

**HUMAN SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE WARRANT COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, March 25, 2021
Virtual Zoom Meeting
12:00 noon**

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: April 16, 2021
TIME: 10:21 AM

Committee Members Virtually Attending:

Chair Bob McLaughlin; Member Jenny Fallon, Member Lynn Read

Also in attendance:

Director of Council on Aging Nava Niv-Vogel and several Members of the Council on Aging

The Chair, Bob McLaughlin, called the meeting to order at 12:00 noon on March 25, 2021 and recited the protocol permitted under Governor Baker's Executive Order of March 12, 2020 suspending certain provisions of the open meeting law. The Chair took a roll call attendance.

The purpose of the meeting was for the Human Services Subcommittee to meet with the Director of Council on Aging and such Members of the Board who chose to attend to discuss the Council on Aging FY22 Budget. The proposed Budget showed an increase comparing FY22 to FY21 of \$68,203 or a total of 17.2%. It was noted that the entire increase resulted from the proposal to add a full-time social worker to the staff of the Council on Aging. This request had been made repeatedly in prior years and by reason of the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for additional social worker services was greatly increased.

As of this writing, it is now known that the Belmont override did not pass and it is very likely that the increase in the Budget for FY22 will be eliminated, and therefore, the proposed additional full-time social worker will also be eliminated.

The Director explained to the Subcommittee that with the shutdown occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic, the operation of the Council on Aging' services significantly changed. Among the changes noted by the Director is the Springwell meals previously served at the Beech Street Center were not eliminated, but that a grab-and-go lunch pickup had been substituted, which was utilized by twenty (20) to thirty (30) people.

Outdoor heaters had been purchased for the comfort of people when meals were delivered. The Council's transportation services were used for delivering meals. An added breakfast Monday through Friday was instituted.

Other actions to cope with the COVID-19 protocol included an online ZOOM exercise class, established an outreach program for seniors over 75 to assess needs for services, arranged television programs on computer literacy. Transportation was still a critical function of the agency including rides for senior for shopping and medical appointments, as well as using drivers to deliver meals and masks.

The Director was sending out a survey of all past volunteers to see if they were comfortable to return and what would be necessary to make them feel safe.

Last year, Belmont was recognized as an age-friendly community and although somewhat delayed this year, the action plan is now almost ready to submit.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Robert E. McLaughlin, Sr.