

Association for the Relief of Aged Women
Minutes of the 156th Annual Meeting | April 27, 2023

President Jane Stankiewicz called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM.

Current Board Members in Attendance: Gale Beaton, Deborah Brooke, Gloria deSa, Mary Ellis, Diane Laflamme, Leah Macomber, Pamela McKnight, Angela Natho, Roseanne O'Connell, Rosemary Saber, Jane Stankiewicz. **Members Absent:** Cathy Mayall.

Also present: Past ARAW Board Members: Jeannette Doyle, Mary Ellen, Gillian Harris, Lees, Nancy Kurtz and Pamela Sherman; Representatives from FY24 Community Partners: Jan Baptist of Cape Verdean Association in New Bedford, Andy Pollock of Coastal Neighbors Network, Laura Campbell of New Bedford Fishing Heritage Center, Andy Pollock representing South Coast LGBTQ+ Network, Christopher Oldi, Gavin Bates, Raquel Antonio & Victoria Gautney of South Coastal Counties Legal Services, Andrea Lemos & Susan Rothier of Westport Council on Aging, and Blair Taylor & Emma York of Zeiterion Theatre. Investment Advisory Committee Member: Kathleen McQuiggan; Bank of America advisor: Meg Bennett; ARAW staff: Executive Director Clare Healy Foley, ARAW Beneficiary Advocates Patricia Midurski and Ana Paz.

Welcome: President Jane Stankiewicz

Recognition of history of ARAW read by: Vice President and Legacy Chair Diane Laflamme.

Report of the Clerk: The minutes of the 155th Annual Meeting, April 28, 2022 approved as written. SO VOTED

Moment of Silence: Beneficiary Chair Pamela McKnight read the names of beneficiaries, former board members and staff who we lost during FY23, followed by a moment of silence: Dorothy Alfonso, Irene Almas, Maria Amaral, Josephine Andrade, Lois Augustine, Jean Bennett, Pauline Benoit, Elizabeth Brinkerhoff, Frances Devlin, Lucille Duquette, Sandra Fogg, Margaret Galley, Amelia Gomes, Melba Gordon, Elena Guba, Barbara Holden, Kathleen Jennings, Betty Ann Livramento, Shirley Mendonca, Joanne Methia, Bebe Oliveira, Sharon O'Malley,

Lorraine Perry, Laura Roy, Maria Ruas, Madeline Sinclair, Lucinda Snow, Rae Sousa, and Isaura “Hazel” Souza.

Recommendation of the Treasurer: A motion was made to approve the preliminary FY23 year-end financial report. SO VOTED

President’s Remarks of Appreciation: Jane Stankiewicz

1. Welcomed everyone to the 156th Annual Meeting and emphasized that our values and mission remain unchanged.
2. Articulated how rising rents and other challenges are making it more difficult for women already struggling to age in place.
3. Expressed thanks to the members of each of our committees including a special thanks to our consultants, Cahners and Donahue
4. Thanked all board members and singled out these individuals:
 - a. Clare Healy Foley, our Executive Director, for her vision and leadership
 - b. Jenny Costa, our Office Administrator, who keeps us organized
 - c. Pat Midurski and Ana Paz who work tirelessly as beneficiary advocates
5. The following Board members were thanked with a gift of appreciation
 - a. 3 board members who have stepped down from the organization: Jeannette Doyle, JoAnn Beaulieu and Shannon Bachman
 - b. Debbie Brooke, who is stepping down as Chair of Governance
 - c. Gale Beaton, who is stepping down as Clerk and becoming Chair of Governance
6. Emphasized that “not alms alone, but a friend” is a principle that lives on.
7. Expressed confidence that we can continue to meet the challenges ahead and support the growing needs of the needy, elderly women in our community.

Report of Beneficiary Committee: Chair Pamela McKnight reported:

1. FY23 Achievements
 - a. Committee reviewed 247 new requests, 131 annual updates, and 27 applications for FLO (20% increase in applications since last year)
 - b. Fortunate to have in-house Beneficiary Advocates.
 - c. Every attempt made not to provide support that is already available in community assisting applicants navigating other community resources.
 - d. Trends affecting ARAW population:

- Increase cost in essentials
 - Increase house instability
 - Younger applicants (60-75)
2. Goals for FY24
 - a. Ensure that we are prepared to meet the growing number of elderly women in need in our community.
 - b. Increase direct support by 15% per year.
 - c. Refine committee application review process to handle more requests on a monthly basis.
 - d. Educate ourselves on issues facing our ARAW community.

Report of Executive Director: Executive Director Clare Healy Foley reported:

1. Worked with 408 women in a year of economic uncertainty, steep inflation, a housing crisis and post-pandemic adjustments
 - a. More visible in the community through the support we provide to our beneficiaries, the collaborative work of our Beneficiary Advocates, partnerships with our grantees and intentional community engagement efforts, we continue to see an organic increase in referrals
 - b. Westport Council of Aging is the only remaining external outreach partner – thank you
 - c. In July Ana Paz was hired as a full-time Beneficiary Advocate – speaks Portuguese, deep appreciation for Portuguese population, critical thinker, hard worker’ tempered by her compassion and empathy
 - d. Special thanks to Pat Midurski – excels at job, training both new employees, shouldering more than her fair share of the workload as we transitioned, invaluable shares her expertise and knowledge
 - e. Increasingly complicated case with increased cases of: women facing unsustainable situations either by circumstance or a resistance to solutions presented; considerable credit card debt; distortion of or refusal to provide complete information pertaining to financial situation; long wait lists for housing; mental health issues; perception that ARAW is an entitlement program (especially amongst our younger beneficiaries).
2. Second year of the Community Partner Grant – 10 community partners.
 - a. High value on grant follow-through and partnership.

- b. Some partners wrestled with execution, grant management or program participation.
 - c. Most successful partners those willing to communicate, learn, reflect, evolve and sometimes completely pivot
3. *Going with the FLO* newsletter communicates Community Partner programs and essential information, benefits or valuable community initiatives
4. ARAW's office moved from 432 County Street to 174 Union Street in July; historical relevance and modern-day conveniences – great view!
5. Community engagement efforts: identification and building of relationships, becoming better known and understood; a significant increase in referrals from a variety of sources.
6. We all rely on Jenny Costa's invaluable skills and attributes to keep us on track and help ensure the highest level of quality assurance
 - a. promoted from Office Administrator to Director of Data, Administration and Quality Assurance was made at the end of this fiscal year
7. Increase in philanthropic contributions
 - a. due to "our story" getting out and people wanting to be a part of it
 - b. significant outpouring of appreciation for our beloved former staff member, honored and deeply humbled upon Sharon O'Malley death in January, the family chose to direct memorial gifts to ARAW.
 - c. in March surprise bequest specifics and hope in the coming fiscal year.
8. A privilege to work with you all; honored to play a part in the important mission of the ARAW.

Report of Finance Committee: Chair Mary Ellis reported:

1. FY23 Achievements
 - a. Achieved goal of getting new office space.
 - b. Working on portfolio sustainability with:
 - Investment Advisory Committee
 - Bank of America fund management
2. FY24 Goals
 - a. Modify Executive Director's Discretionary Fund Policy.
 - b. Develop a Spending Control Policy.
 - c. Monitor spending in conjunction with Beneficiary Committee.

Report of Governance Committee: Chair Debbie Brooke reported:

1. Ensured board operating at optimum levels.
2. Assured all board members are feeling supported, heard and fulfilled.
3. Revised By-Laws and Constitution in addition to creating several Member Guideline documents.
4. After completion of three-year Strategic Plan now in the final process of developing Strategic Plan for the next three years.

Report of Grants Committee: Chair Rosemary Saber reported:

1. Since providing grants is still relatively new process, critiquing and managing process continues with expectations that partners will provide referrals to ARAW.
2. Goals for FY24 identifying those organizations who will:
 - a. Promote financial stability and provide life strategies.
 - b. Provide opportunities to combat loneliness and isolation.
 - c. Establish safety and stability opportunities to foster optimal health and wellbeing

Report of Legacy Committee: Diane Laflamme reported:

1. Proud to carry on Rachel Howland's plan to preserve her legacy.
2. Have been sorting and will continue to sort through documents to determine materials needed to record our history.
3. Began and will continue to interview former Board Members of ARAW to record their recollections of their ARAW experience.
4. Determined that the preservation of ARAW legacy will continue under the aegis of a Legacy Task Force then duties picked up by Governance Committee which will be voted on at next Board Meeting.

Report of Personnel Committee: Chair Angela Natho reported:

1. Reviewed history of development of Personnel Committee.
2. Believe that ARAW is a fair and equitable organization and that we are rewarded with outstanding and dedicated staff that represent our vision and values.
3. Extensive work on personnel handbook thanks to Clare's knowledge and tireless research.
4. FY23 worked on health insurance and paid medical leave policies.
5. FY24 will work with Finance Committee to propose personnel budget.

Recommendation of the Governance Committee: Governance Chair Debbie Brooke presented the FY24 Slate of Officers, Committee Chairs and Committee Members.

A motion to accept the Slate of Officers, Committee Chairs and Committee Members for FY24 was made. SO VOTED

FY23 Community Partners' Remarks: Brief presentations were given by Cape Verdean Association in New Bedford, Coastal Neighbors Network, New Bedford Fishing Heritage Center, South Coast LGBTQ+ Network, South Coastal Counties Legal Services, Westport Council on Aging, and Zeiterion Theatre.

There being no further business, the Annual Meeting adjourned at 4:20pm.

Recorded by, Gale Beaton, Clerk

