

AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 3, 2018
5:00 p.m.

ATTENDEES: Leroy Walker, Jason Levesque, Peter Crichton, Jan Biron, Belinda Gerry, Larry Pelletier, Frank Pippin, Alfreda Fournier, Jim Horn, Peter Ceprano, and Tizz Crowley

Speakers: Bill Post and Shawn Rice

Councilor Leroy Walker opened the meeting at 5:08 p.m.

He welcomed those who came out to our meeting. As a way to make the meeting less formal introductions were made by Councilor Walker as to who he knew have been attending our meetings on a more regular basis and had those new to our meeting for the 1st time give their names as a way to help them feel part of our group and we would also know who was speaking when they spoke.

He also mentioned that a few of our regular attendees couldn't make tonight's meeting.

The minutes were reviewed by all present and were accepted as written.

Next, he introduced our guest speakers starting with Mr. William Post, Town Manager from Bowdoinham, Maine, who would be speaking on Bowdoinham's Advisory Committee on Aging (ACOLA) and their Age Friendly Action Plan.

After Mr. Post's presentation we heard from Mr. Shawn Rice, a video lab teacher from Edward Little High School, whose field is technology/video/pictures in the television studio department.

Mr. Post started with a brief description of the Town of Bowdoinham which is a rural community with a population of about 2,889 people living in an area of 39.2 sq. miles.

In 2012, as part of their comprehensive planning process, there was a needs assessment done to measure the strengths and weaknesses of the community. The town wanted to find out what the needs of their community were and to make sure all residents, at any age and as they aged, could participate, if possible, be active and live in their residence as long as possible, as well as attract new residents and help them feel part of the community.

They also found that seniors who don't especially like that title need leadership (someone), a place to go to get information and for help when they require it. They don't usually turn up at the town hall or at their meetings. (Someone commented we have that issue too in Auburn.) The assessment indicated that a large part of their population are seniors and there was a lack of suitable housing and a need for more places for seniors to live, for them to be able to meet and socialize, attend activities, had limited to no public transportation (taxis), or affordable home repairs/chores services.

Since the Bowdoinham is small community there is no dedicated senior place. The question was asked if they could meet at a school and how many students were there? (It was also mentioned that we were working on trying to get high school students to do community service projects for a few of our seniors.)

The answer was that the schools are not locally run but were used on occasion when they partnered with the city for city events. There are about 300 students in kindergarten to high school.

In response to the assessment, the select board then established/appointed the advisory committee on aging (ACOA) whose mission is to provide advice and solutions to the select board and the town manager. This group has term limits and members serves for 3 years and can be reappointed for an additional term. They have a mission statement and are governed by by-laws.

The manager also hired a part-time person to coordinate older adult services and to advocate for older residents. She (Patricia Oh) also did the town's needs assessment and later went on to work in a similar position as a senior advocate for AARP.

Every available space is utilized based on the activity and room size needed to do a particular event. Events/activities then are held in local churches, the local library, fire station, art center, etc.

For instance, some of their activities are playing cribbage which started during the day and now they are also playing in the evening, playing card games like bridge, line dancing, playing pickle ball, doing yoga, etc. Last year, there was a garden group, and participated in tech time at the library taught by high school students. Once a month they also go to a local restaurant to hear a guest speaker, meet up with friends and enjoy a senior discounted meal.

Word about events is spread through flyers, by word of mouth and mailings because not everyone has a computer. They do try, when possible, to get the word out through emails as a cost saving measure.

With no local public transportation, a volunteer ride program was set up. Rides are provided to go to senior activities, shopping, doctor appointments, and wherever else is needed. A waiver of liability was drawn up to protect the driver. Riders are not asked to give a donation, but can, and some do, in the form of a gas reimbursement card.

To help with affordable small home repairs, install smoke alarms/sensors and change their batteries the Masons partnered up to form the handy-brigade.

The fire department and the local hardware store partnered up, as well. Donated pails were filled with sand and delivered by the fire department. It did several things – provided a safety check, gave seniors needed sand, it promoted the business and gave them the opportunity to volunteer and provide a service.

Larry Pelletier mentioned that Auburn's public works department does a similar thing – delivers sand and performs safety checks.

All programs, activities and services are done by volunteers, from high school students, to neighbors, to area businesses.

It was mentioned that some of our goals were to connect our community and/or do projects in a similar way as Bowdoinham is already doing – using volunteers across all age groups.

In 2014 Bowdoinham was the 1st community in Maine accepted in the world health organization global network of age friendly cities and communities. It was also asked to be and became one of three communities in the U.S. (Mr. Post mentioned D.C. was one and Switzerland was another one) and 13 communities worldwide participate in the WHO pilot of its Guide to Measuring the Age Friendliness of cities; A guide to core indicators. Mr. Post was also asked to speak at a big conference but couldn't attend and Ms. Oh went in his place.

Bowdoinham joined AARP 2015 and then later participated in an AARP challenge grant, several elevated garden beds were bought and placed in their community. Richmond & Bowdoin ordered them for \$70.00, 48" x 24", with legs. The Masons helped put them together for them.

Our city manager asked Mr. Post how much grant money they have received and used to date. Mr. Post responded under \$10,000.

Larry Pelletier asked if there was any cost for the city to join AARP Age Friendly Community and was told that there wasn't.

Mr. Post brought up Bowdoin's 250th anniversary that was celebrated in 2012. One of the founders had set up an account to go toward celebrating their milestones and it had accumulated a large sum of money.

Tizz. Crowley commented that our city manager should establish a similar trust for ours.

Mayor Levesque asked Mr. Post what guidance or recommendations he would suggest for us to move forward.

Mr. Post said to get community business support, do a needs assessment, conduct surveys and focus groups but not to just have meetings and expect them to come to us. It is also important that the Age Friendly groups go to various groups and meetings to get them on board. Originally their ACOLA spent about \$2,700.00.

Larry Pelletier said this could be a big challenge to get the word out to all age groups.

Tizz Crowley mentioned that Councilor Walker belongs to several groups and we could reach out to Lewiston to Seniors Plus. She suggested that the city could give \$2.00 a resident to Auburn's Age Friendly group for this.

Our city manager stated that the city is already giving money toward Auburn's Senior Communities.

Larry suggested we could possibly look for grant funding.

Mr. Post ended by saying to make their downtown and recreational area sites more assessable they added more handicapped spaces where none existed and also designated drop off spots.

Leroy introduced Shawn Rice who runs the TV Station/recording studio at Edward Little High School and teaches students how to work with electronic media.

Mr. Rice started by saying he was excited to be asked by Jim Horn for some of his students, as part of their community service day, to participate in videotaping stories of several of our seniors and helping preserve their memories. It's important to record and connect live history and the importance it instills in hearts and minds.

Phil Larlee from Great Falls TV has been helping him and the school with the upgrades they needed in their studio.

Mr. Rice teaches students to be comfortable with cameras as they perform their job assignments.

His students have video recorded high-end events at the community center and have done school sporting events to name some of their projects.

Councilor Fournier said we need to come up with questions to be asked of those who are videotaped.

Jan Biron stated that Lucy Cowles will be 102 in May and that her daughter is putting together questions for when they go to her home to interview her.

Larry Pelletier said he wishes he could have had his father, who worked in the shoe industry and his uncle who made bedspreads, recorded before they passed.

Tizz Crowley mentioned that it is too bad a family tree documenting the life of Irving Issacson couldn't be done.

Councilor Fournier added that the Morin family of Morin's Brickyard would also make a good story.

Mr. Rice told of a recording that happened not too long ago of Dr. Goldberg's experience of coming to America. The person recording was instructed to put the camera off to the side to capture the experience and the essence of the person as he was telling his story, as well as the story.

Logistics: The high school's community service day is only 4 hours long.
 Number of (seniors) those to be taped,
 Taping location.
 Student transportation.

Adjournment: 6:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:
 Belinda Gerry (in the absence of Jan Biron)