**Committee Members Present**: Maureen Booth, Mary Kelley, Karen Mayo, Grace McCarthy, Peggy Muir (via zoom), Barbara Rollins and Deb Smith (via zoom)

**Absent**: George Oliver

**Staff**: Jason Lamoreau

**Guests**: Sally Cluchey, State House Representative, District 52

**Call to Order**

Maureen established a quorum.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The Agenda was approved as distributed.

**Approval of MinuteS**

The minutes of the November 14, 2022 meeting were approved as distributed.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Conversation with Sally Cluchey**

Sally Cluchey, newly elected State House Representative for Bowdoinham, Richmond and Bowdoin, came to discuss her legislative priorities and to learn more about the Committee’s work. Sally noted that caring for her mother during the past few years impressed upon her the lack of a sufficient work force to meet the growing demands for long term care. Sally is working closely with Jess Maurer, Director of the Maine Council on Aging and Co-Chair of Harpswell’s Aging at Home, to shape legislation in three areas:

* Reporting of data on the number of home-based services authorized versus those actually provided. Currently, there is no quantification of the impact of workforce shortages on the ability of individuals to receive needed care. Reporting is the necessary first step to understanding the scope of the problem and its geographic distribution. Still to be determined is whether proposed reporting would be for both public and private agencies.
* Incentives for workers to stay in the home care field. Currently most in-home workers receive no health insurance benefits. The proposal would extend Medicaid coverage to workers who provide care to individuals covered under Medicaid.
* Reciprocity that would allow for sharing of documents across provider agencies such as background checks, vaccines, etc that currently must be obtained and submitted by the worker for each agency through which the worker is employed. Discussion is under way to make these qualifying documents free for the worker who currently must bear the cost.

Peggy spoke to earlier efforts made by the Committee to work with Voc Tech and community colleges to incorporate elder support in relevant classes. Sally noted that minimum worker salaries were adjusted last session to 125% of the federal poverty level or $17.00 per hour. Sally also discussed a longer term plan to create a registry of in-home workers that individuals and their families could use to hire qualified staff.

In response to the Committee’s question on what role it could play in helping Sally’s efforts, Sally suggested:

* The Committee can help spread the word on what is currently available to assist families as they care for their older members. She mentioned services that are not well known such as fuel assistance or the Supplemental Food Program run through Good Shepherd providing staples to low income seniors.
* CA$H MaIne is a statewide collaborative that trains volunteers to assist individuals prepare tax forms. The Committee can play a role in recruiting volunteers, promoting the program to residents, and offering a Tax Prep Day in Bowdoinham. As a first time effort, the Committee felt focusing on individuals with only Social Security Income would reduce the complexity.

The Committee thanked Sally for her efforts and offered its help in both sharing ideas with her and supporting her as needs arise.

 Follow up Actions:

1. Sally will contact Steve Cohen of CA$H Maine about the Committee’s interest in both volunteering as well as hosting a TAX PREP DAY in Bowdoinham.
2. Sally will keep the Committee apprised on draft legislation on issues pertaining to our work.
3. After Sally’s introduction, Maureen will follow up with Steve Cohen to pursue tax prep training, promotion within the community and sponsorship of a TAX PREP DAY.

**Staff Report**

EMS Transportation Services - Jason shared with the Committee the growing shortage of EMS services on a statewide level. Currently the Town contracts with North East Mobil Health Services. The current contract ends in June 2022 but, according to contract terms, North East is seeking to amend the current contract. The proposed amendment would alter the contract from $50,000 per year to $65,000 per month beginning in February 2023.

The Town is in negotiation with Topsham who currently supports 80-90 percent of Bowdoinham’s hospital runs on a mutual aid basis although no contract exists. The Town has also reached out to Gardiner who has interest in becoming a regional EMS provider. The issue will come before the Bowdoinham Select Board on December 13.

Age Friendly Bowdoinham Website - Jason previewed the updated website which has a new format and some new content. Questions were raised about the timing of several weekly activities which Maureen will double check. Jason encouraged members to spend more time on their own reviewing the site and to share any edits with him. The Committee thanked Jason for tackling this long overdue project.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Joint Planning Task Force**

The Committee reviewed Minutes from the first meeting of the Joint Planning Task Force which was attended by Grace, Jason and Maureen. Grace clarified that the plan is for Age Friendly to have its own section in the Comprehensive Plan; the format for which will be governed by the existing Comp Plan. Questions were raised about the draft goals which were proposed by the Task Force and whether it would be preferable to organize the Age Friendly goals according to their relevant domains such as transportation, housing, etc. Jason noted that domain-specific goals were discussed by the Joint Planning Task Force but a preliminary decision was made to cross-reference the Age Friendly goals to the relevant section of the Comp Plan rather than to sub-divide the Age Friendly section by domain.

As a former member of the Comp Plan Committee, Karen questioned whether the Committee was ready to assume responsibility for sections of the Comp Plan which becomes the governing document for major changes in the Town. It was agreed that many of the proposed goals for Age Friendly would not necessarily be the responsibility of the Committee to implement but rather they were intended to ensure that the needs of older adults were considered when adopting the Plan. Peggy expressed hope that at some point a separate section would not be needed and that instead the concept of “age friendly” would become a universal standard and not specific to older adults.

Maureen reported that, after the Task Force meeting, she reviewed minutes and documents of the Committee from the past three years to make certain that all priority issues could be included under the draft goals. In doing so, she consolidated the 9 draft goals into 5. Given the limited time available during the meeting to conduct a thorough review, it was decided that each member would review the document more carefully prior to the January meeting and that the development of draft goals and recommendations would be the primary focus of that meeting.

 Follow-up Action:

1. Each member will review draft goals developed by the Task Force and the consolidated goals and recommendations prepared by Maureen prior to the next meeting.

**Lifelong Fellows Project**

Emergency Winter Kits: Jason reviewed donations and grants used to purchase items for the winter kits that were distributed at the food pantry on December 7. Of the total 40 kits, approximately 20 were distributed at the food pantry or included in food pantry deliveries; another 4 kits will be delivered to food pantry patrons on December 14. In addition, several were shared with Fire & Rescue to be given out during emergency or wellness check calls; one will be given to a RideShare client; 4 to the local churches; and the remaining will stay at the Town Office. Maureen will maintain a list of the names and phone numbers of individuals who agreed to be called in several months to assess the usefulness of the kits.

Resource Directory: Mary reported that she and Maureen took a first cut of reviewing the Town’s old resource directory as well as those collected from other towns. Mary noted that decisions must still be made on the primary purpose of the resource directory and its scope. It is planned that a draft document will be prepared for Committee consideration at the February meeting. It was also noted that posting of the directory on the website will allow for it to evolve and be updated on an ongoing basis.

Coalition Building: Maureen reminded the Committee that the purpose of the Lifelong Fellows Project is to create a network of partners in town and locally who work with at-risk residents (such as the food pantry, fire & rescue, churches, RideShare and the Town) to share experiences, coordinate efforts and improve strategies for meeting the needs of residents who are helped by multiple sources. One theme of the Lifelong Fellows Project is to develop a No Wrong Door approach such that residents can reach out to any one of the coalition partners and have access to information about all available services. The winter kit project is a first step in reaching out to potential network partners for help in the distribution of the kits. In the coming months, the Committee will consider hosting a formal gathering of partners to begin building a coalition.

 Follow up Actions:

1. Jason will be the point person for requesting a winter kit and for ordering component parts as needed.
2. Mary and Maureen will prepare a draft Resource Directory for consideration at the February Committee meeting.
3. Jason. Peggy and Maureen will continue to work with Kathryn Harnish, the Town’s Fellow for this project, to review strategies used in other communities to build coalitions for serving at-risk residents.

**Updates**

Report to the Select Board: Members reviewed a draft report to be presented by Maureen at the December 13 Select Board meeting. Deb, a Select Board member, felt that it was important to use this forum to promote our activities not only to the Select Board but to those watching the meeting via streaming.

Medical Equipment Loan Program: Karen and Jason reported that a wheelchair, rollator and cane were distributed this past month. Currently no wheelchairs are available. The suggestion was made to post on Facebook a call for donations.

Luncheons: Barbara reported that the December was a success and that a meeting would be scheduled shortly to plan the January 12 and February 9 luncheons. Grace noted that a neighbor commented to her that the raffle had become very drawn out and may be better placed after the speaker. Karen agreed. It was also thought that fewer items would be a way to reduce the extensive time devoted to the raffle. Grace offered to do a Romance Fraud presentation in February. Maureen and Karen reported that Aga Smith, who recently completed the Mind Your Health series for Age Friendly, expressed interest in speaking on social isolation, relaxation tips, or other topics of interest.

 Follow up Actions:

1. Barbara will convey to the Luncheon sub-committee the recommendation to postpone the raffle until after the speaker/activity and to consider reducing the number of items to be raffled.
2. The Luncheon Sub-Committee will consider the recommendation for Grace and Aga to speak at a future luncheon.
3. The Luncheon Sub-Committee will review current inventories and alert Jason to the need for purchasing items for the luncheons.

Maine Center Challenge Grant: Maureen reported that the Maine Center on Aging will be publishing its Request for Proposals (RFP) in mid January to fund an age friendly project. Grants are usually in the $6-8,000 range. A zoom call is scheduled by the Maine Center to provide further details about the grant opportunity.

 Follow-up Action:

1. Jason, Peggy and Maureen will gather further information about the RFP for consideration by the Committee, hopefully at the January meeting.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:30 pm.

**Approved by:**

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| Peggy Muir, Co-Chair |  | Date |
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Maureen Booth, Co-Chair Date

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| Jason Lamoreau, Age-Friendly Coordinator |  | Date |