

**Minutes of the Ridgefield Commission on Aging (“CoA”) Meeting  
March 15, 2024, 2:30 pm, Large Conference Room, Town Hall**

The meeting was called to order at 2:30 pm. Commissioners Bancel, Beebe, Culhane, Saleeby, Ternullo, Tewes, and Yaffa were present. Commissioner Martin had an out of state commitment and was excused.

As the **1<sup>st</sup> order of business**, Mr. Ternullo invited public comment. There was none.

As the **2<sup>nd</sup> order of business**, Mr. Bancel moved that the 3/18/24 CoA minutes be approved. Mr. Tewes seconded. There being no discussion, a vote followed. The minutes were unanimously approved.

As the **3<sup>rd</sup> order of business**, progress reports on the CoA’s 2024 goals were provided as follows:

Goal	Description	Lead	Report
1.	Collaborate with Fire Department to distribute File of Life to requesting residents, explore ways CoA can assist in creating awareness of and participation in FD’s safety initiatives, and invite Chief to present at a Senior Voices forum.	Yaffa	<b>IN PROCESS:</b> 5/2/24 File of life meeting with Fire Chief has been scheduled. Fire Chief will present at June Senior Voices.
2.	Write to SB to express support for a cost-of-living adjustment for all elderly-related tax credits, tax deferments and renter abatements and offer to engage in primary research needed and appear before the SB in further support.	Ternullo	<b>COMPLETED earlier this year.</b> Included here only for informational flow re status of all goal
3.	Explore whether CoA is the proper organization to identify senior citizen behavioral health needs and coordinate municipal programs re same.	Ternullo	<b>COMPLETED:</b> Report sent to 1 <sup>st</sup> Selectperson last month will be present report to Selectboard on 4/24/2024.
4.	Grow CoA’s email list and develop a recurring CoA communication plan	Yaffa	<b>COMPLETED:</b> Ms. Yaffa moved for approval of communication plan below. Ms. Saleeby seconded. After discussion, the plan was unanimously adopted.
5.	Activate a CoA grants program	Ternullo	<b>IN PROCESS:</b> Mr. Ternullo summarized progress and stated that a full report will be presented at next month.
6.	With Commissioner Tewes as editor- in-chief, explore expanding the Senior Directory to a revenue generating	Tewes	<b>IN PROCESS:</b> Mr. Tewes presented his vision of possibilities, which was well received. This will be discussed in greater detail next month.
7.	Adopt and grow Gold Card Program	Martin	<b>COMPLETED:</b> Ms. Saleeby distributed a new brochure listing participating merchants and referenced the Gold Card tab now on the CoA’ website.
8.	Launch an awards program celebrating excellence and commitment to serving seniors	Beebe/ Culhane	<b>IN PROCESS:</b> Ms. Beebe introduced Stephen Bartkus, Ridgefield Historical Society Executive Director and moved to approve the motion below. Ms. Culhane seconded. Following robust discussion, it passed unanimously.
9.	Explore the feasibility of CoA authoring a book on high performing CoA’s	Ternullo	<b>DROPPED:</b> earlier this year. Included here for info flow re status of all goal

Ms. Beebe’s Award Program Motion:

*“I move that the Commission on Aging, led by Ms. Beebe and Ms. Culhane, explore in earnest over the next 150 days, the feasibility of collaborating with the Historical Society to launch a Ridgefield Hall of Fame, whose purpose would be to recognize and celebrate those current and past individuals who have made significant contributions to our community and to society-at-large, and that Ms. Beebe and Ms. Culhane present at the COA’s 9/24 meeting a business plan, including a funding component and induction criterial, or a report why it is not a feasible concept.”*

As the **4<sup>th</sup> order of business**, Mr. Ternullo moved that Rutvi Vohra, a student who raised funds recently for CoA’s food insecurity funding priority, be appointed CoA student liaison. Ms. Yaffa seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

As the **5<sup>th</sup> order of business**, to comply with recent Charter changes that reduced CoA commissioner terms from 3 years to two years and staggering the terms (5 expire in odd years and 4 expire in even years), the CoA unanimously

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directed Mr. Ternullo to advise the First Selectperson that full compliance can be achieved by changing Ms. Saleeby’s current expiration term from 4/1/2026 to 4/1/2025 and that current vacancy also expire on 4/1/2025

As the **6<sup>th</sup> order of business relating to new business**, Ms. Beebe called for a vote, subject to full compliance with the Town’s Human Resource Department requirements, to accept the Goldstone Family Foundation offer to provide an intern and related funding to the CoA. Ms. Yaffa seconded. It was recommended that the intern work under the direction of Mr. Tewes (focusing on Goal 6) and Mr. Ternullo (focusing on Goal 5) as these should aid in the development of the intern’s competitive job skills. The motion, with the recommendation, passed unanimously.

The **7<sup>th</sup> order of business** was informational regarding future dates. No discussion occurred.

There being no other business, Ms. Saleeby called for adjournment. Mr. Tewes seconded. The motion to adjourn was unanimously approved at 4:27 pm.

The above is a true and accurate summary of the CoA 4/15/24 meeting. - Joseph Ternullo, Acting Secretary

**CoA Communication Plan** (unanimously approved 4/15/2024)

Goal: Establish better communication with seniors and senior caregivers

Methods: There are four principal methods through which the CoA intends to build upon its current communication with seniors and their caregivers:

- (i) Maintaining a current and timely website ([ridgefieldct.gov/coa](http://ridgefieldct.gov/coa))
- (ii) Centralizing our recurring communication through the Inside TownHall weekly newsletter emailed to Ridgefield residents on Friday of each week
- (iii) Continuing our Library/CoA *Senior Voices* forum
- (iv) Maintaining a designated display area at Town Hall for CoA informational resources for seniors

Email Acquisition Campaign:

Through the survey administered in the fall of 2023 and through the Gold Card sign up process, CoA already has hundreds of email addresses.

Because CoA’s primary mode of recurring communication will be via the TownHall weekly newsletter, we will continue to coordinate periodic email acquisition campaigns. This may include sending postcards to residents that invite them to sign up for Inside TownHall and asking others who serve Ridgefield seniors to help us get the word out.