

**Association for the Relief of Aged Women
Minutes of the Regular Monthly Meeting
September 14, 2023**

President Jane Stankiewicz called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM.

Members in Attendance: Beaton, Brooke, deSa, Laflamme, Macomber, Mayall, McKnight, Natho, Saber, and Stankiewicz.

Staff in attendance: Executive Director Clare Healy Foley.

Members excused: All present.

Moment of Silence: All present had a moment of silence for the women lost since our last meeting:

1. Beatrice St. Ours, beneficiary, who died at the end of July. She was a 95 year old Westport resident who had been with ARAW since 2010. We provided BCBS, cleaner & EPERS. Enjoyed word searches, puzzles, Danielle Steele novels and walking at the mall.
2. Mary Ellis, member of the board of directors since 2018 and treasurer since 2020. She was a committed Board member who challenged us to grow and always do what was best for our beneficiaries. Executive director Clare Foley read a sampling of the messages of sympathy received.

Reflective Moment: Leah Macomber read the poem “Remember Joy” in memory of our departed member Mary Ellis.

Don't grieve for me, for now I'm free,
I'm following paths God made for me
I took his hand I heard him call
Then turned, and bid farewell to all

I could not stay another day
To laugh, to love, to sing, to play
Tasks left undone must stay that way
I found my peace... at close of play

And if my parting left a void
Then fill it with remembered joy
A friendship shared, a laugh, a kiss
Ah yes, these things I too will miss.

Be not burdened... deep with sorrow
I wish you sunshine of tomorrow

My life's been full
I've savoured much
Good friends, good times
A loved one's touch

Perhaps my time seemed all too brief
Don't lengthen it now with grief
Lift up your hearts and share with me,
God wants me now...
He set me free.

Anonymous

President's Report: Jane Stankiewicz reported:

1. A motion was made to approve minutes of the July 13, 2023 board meeting as distributed. SO VOTED.
2. The Executive Committee met on August 11 to discuss the filling of the role of treasurer, left vacant by the untimely death of Mary Ellis. At the meeting, the committee passed a motion to recommend Cathy Mayall for the office of Treasurer, pending a formal nomination by the Governance Committee.
3. Board member check-ins will take place in October.

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

1. Activity sheets and BA reports
 - Reflect the depth of engagement and the complexity of the cases.
 - Ana Paz is becoming very good at finding resources for beneficiaries.
2. Financial Empowerment
 - The Zeiterion alerted us to a promising financial literacy series.
 - Organized through the United Way and the Office of Economic Empowerment
 - BayCoast Bank will be presenting three workshops in October.
 - Twelve women have already signed up.
3. Social activities for beneficiaries – hostess opportunities available
 - September 28: Guided visit to Blazing Saddles Animal Sanctuary in Fairhaven.
 - September 22: Luncheon at the Wamsutta Club. Rosemary Saber and Leah Macomber have volunteered to host.
4. Donations in memory of Mary Ellis
 - Over \$2,700 have been received.
5. Staffing update
 - Pat Midurski will continue working at ARAW on a part-time basis, 20h/week.
 - New beneficiary advocate position put on hold for now.
6. Beneficiary highlight

- Shauneen Burke, age 66, lives in New Bedford.
- Unhappy with Board's decision not to pay her credit card bills.
- Blamed our delay for incurring interest. Submitted letter to committee on her own behalf.
- Multiple conversations with Pat, her BA, and ED explaining actions/choices have consequences.
- Found funds to pay off \$1,000 balance and charged almost \$1,300 to cards in meantime.
- Unhappy with ARAW's policy of not allowing unvaccinated persons to attend its social events.

Report of the Finance Committee: Cathy Mayall reported:

- Cathy Mayall reported that she is still learning the ropes and accepted the position of chair based on Mary Ellis' encouragement.
- The minutes of the July 11 Finance Committee regular meeting, and the committee's meeting with the Bank of America and the Investment Advisory Committee on July 26 were emailed to all board members. No questions were raised.
- As previously agreed, finance reports for Board review will now be submitted quarterly.

Report of the Visiting Committee:

1. Visiting report by Pam McKnight about beneficiary Leila Charbonneau.
 - Friendly 79-year-old widow living in own home in New Bedford.
 - Has two adult sons who live abroad.
 - Has been receiving ongoing support with cable and Internet for many years.
 - Recently asked for help with car repair bill after paying for it with money borrowed from a friend, instead of asking for prior approval.
 - Pam pointed out how difficult it is to combine the role of being a friend to our beneficiaries while, at the same time, being involved in decisions about their requests for financial help. This is especially difficult when the information shared as a friend may differ from that submitted in formal requests by the beneficiary advocate.
2. A new sign-up sheet for upcoming reporting was circulated.

Report of the Visiting Committee: Chair Pam McKnight reported:

1. A motion was made to accept the decisions of the Beneficiary Committee as distributed. SO VOTED.
2. New beneficiary highlight: Cynthia Smith.
 - Very private and proud 87-year-old widow with several serious health issues.

- Referred by her car mechanic when she could not pay for the replacement of her breaks.
- Although Cynthia and her late husband were frugal and saved for retirement through the husband's pension program, they lost their savings when the company went bankrupt.
- Husband used to take care of all financial matters. Since he died, Cynthia has been putting most of her expenses on credit cards because she is too embarrassed to ask for government assistance.
- The Beneficiary Committee approved about \$1,500 for breaks.
- BA referred Cynthia to ACCS for financial advice.

Report of the Governance Committee: Chair Gale Beaton reported:

1. A motion was made to have Cathy Mayall assume the role of Treasurer. SO VOTED.
2. A motion was made to invite Linda Garibaldi to join the ARAW board. SO VOTED.
3. Debbie Brooke will take on the task of being Linda Garibaldi board mentor.
4. Reminders:
 - a. Update your ARAW Board manual. Schedule an appointment with Clare if you need assistance.
 - b. Keep track of time spent on Board and committee work until the November board meeting.
5. ARAW party initially planned for the summer will take place around the holidays.

Report of the Grants Committee: Chair Rosemary Saber reported:

1. The committee met on September 12 to review Q2 reports from Community Partners. Here are some of the insights/concerns and successes that came up during the meeting:
 - Grant receivers should use the ARAW newsletter to inform our beneficiaries of the programs and services.
 - Having a clear sense of who is in charge of the implementation of the programs for each grant is helpful.
 - Concerns regarding DEAF Inc implementation and reporting.
 - SCCLS is finally working well with us. They are transparent in their reporting and conducted an in-service on housing issues for our staff and Beneficiary Advocates. Plans for beneficiary education session in the future.

Report of the Friendship Taskforce: Chair Debbie Brooke reported:

1. Nothing to report. The taskforce will have its first meeting on September 22 at 9:30 a.m.

Report of the Legacy Taskforce: Chair Diane LaFlamme reported:

1. Nothing to report.

Other Business:

1. Building updates

- Roof leak damaged some materials in our supply closet. No insurance claim was filed since the cost of replacing the damaged items was approximately the \$500 deductible.
- Elevator problems continue.
- ARAW will be assigned its own bathroom. New tenant across the hall will have the second bathroom.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:55 AM.

Respectfully submitted by
M. Gloria de Sá, clerk
September 28, 2023