

ECOA Board Meeting Minutes
December 18, 2020
8:30am

Present: Rosemary Cunningham, Marvene O'Rourke, Heidi Boyd, John Dropick, Nancy Ignacio and Treasurer of the Friends of the ECOA, Janice Belisle; Administrator Lyndsay Famariss. **Absent:** Steve Miller

The meeting was called to order by Board chair Rosemary Cunningham at 8:34 am.

Approval of the Minutes

Rosemary asked if there were any amendments, questions or additions to the proposed minutes of November 20, 2020. Upon motion by Nancy Ignacio that was seconded by John Dropick, the minutes were accepted unanimously.

Budget:

Lyndsay brought to the Board's attention the line item entitled 'Miscellaneous Expenses' at the bottom of the YTD budget. Lyndsay explained that she researched this line item and found that this amount was a reflection of FY20 invoices that were paid in July 2020 in FY21, and that the town accountant created this line item for her accounting purposes. She noted that there is another line item for Miscellaneous Expenses that accurately reflects our spending and remaining funds in this category in FY21. Lyndsay informed the Board that she asked for a level funded budget for FY22, which was due a week prior, with one exception: building maintenance. In this category, she increased the amount asked for by \$3500 in order to capture the expense for hiring a cleaning company to tend to the Anchors' cleaning needs. She noted that some of the cleaning expenses may be picked up by COVID funds, but that is yet to be determined. There were no questions from board members regarding the budget.

Lyndsay reported that she had a conversation with Town Administrator James Hagerty in which he stated that he would veto any effort on behalf of the COA to request an expansion of the staff. He stated that the town's revenues are down, and that the town currently has a hiring freeze. He expressed that in the time of COVID especially, it is not appropriate to ask Edgartown residents to pay for an additional employee. Lyndsay explained that while this stance was disappointing, it is a reality of our time. James Hagerty expressed that the Town feels that the COA should be able to meet the demands of this position by restructuring existing staff members' responsibilities to cover these tasks, especially while our building is closed to the public. Lyndsay shared that she feels that Katie Vieira, who has been in the part-time assistant outreach worker position, has been an excellent addition to the staff and that Katie has expressed that she hopes to work in this position when the Formula Grant funds are once again available to the COA. Marvene asked for confirmation of Katie's ability to hold the position in January 2021, and Lyndsay confirmed that she has expressed an interest in the position for the winter 2021 and beyond.

Lyndsay shared that MCOA informed COAs that the Formula Grant is likely to be funded at \$9/person in 2022. This amount is a decrease from the \$12 per person that the ECOA has gotten for the last two years. Lyndsay shared that she welcomes input

and suggestions from the Board as to ways to approach this staffing issue, but that she is concerned that her using time to chase small grants to 'Bandaid' the salary needs is not an efficient use of her time, nor is it likely to be a feasible solution for the longer term.

Rosemary asked the Board to share any suggestions for possible solutions moving forward. There were no responses at this time.

Administrator's report:

The staff continues to use a remote working model and Lyndsay reviewed the schedule that the staff tries to follow. Lyndsay reported that the laptops purchased through COVID funds have not yet made it to the staff, but they are expected in the next few days. Lyndsay reported that the phone system continues to be challenging, with multiple days when the phones weren't working. She shared that the Town has yet to switch to a Comcast phone system.

Lyndsay shared that she has not been able to gather additional information regarding the request from June Schoppe of the MV Arts Association. Ms. Schoppe expressed an interest in renting the ECOA lawn space on July 17, 2021 for an event they are hosting. Ms. Schoppe was unable to meet about this topic due to medical reasons, but she and Lyndsay plan to talk in the New Year.

Lyndsay asked the Board to accept a \$500 donation from Sherry Cutler and Bob Donohue. John Dropick motioned to accept this donation, and Marvene O'Rourke seconded. The donation was unanimously accepted by the Board.

Lyndsay asked the Board to accept a \$37 check from the Stop & Shop Community Bag Program. John Dropick motioned to accept this donation, and Nancy Ignacio seconded. The donation was unanimously accepted by the Board.

John asked Lyndsay for the amount to pay the part-time Outreach assistant position. Lyndsay shared that we don't have the exact amount, because the Town Personnel Board has not yet weighed in on the grade and step that this position would fall under. This step in the process didn't occur because it lacked James Haggerty's support. Lyndsay offered that at the current rate of pay, for 20 hours a week, this position would cost about \$32,000 per year, plus benefits. But that the amount that it pays now is not necessarily what it will pay should the Town agree to add the position.

Marvene asked if the Town would allow another source of funding for a new position. Lyndsay responded that it is not clear if that is a viable option due to the Town's perception that by getting grant funding for a position, then asking the Town to make it permanent, the Town perceives this as going around their system. James Haggerty stated that he feels the voters should guide whether a position should become permanent, not the ECOA staff. Lyndsay stated that she plans to meet with people such as Dianne Durawa and Paul Mohair and others with experience who can weigh in on how to move forward and whether paths exist to pursue the addition of this position in the future.

Director of Senior Services Report

Meris reported that many residents received hot chocolate deliveries in recent weeks. Meris applauded Janice Belisle, Mary Gentle and Carolyn O'Day for the holiday cookies they made and that we distributed to Edgartown older adults. Janice shared that once the call to gather holiday cookies went out, she received such a large amount in response that they were able to distribute them to the COA, the Post Office, Stop & Shop, the pharmacy, Police Dept, Fire Dept, Library, Island Health Care, etc. Janice reported that they were able to show their appreciation to the many people working to keep the town running during the pandemic. Janice shared that it was the best, heartwarming holiday gift to see the strong response in the community.

Meris updated the Board on the proposed changes in the exercise program, including making a change with instructor Lisa Amols. Meris asked for the Board's suggestions for instructors in the community who have experience with chair-based exercise classes and classes geared to 80+ adults. Rosemary asked if the current challenges were financially driven, or content driven. Meris replied that both seem to be factors. Marvene suggested Martha Abbott as someone who might teach classes for the ECOA. Meris explained that while the ECOA is charging more than most COAs, but that the Friends have offered to pay \$26 per class to help defray the cost to participants.

Meris announced that Adele Dreyer is offering a holiday themed concert next week via Zoom. She shared that Jill Jupen has offered to facilitate a book club via Zoom, and that Jill intended to contact Jay Sigler about his interest.

Meris asked the Board for any feedback, and Rosemary applauded Meris' work in programming, and stated that she feels the direction she is going re: exercise programs is the right path to take.

Janice offered the suggestion of Katrin Juergen, an exercise instructor who teaches as Up Island COA for \$5 for a 30-minute class. Janice gave her strong endorsement for Katrin and her abilities. Meris reported that she would check in with Tanya at Up Island COA about this recommendation.

Outreach Report:

Outreach worker Victoria Haeselbarth joined the meeting to give her report. Victoria reported that both she and Katie Vieira offered offer 100 units of service to Edgartown older adults. She shared that she delivered amaryllis and paper white bulbs (donated by Steve Bernier of Cronigs Market) to our participants. She highlighted the value of seeing people in person, even from the safe distances that is required during COVID, as it often leads to requests for much-needed services and resources. Victoria shared that the Permanent Endowment of MV (now called the Martha's Vineyard Community Foundation, MVCF) is providing Island organizations with \$200,000 to support rental and utility assistance, medical transportation and childcare needs. Victoria reported that she feels this money will be a very helpful resource for some of our most vulnerable participants. Victoria stated that she is working on the Christmas meal delivery list, and that she looks forward to delivering Meals on Wheels meals on Christmas Day to some of our homebound and isolated residents. She shared that the Outreach staff made many calls to our residents to determine their storm preparedness in recent weeks. Victoria reported that the Edgartown Shellfish Dept offered to donate oysters to our

participants on a weekly basis to as many people as we can gather. Lyndsay added that the ECOA asked the MVCF for \$2700 in support- \$2500 to be used to purchase grocery gift cards and \$200 to pay for five annual VTA bus passes for residents in need.

Friends of the ECOA Report:

Janice Belisle reported that they continue to respond to requests from the ECOA for support for Edgartown residents.

Lyndsay expressed her sincere appreciation to Janice and the Friends for their continued moral and financial assistance. Lyndsay shared that she feels there will be a need to ask the Friends to help with the fuel needs of our participants this winter as the prolonged effects of the pandemic continue. Rosemary echoed Lyndsay's words of appreciation to Janice and added, "Janice, you are the gift that keeps on giving. Thank you for all you – and that organization does."

New Business:

Rosemary asked if there were any new business, to which there was no response.

Rosemary Cunningham adjourned the meeting at 9:31am.

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, January 15, 2021.