



Minutes of Town of Andover
Council on Aging Board Advisory Board
Virtual Meeting via Webex Link
August 13, 2020 at 8:30 am

The Council on Aging Advisory Board met in regular session on Thursday, August 13, 2020 via Webex. Chair Paul MacKay called the meeting to order at 8:30 am and roll call was taken.

PRESENT: Molly Bicking, Tana Goldberg, Louise Hadad, Jeff Kaplan, Joan Kleger, Paul MacKay, Fran Walker McGuinness, Thomas Rando, Kimberly Rainen, Jane Burns

ABSENT: Joan Fox, Judy Treretola

GUESTS: Jane Gifun, Dot Hollenbeck, Bev Oliver, Genee Morrissey, Jemma Lambert, Ashley English, Patty McCloskey, Shawna McCloskey, Kristine Arakelian.

Paul added to the Agenda a Public Comment section which will be open after the Council on Aging Advisory Board discusses the SCRPT program recommendations for FY21. Paul reported that he had been asked by a Council on Aging Advisory board member if another board member could cast a proxy vote on their behalf. Town counsel advised that proxy voting is not allowed.

SCRPT PROGRAM – Jane Burns and Ashley English

Jane and Ashley presented the SCRPT program recommendations for FY21 based on the current situation due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This presentation included a PowerPoint which Jane shared with the audience. Many SCRPT jobs have been lost and Ashley compared the breakdown of SCRPT jobs in FY20 to FY21. Currently 39 core positions remain, which include meals on wheels drivers, medical transportation drivers, social day program volunteers and kitchen workers. The FY21 recommendation is that the program be limited to 100 SCRPT workers and that 75 of the 175 people who have signed up for the program in FY21 be suspended. The following FY21 recommendations were discussed as criteria to be accepted into the program and guidelines of the SCRPT program:

- Income limit of \$75,000 per person or \$90,000 per couple, same as the Circuit Breaker Abatement. Also recommended an asset limit of \$200,000 (not including primary Andover residence).
 - Adjustments will be considered for those with excessive medical expenses or necessary home repairs and modifications.
- Participation record of a minimum of ten years.
- Currently serving in one of the core positions. Those participants who have worked during the Pandemic would remain in the SCRPT program even if they do not meet the above mentioned qualification criteria.
- Investigate creation of a SCRPT Hours Bank. This would facilitate making someone's abatement whole who falls short of hours at the end of the program. This may be due to a health crisis or lack of work.



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- If things turn around with the pandemic and more positions become available, suspended workers would be reinstated.

These changes are being recommended due to the impact on the program opportunities due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Jane stated that if we were not in the situation we would not be looking to make any of these changes. Jane concluded her presentation with how different our world is today and how it has affected all of our programs. Paul opened the meeting for questions from the Council.

The following questions and comments were discussed with Council on Aging board members:

- Will there be income limits in future years?
 - Jane responded that Elder Services are looking to make these changes only for this year during the pandemic and will look at next year's requirements in the Spring of 2021.
- Why has the program not had income limits previously and is there any thought of suspending the program this year?
 - Jane replied that Elder Services relies heavily on its volunteers for many programs and it would be a terrible hardship if it had no volunteers at all.
- Is the driving factor the tax revenue break or the number of positions to be filled?
 - Jemma responded that the tax abatement is not the driving factor and the Town stands behind this program 100%. Jemma stated that there are not enough placements right now due to town buildings remaining closed to the public and schools in flux.
- A concern was stated that the temporary reduction might become permanent. Once you give something up, it's always hard to get it back.
 - Jemma's response was that if the Board feels strongly about going back to the original parameters, they could include that in their Motion/Vote and Jemma would support it.
- Can someone who does not meet the income requirement continue to volunteer?
 - We will continue to welcome volunteers that do not qualify for SCRPT.
- Volunteers benefit in other ways than just the tax abatement.
- Will new applications going to be issued? If not, how does the town justify disseminating confidential information that was submitted to them for another program?
 - Jane responded that the financial information will be held in strict confidence.
- Will this be a permanent change in the structure of the program without voting on it at Town Meeting?
 - As previously mentioned, we are only looking at this year and will look at next fiscal year in the Spring. Jane and Jemma are trying to get clarification of who has authority over this program. Jane has begun investigating the concept of a SCRPT Hours Bank. The Town Assessor feels that is similar to a Proxy worker, which may need Town Meeting approval. This is in early investigation.



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- If the funding is available and the positions are not there, can we decrease the number of hours required at a higher hourly rate.
 - Ashley explained that the program is capped at the state minimum wage and we adjust the hours as the minimum wage changes. Paul does not think there is an option to pay a higher rate than minimum wage.
- When would the changes go into place?
 - Jane responded that we will see the results of today's COA meeting, then it will go to the Select Board on Monday, August 17, 2020. Jane and Jemma will present the Council on Aging Board's recommendation to the Select Board on Monday evening. Jane explained that we are dealing with this now instead of waiting until May when folks haven't met their hours. Paul added that things are not going back to normal and we need to address this soon. Addressing this issue as early as we can is the most appropriate thing to do.

The following questions/comments were made by members of the public:

- Jane Gifun, 9 Castle Heights Road, stated that Andover seniors would not want their neighbors to know their financial situation and she would not want to see SCRPT workers stigmatized by having financial difficulties. Jane is also concerned about Elder Services program leaders being covered under the town insurance if they are not SCRPT workers. Would volunteers be covered under the town's insurance?
 - Jane Burns believes a volunteer leading a group such as the WOAG would be representing Elder Services and would be covered by the town's insurance. Jane will look into this and provide confirmation. There was discussion of other communities who have SCRPT workers and volunteers working side by side. Jane and Ashley will reach out to the SCRPT workers who are already working individually.
- Genee Morrissey, 11 Cherrywood Circle, is concerned about the SCRPT workers not getting their 86.25 hours.
 - Jane Burns explained that the small jobs (onesie, twosie jobs) that won't get you to 86.25 hours would be offered to those who need to finish their hours. Once you are in the SCRPT program, these jobs will be offered to you to level the playing field.

MOTION:

Molly made a motion that:

The Council on Aging adopt the recommendations of the Director of Elder Services and Volunteer Coordinator in modifying the FY21 SCRPT Program to limit the number of available positions and implement income guidelines and a longevity clause in response to the COVID-19



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pandemic. Furthermore, the Council on Aging requests the Elder Services Director to investigate the establishment of a SCRPT Hours Bank.

Kim seconded the motion; roll call was taken; motion passed unanimously 9-0.

Jemma would entertain a statement by the Council on Aging that if the Council feels strongly that the program be returned to normal, they could make a motion. Tana responded that she did not think we needed to make that motion right now and to wait to see what the new normal will be.

NEXT MEETING: September 10, 2020 at 8:30 am

ADJOURNMENT

ADJOURN: Kim made a motion to adjourn at 9:55 am; Tom seconded the motion; roll call was taken; motion carried unanimously 9-0.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:55 am

Respectfully submitted,
Christine M. Marshall, Office Assistant