

**Meeting of the Northborough Council on Aging  
March 12, 2024 – 5:30PM – Northborough Senior Center**

*As the hub for all aspects of healthy aging, the mission of the Northborough Council on Aging/Senior Center is to enrich and enhance the lives of older adults.*

**Call to Order:** A meeting of the Council on Aging of the Town of Northborough was called to order at 5:30 PM by Linda Cragin, Clerk due to the absence of Paula Moore, Chair. A volunteer was asked to chair the meeting and Virginia George agreed to do so. The following were also present:

Fran Bakstran, Member

Alli DellaRovere, Member

Elizabeth Nasser, Member

Theresa Lee, Member

Mitch Cohen, Chair, Select Board

Ron Doucett, Friends

Henry Squillante, Friends

Kendra Faldetta, Director

Trish Smith, Guest, Springwell

The following COA members were not present: Jerry Anderson, Paula Moore, and Joan Frank, School Committee rep.

**1. Minutes:** The January 2024 meeting minutes were approved.

**2. Introductions:** Trish Smith, the CEO of Springwell, the Aging Services Access Point (ASAP) which is state funded to serve Northborough was introduced. Attendees also introduced themselves and their roles related to the COA/Senior Center.

**3. Springwell Report:** Trish Smith provided an update about Springwell's efforts since the merger about 18 months ago with Bay Path, the prior ASAP that served Northborough). The focus has been on integrating policies and procedures for staffing and programs since each ASAP did things differently. Other ASAP mergers indicated that this could take 3-4 years to complete, and Trish feels that good progress has been made. Home Care, the largest program "has not moved beyond the policies and procedures stage", though is on track similar to other home care's experiences. A focus has also been on the integration of technology (phone systems, computer systems and data integration). The organization has also reorganized with directors overseeing programs that have become larger.

Externally, a benefits applications specialist program for MassHealth applications will finish up on June, and a Community Transition Liaison Program with discreet funding will assist nursing home residents who want to transition to the community, addressing barriers such as housing or CORI issues. Newton Wellesley Hospital has contracted with Springwell to assist with discharged returning to the community. Trish agreed that this program would most likely not have an impact in Northborough, but she hopes it is a foundation to build on in the future.

In Northborough, funding was received in January to develop a supportive housing program with the Housing Authority at Heritage and Center Dr. This program started the day before, March 11<sup>th</sup> with an onside, dedicated care coordinator three days a week, a congregate meals program, onsite Information and Referral, transportation, and activities. A dedicated vendor has been identified to respond 24-7 (she is offering a "metro-west vendor" office space to interview locally, it is not clear if this is the same vendor); the will help serve Northborough which is an "underserved" community. Springwell is recruiting for the care coordinator, the assistant housing manager is currently on site. This has helped address the wait list of 6 people with three now served since they are close to the site. She also mentioned that rates were recently increased.

Discussion followed.

- Liz asked about the Enhanced Mental Health Outreach Team and Trish shared that Springwell has chosen not to apply at this time due to other priorities.
- Linda asked about the numbers served by Springwell as requested in the letter of invite. Trish did not have a current answer as the computer system could not report by town. She provided a report for 2023 which Kendra summarized, for example, that if 30 consumers received 2440 hours of homemaking, this is a total of 81 hours each for the year, or less than two hours a week which is barely time to prepare a meal, shop or pick up around their home.
- Kendra was also not aware of the Supportive Housing program until she met with the Housing Authority director. It was discussed that Springwell should have reached out to the Senior Center director to understand the needs of the community instead of just assuming the Supportive Housing was needed. Many of the residents of these housing sites are very engaged in Senior Center activities and avail themselves of the transportation available; this is not the highest need population.
- Theresa asked Trish about the culture of Springwell, her leadership, and her top priority. Her priorities (she could not list one) are staffing for the agency and workers in the field. She is currently reaching out to other ASAPs to determine the vendors they use and how to best fill cases.
- Linda shared the request from Jocelyn to include a COA brochure about the outreach services available for the town's Meals on Wheels (MOW) recipients. This was denied by the program manager. Trish was not aware of this request and surprised that it was denied. Linda asked Trish to follow-up and report to Kendra in time for next month's COA meeting.
- Kendra's report illustrates some of the challenges Northborough residents have getting services from Springwell – wait times of 1-2 years and inquiries to the Info and Referral (I&R) staff that go to a voice mail and are answered by email – no staff person interaction.
- Poor communication by/with Springwell was identified as a theme – there does not seem to be internal reporting up to Trish (as evident with the MOWs and I&R examples), nor reporting to COA/Senior Center partners (as evident with the Supportive Housing example). Trish stated that they are monthly meetings with the COA directors. Kendra said these meetings are not effective – attendance is limited, and they have very little time to speak or ask questions after all the updates are shared; there also needs to be more discussion about service level data.
- Related to communication, Linda asked what could be provided from the Board meetings; the COA used to have a monthly report from Springwell via our board rep. Without a Springwell board representative, and with limited communication directly from Springwell, the COA agreed to take a monthly update off the agenda and would like to restore this report. Trish shared that the minutes are private, but she was willing to share a summary and shared an example which was not dated and is basically a summary of programs with no specifics similar to Trish's opening updates. Trish shared there are several board openings, but these won't be filled until November.
- Linda asked about discussions to move Protective Services from Elder Services of Worcester Area and Trish responded that this was not a current priority. She promised to

engage Senior Center staff when these discussions do occur.

- There was also concern that Title IIIB priorities were hard to meet for smaller communities like Northborough. Trish will look into this.
- Trish said she would speak with her communications staff lead (she could not remember their name nor their title) to be sure we receive their newsletter. This, however, only comes out twice a year.

The following next steps were discussed:

- 1) A follow-up meeting in several months
- 2) A follow-up meeting with Northborough and other COAs
- 3) More Board communication
- 4) A timeline when town specific service utilization can be shared.
- 5) Follow-up regarding sharing a brochure with MOW recipients.
- 6) A commitment to discuss any shift in Protective Services with Senior Center staff prior to a decision.
- 7) Follow-up regarding Title IIIB priorities.

Trish was thanked for attending and the agenda resumed.

**4. Friends Report:** Ron provided the Friend's report, summarizing support for Valentine's Day and St. Patrick's Day celebrations and presentations on Bucky Lew and Portuguese culture. Spring volunteer gifts were also supported and had been distributed to COA board members. The Annual Appeal surpassed its goal of \$20,000, with one donation of \$5,000 which covers the mailing costs of the appeal (\$4,600). The Friends will support several upcoming activities and will "buy a brick" in honor of Adrienne Cost. A doo-wop event is planned for June, starring Tony Funches, the lead singer for the Platters who also sang with the Drifters, Coasters and Shirelles singing groups. A car wash is planned for August 2<sup>nd</sup> at Whitney Place.

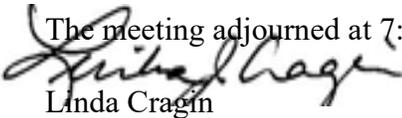
**5. Director's Report:** Kendra submitted a budget to the Appropriations Committee constituting less than 1% of the overall town budget. She provided an extensive and visual report of the activities. Plans for the Kentucky Derby 150<sup>th</sup> celebration are coming together with Vicki's "mint julip" recipe, Table Talk pecan pies and a solicitation out for fried chicken; Kendra is also contacting Vineyard Vines, the sponsor, for swag from last year's Derby. There is also a winning horse raffle. Upcoming activities include a Isabell Stuart Gardner Museum lecture, Build a Bouquet for Mother's Day, and a lecture on the Great Molasses Flood. A portion of the building is still unusable as the walls need to be finished; fortunately, the computers seem to be ok. Kendra is exploring if a room could be named after Adrienne.

**6. WRTA:** Nothing new.

**7. Master Plan:** Fran reported that the Downtown Revitalization Plan and plans for a new Town Hall are continuing.

**8. Old/New Business and Community Awareness:** None discussed due to focus on Springwell.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35pm.

  
Linda Cragin

Board of Directors  
Northborough Council on Aging  
119 Bearfoot Rd.  
Northborough, MA 01532

January 31, 2024

Trish Smith, CEO  
Springwell  
307 Waverly Oaks Rd. #205  
Waltham, MA 02452  
[Tsmith@springwell.com](mailto:Tsmith@springwell.com)

Dear Ms. Smith

The Northborough Council on Aging Board of Directors would like to invite you to our March 12, 2024 meeting at 5:30 pm at the Northborough Senior Center. If this date does not work for you, our next meeting will be April 12, 2024 at the same time.

We used to get monthly statistics from Baypath Elder Services about the services provided to the residents of Northborough. Since the merger of Baypath with Springwell, we have received no information. While we realize that a board of directors that includes every city/town in your service area would be unwieldy, more than a year after the merger, we need some routine communication. Unfortunately, recently, after more than 10 years of monthly updates from our local Aging Services Access Point, we voted to take an update off our regular agenda; we would like to restore this discussion item.

We have looked to our senior center director, Kendra Faldetta, for information and she has shared that there is also no routine communication to her.

We invite you to join us and provide an update about activities since the merger. We would also like to discuss a plan where we can receive routine information, including appropriate response to the request from the senior center staff. We are looking at how we can best support our frailest Northborough residents.

We are interested in the following:

- Monthly average number of Northborough referrals and referral source if you track this (family, physician office, internal referral, COA, etc.)
- Number of Northborough referrals that are opened for services (and a comparison to overall agency rate).
- Monthly average of calls for information and referral
- Number of Northborough residents on the wait list and the number receiving home care services (basic home care, ECOP, Choices, One Care, SCO, PCA, Care Transitions, long term care screening and meals on wheels) and the number receiving other services like Money Management, Caregiver Support, Friendly Visitor, etc.

- Length of time from a referral to a response, including the in-home assessment
- Average wait time for a home care aide assignment (by level would be helpful- i.e. Chore, Homemaker, Supportive Home Care Aide, etc.) and your process to provide updates while consumers wait for services.
- Involvement of Northborough residents in the services you provide that are new to us - like the Medical Escort services and Shopping Assistance.
- Name and contact information for case managers assigned to Northborough for our outreach worker, Jocelyn Ehrhardt, MSW.
- Future plans for communication regarding Protective Services.
- Plan for routine communication.
- Opportunities for us to work with you to promote your services and for Springwell to promote ours to Northborough residents.

Thank you in advance for your commitment to elders and our shared mission to serve those who live in Northborough.

I can be reached at: [dpmoore68@verizon.net](mailto:dpmoore68@verizon.net).

Sincerely,

Paula Moore, Chair  
Northborough Senior Center  
Board of Directors

cc. Board of Directors

## HIGHLIGHTS FOR COAs

- Money Management Program (MMP): Springwell has hired new MMP Specialists who are working through the current waitlist. Anyone who has been on the waitlist should be hearing from Springwell soon to determine whether they are still interested in joining the program. New referrals are also being accepted.

The Money Management Program is a volunteer-based program that assists older adults and individuals with disabilities who are having difficulty managing personal household budgets, paying bills, keeping track of banking records, or handling other issues related to personal finances. An assigned volunteer will visit on a monthly basis to assist with such tasks as establishing a budget, organizing and sending out mail, balancing a checkbook, reviewing and paying bills, and reconciling bank statements. The goal of the program is to help individuals maintain their independence for as long as possible.

- Benefit Support Specialists have availability to assist with MassHealth applications and redeterminations. Funding for the positions only goes through June 30 and then the program will go away.
- Community Transition Liaison Program (CTLP): This new program is open to referrals and supports individuals who are in a nursing facility and want to return to the community. The team of a Community Transition Liaison and Case Aide will assist with addressing barriers that have prevented a successful return to the community, make referrals for appropriate programs and services, assist with completion of applications, and collaborate with other providers and family members to support a community discharge.

## Northborough Statistics FY2023

FY'23	consumers	
Total Residents/Professionals Served	184	
Information & Assistance	112	421 units
Caregiver Support	21	
Options Counseling	28	

	consumers	units
Receiving SPR services	119	
Home Delivered Meals	55 ✕	4,499 meals
Adult Day Health	6	833 days
Laundry	20	452 bags
PERS	47	
Environment Modifications	15	
Transportation	10	
Home Health Aide	5	12,430 hours
Personal Care	5	205 hours
Homemaking	30	2,440 hours
Chore	2	77 hours
Consumer Directed Care	10	3,079 hours