

**MINUTES OF THE GRAFTON COUNCIL ON AGING MEETING**  
**November 8, 2007**

Members present: William Drago, Chair, William Cutler, Vice-Chairman, Marcella Benoit, Secretary, Shirley Antaya, Phyllis Brown, Doris Fowler, Barbara Gardner, Rev. Phil Goff, Chet Jakubiak

Members absent: Winifred Paul

Also present: Michelle Drumm, Senior Center Director  
Natalie Lashmit, Town Administrator  
Roland Richard, FOGA President

Bills were signed by all members present.

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 P.M. by Chairman, William Drago.

Natalie Lashmit, Town Administrator, was re-introduced to all COA members by William Drago, Chairman.

Natalie led the discussion on WRTA bus services and a new program through the WRTA, a centralized call center. There is another major cut due in funding. The WRTA is holding monthly meetings regarding bus usage. The cuts are to be drastic; so the WRTA has drawn up a plan whereby a private company will be handling all dispatching. This Dispatch Call Center would be open 24/7. Their database will include all information on each client's needs. Natalie Lashmit expressed the importance of Michelle Drumm attending monthly and/or special meetings as required. Attending said meetings allows all and any Grafton Senior citizen's needs and concerns to be voiced. Michelle Drumm stated that she has not received any meeting notices since the August meeting she attended. Michelle Drumm was extremely concerned a centralized call center would not be aware of our seniors' needs and idiosyncrasies that contribute to their improved quality of life, despite a data transfer. Examples given. Michelle Drumm stated that the Town of Grafton has worked hard to create a successful and user friendly service for the seniors, that the seniors are well-served with an efficient program. She questioned that since the reimbursement from WRTA is so low, if this new system does not work, perhaps the Town would need to consider purchasing its own second bus and eliminate WRTA all together. Natalie Lashmit stated this could be considered. Various COA members voiced strong opinions regarding doubt the call center could maintain the same level of exemplary service the seniors are accustomed to with our current system, ie. patience and compassion, particularly for those with memory care or disability issues. It came up in further discussion that this program was not mandatory, but was actually a pilot program with a January 1 projected start date. After further discussion, it was clarified by Ms. Lashmit that this was an optional program. Ms. Lashmit was a large proponent that the Town participate in this pilot. During a lengthy discussion, the COA continued to voice concerns with this proposal.

The Senior Tax Work-Off Program is being modified at the request of the Town Administrator. Income and length of residency requirements were briefly discussed. The minimum will be going up to \$8.00 per hour in January, with an estimated January 1<sup>st</sup> implementation date. It will be looked into whether the maximum amount of abatement will remain at \$750 or will increase.

Ms. Lashmit left the meeting at 2:00 P.M. The meeting continued as usual.

All COA members were deeply impressed with the many complimentary remarks Ms. Lashmit gave Michelle Drumm regarding her ability to communicate and problem solve, as well as other skills which made her a successful director.

The secretary's report was reviewed. A motion to accept as written was made by William Cutler, seconded by Phyllis Brown. All voted in favor. So moved.

The Director's/Financial report was reviewed. A motion to accept as given was made by Chet Jakubiak, seconded by Rev. Phil Goff. All voted in favor. So moved.

William Cutler's nomination as Vice-Chairman was addressed. The motion to nominate William Cutler as Vice-Chairman was made by Barbara Gardner, seconded by Phyllis Brown. All voted in favor. So moved. Mr. Cutler accepted the nomination. A motion to appoint William Cutler as Vice-Chairman was made by Shirley Antaya, seconded by Chet Jakubiak. All voted in favor. So moved. William Cutler abstained from voting on both motions.

Rev. Goff had a comment about the new Outreach Worker, Tony Merenda. When his wife turned 60, she received a very impressive packet in the mail from Tony. It was a "Welcome to Senior Citizenship" packet, marketing the Senior Center.

William Drago read a letter from Sheriff Glodis about the successful process of the Triad Program in Grafton.

There was a lengthy discussion on certain phases in the tax work-off program. Unanimous vote of the COA as attached. Michelle Drumm recommended we vote on the Tax Work-off Program as written, i.e. priority being based on skill set, financial need and length of residency, in that order. The motion to accept the Senior Tax Work-Off Program as amended to change order to financial need skill set and length of residency was made by Barbara Gardner, seconded by Chet Jakubiak. All in favor voted. So moved. All COA members present are unanimously in favor of said program as amended only.

The COA Christmas Party will be at Danielle's Restaurant on Tuesday, December 11, 2007 at 5:00 P.M.

FOGE report as given by Roland Richard, President:

1. The Talent Show netted \$274.75 for FOGE.
2. FOGE supper prior to the show sold all 50 tickets as planned. The cost was \$108.00. The profit was \$198.00.
3. We held a discussion regarding the pianos because of the comments we received about them not being too easy to play. The Baby Grand "Weber" we have was checked this morning by a piano repairman. It was not worth salvaging. Roland Richard has priced pianos – spinets start @\$3,000 and Baby Grand's' start at \$5,000. The upright we have will be tuned and repaired with a humidifier being added. Roland Richard will continue to pursue feasibility of a new or better used piano.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Shirley Antaya, seconded by Phyllis Brown. All in favor. So moved.

The meeting adjourned at 3:10PM.

The next meeting will be Thursday, December 13, 2007 at 1:00 P.M. in the Craft Room of the Grafton Senior Center.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcella Benoit  
Secretary