Erin Gendron, all others were in favor.

IV. Chairperson's Report:

Richard requested for permission from the Board if Councilor Rita Mercier could speak first, to give an update on the status of the City's issue with Walgreens and for the City to purchase the building. Rita spoke about how the Senior Center first came about. First place for the Center was the Smith Baker Building. Others involved were Steve Panagiotakis and Tom Sweeney. Nick Sarris was the owner of the building which was once the City Barns. There will be a Public Hearing on Tuesday night at seven o'clock. The plan is for the city to puchase the property for 3.3 million dollars. The property includes the Senior Center Condo, the Pro-Rehab building called the Blacksmith Building, Walgreens and the parking lot. Frank Baskin asked if Monarch was part of the purchase. The Monarch Building is not part of the purchase. Monarch owns their building and Nick Sarris owns the parking lot which has 25 parking spots. Erin asked about the financial impact to taxpayers but Rita said that she does not know. The first vote taken on the issue was five councilors were for the purchase and five were against, but Rita convinced one of the five that were against to vote in favor for the purchase. However the lease to Walgreen's will be in effect until 2028. Many supporters attended the City Council meeting on Tuesday night and the voting was unanimous to purchase all parcels from Nick Sarris. Ita said that the Senior Center opened up in 2001-2003. She was the Mayor. She spoke about the Friends of the LCOA paying for many things and petty cash for Kim.

V Director's Report.

Kim said that we do need more space and this is a big opportunityfor the SC.. Kim has been taking care of the heating issue and at present seems to be going well. The BHOAP contract was received so Outreach will be business as usual with Glady, Nava & Jenny.

Committee & Laison Reports:

a. Grant Updates: Grant Funding for the Art Class in November. On Saturday November 14, from one pm to 5 pm there will be a time for members to show their treasures to sell. The

tables will be free and this will be an excellent opportunity to introduce people to the Senior Center.

b. Outreach Committee:

c. Healthy Aging Committee: It was a busy summer for the Age Action Committee. There is a bulletin that will be attached to the minutes with the fall events. Also, Andy met on October 3 with members of the board to work on the Pen-Pal project.

Frank Baskin continues to keep everyone updated on the Council of Aging in the monthly Heritage which will also be attached to our minutes for October 19, 2026.

d. Senior Center Working Group

Maxine plans on speaking at the Council Meeting on Tuesday night. She is in favor of the purchase and has stated that there are 20,000-22,000 seniors in the city and this Senior Center has a great impact on the people who use it.

VII Items for Discussion:

a. Old Business:

i. BHOAP Behavorial Health Outreach for Aging Population

ii. Changes to Mass Health

b. New Business

VIII Other Richard will discuss the BINGO held on Sunday October 4, 2026.

IX. Adjournment: First by Gilda second by Maxine, all others it was unanimous.

Next meeting: Monday November 9, 2026 @ 9 AM