

**Billerica Council on Aging
25 Concord Road, Billerica MA
Board Meeting Minutes**

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October 8, 2025, 5:30 pm

Present: Dan Burns, Richard Carroll, Phil Doiron, Barbara Flaherty, Mary Jones, Joseph Marino, Marguerite Massey, Bill Neeb, John Pellegrino, Mary Riley, Mike Rosa, Hemali Shah.

Absent: John Burrows,

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by Chair Richard Carroll, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence for the sick and departed.

Open Mic with 15 min time limit

A motion was made by John Pellegrino to add an open mic session to the COA board meetings. The Motion specified that the time limit for the open mic will be 15 minutes, which can be extended at the Chair's discretion, with a 3 minute time limit per person. Motion seconded by Phil Doiron.

A roll call was taken and the motion passed

Acceptance of the minutes of the September 10th 2025, meeting.

M/Phil Doiron. S/ Mary Riley A roll call was taken, with all in favor the Motion passed.

Director's Report

Program and Financial Updates

Financial Performance: September 30 was our first day of registration for October programs. That week we had 581 completed transactions, generating revenue for \$3,172 and the use of \$83 from credits in patron's wallet. This month registration forms were distributed in advance of registration for exercise classes. This proved to be quite successful as patrons brought in their forms with one check for the month

W-9: At the last board meeting a patron had brought up a question of whether or not providing a W-9 counted as income. Speaking to our Accountant, I was notified that the Town does not require a patron to submit a W-9 in order to request a refund. We've updated our refund request policy to reflect this change. A discussion ensued as to whether a refund may trigger a 1099 form for the town to report to the IRS. With the current procedure most refunds are credited back to a virtual wallet for future use, and this method has been working well for patrons.

Active Agers Award – We were selected as one of eight communities to win \$250 as part of a submission for Active Agers competition, where a few COA's were selected based on submission of stats on how many active seniors we have. From January 2025 – August 2025 we had 8068 check-ins across all of our exercise programs.

Successful Programs:

Senior Prom – Was a huge success with 70 patrons participating. Everyone had a great time. Kudos to Riley for getting the whole program sponsored

Senior Self -Defense – We had 20 patrons participate and they've asked for us to repeat the event

Painting class with Joan Turner – Class was filled to its maximum of 20 and was requested back. We will be offering this class monthly

A survey is in the works to distribute to patrons to ask what they like to see in programming

Introduction of Outreach staff (Jeanne Teehan and Karen Cusack- Bouvier)

Jeanne Teehan and Karen Cusack- Bouvier provided information and statistics on services provided by the outreach program including:

- **The COA's social services team** has handled 412 new cases with 981 total visits across various services including housing applications, fuel assistance, and mental health support. They have conducted approximately 300 home fire safety visits and are installing bed shakers for hard-of-hearing residents. The team discussed the need for additional staff, with Karen noting that one more outreach worker would be ideal to handle the workload
- **The Senior Center provides various services** including SNAP applications, housing assistance, meals on wheels, and durable equipment lending. They run the Lahey Fresh Veggie Program in partnership with New Entry, spending around \$980 weekly on fresh produce for about 65-70 people. The center also offers fuel assistance, Medicare savings applications, transportation, home visits, and holiday programs such as turkey meals and gift cards for isolated seniors. This year, they plan to continue these initiatives while collecting feedback through surveys and maintaining partnerships with local organizations
- **Billerica Fire Safety Initiatives** The meeting discussed a home fire safety program initiated in 2015 between the COA, Billerica Fire Department, and the American Red Cross, which has installed over 357 smoke alarms and 270 carbon monoxide alarms in 242 homes. Highlighted a recent incident where a carbon monoxide alarm saved a resident's life by detecting dangerous levels from a new stove. The discussion also covered efforts to address hoarding in Billerica, including training for first responders and a multi-town hoarding task force that provides resources and financial assistance for cleanouts. Finally, the group discussed a new SALT (Seniors At Last) program to provide snow removal buckets to financially and physically needy seniors living in their own homes, with plans to coordinate delivery through local sports teams.
- **Senior Services Challenges and Initiatives** The meeting discussed various challenges and initiatives related to senior services, including electrical credits, transportation, and housing issues. Highlighted the significant savings seniors can achieve through the aggregate energy program, while also noting the complexities of managing cases involving vulnerable seniors and their families. John provided transportation statistics, emphasizing the importance of medical rides and social daycare options. The group also addressed the lack of affordable senior housing, with concerns raised about the high costs of 40B apartments and the lengthy waitlists for subsidized housing.
- **Senior Transportation Staffing and Funding** The meeting focused on staffing and funding for senior transportation services. Discussed was the number of staff at various senior centers, noting that Wilmington has 4.5 staff members and Tewksbury has about 5, with additional interns. They reviewed how their department is funded, with grants and fee-based programs supporting half of their salaries, while the LRTA budget covers transportation costs.

The Director provided updates on programs, noting that Bar Fusion and Tai Chi classes were cut due to low interest, while Zumba classes continue to be popular.

Board Discussions

BCOA Meeting Hours The board discussed changes to their meeting schedule, voting to hold afternoon meetings at 3:30 PM in January and April to increase community engagement.
Motion/Bill Neeb S/Dan Burns - With all in favor motion passed.

Policy of Select board approval of Director's request for Disbursement of donated Funds:
The Select Board clarified that donations to town programs must be approved as a whole, but individual allocations from those donations can be managed at the discretion of program administrators without further board approval.

Grant proceeds to fund Companion Program and salaries

The discussion then focused on the companion program's funding, where it was revealed that while companion salaries and expenses are covered by grants, the program staff salaries are not sustainably funded through this revenue stream, leading to questions about whether these positions should be funded through municipal budgets instead.

Likelihood of Companion program becoming self-sustainable: The discussion focused on the potential are raising their rates for the companion program which, in the Director's opinion for many reasons, is unlikely to happen.

Process of submitting budget proposal

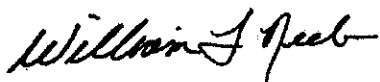
A discussion ensued as to where we stand on the 2027 budget. the director reported that but budget has been presented to the Town Manager. She is now working on a five-year plan so she could be more aggressive in future funding.

Next meeting date November 12, 2025. M/Phil Doiron S/John Pellegrino / A roll call was taken, with all in favor the Motion passed.

Motion to adjourn made by Phil Doiron S/ John Pellegrino / A roll call was taken, with all in favor the Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 7:05 pm.

Respectfully Submitted



William Neeb, Recording Secretary