

**PAXTON COA MEETING
JOHN BAUER SENIOR CENTER
17 West Street
SEPTEMBER 7, 2022**

Meeting called to order by Anita Fenton, Chairman at 9:30 a.m.

Present (Members): Joan Bedard, Robert Callahan, Alice Crowley, Donmarie Desrosiers, Anita Fenton, Curtis Hammar, Frank LaFlash, Kathryn Mahoney, Jim Putnam, **(Associate Members):** Martha Akstin, Natalie Siemen, **Others:** Cindy Love, Gail Hayes, Judy Taylor, Phyllis Callahan, Dick Bedard, Bill Cutroni, Carol Cutroni, Bob Wilby, Ron Johnson, Melinda Johnson

Minutes: Accepted August 3, 2022 minutes by unanimous voice vote.

Treasurer's Report: Accepted as read by unanimous voice vote.

Treasurer's Report on file at the COA office, John Bauer Senior Center

Chairman's Report

- (1) Request for help – volunteers needed: Set-up chairs, put away chairs, folding newsletters and delivering them to the Post Office, etc, (2) Garden Club decorating.

New Business

- (1) Discussion of Bus Trips: Not getting in newsletter, no room in newsletter, much discussion, will be on October's Agenda for more discussion and a vote. A copy of the letter submitted to the board by Bob Wilby is attached.

Next meeting: October 5, 2022

Meeting adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Joan Bedard, Secretary

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September 7, 2022

Members of the Paxton Council on Aging Board
Director Cindy Love

When I approached Jerry Ryan some 10 years ago, I wanted to institute bus trips for Paxton Seniors. Over these ten years we have taken many wonderful day trips to Massachusetts, Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, our numbers of Paxton Residents travelling on the bus trips has fallen off. I will give some ideas as to why.

First, here are our numbers:

2022- so far 161 area residents are signed up but only 33 are from Paxton- 20%; the rest were from surrounding towns.

2021- we completed only 3 trips rather than typical 8, due to COVID-19. Thirty-seven Paxton Seniors signed up- 24%. The rest were from surrounding towns.

2019- we had 86 Paxton Seniors signed up-49%, the rest from surrounding towns.

2018- we had 89 Paxton Seniors signed up-48% , the rest from surrounding towns.

2017- we had 54 Paxton Seniors signed up- 42%,the rest from surrounding towns.

I have tried to offer 8 trips a year, one a month, starting in April through December. Some trips have sold and others have flopped. I have tried to offer a service to our seniors. Most of our travelers are repeaters who love the trips and look forward to them.

Over the years, I have produced revenue for the Friends of Paxton COA. This year there are no profits as the trips are run through Wilson Bus Lines. This money has helped pay for many COA events, most recently, the 2022 annual picnic.

Now come my concerns and reasons for the low turnout.

Why has the number of Paxton Residents traveling with us diminished on these one-day trips?

Is it age as the Senior Center doesn't seem to attract the younger seniors? Many of our former travelers have lost a spouse, and have an illness or they have aged to the point of being unable to travel.

Cost- I get concerned as the cost of the trip increases as fuel, restaurant food and services keep increasing. We could find cheaper restaurants, like McDonald's, but our travelers want nice quality restaurants. They seem to appreciate and frequently comment on our choices of restaurants.

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Communication: In May 2021, Cindy Love ceased to put our trips in the newsletter due to the fear of a COVID-19 breakout following a trip and the COA being sued. The newsletter now has a couple lines referring my trips to me. Many seniors have mentioned to me that the newsletter is only way that they receive information about trips. The newsletter is how the COA gets the word out about its programs. The seniors do read it and come to many events each month. In fact, each month, I personally mail out 45 newsletters to out-of-town seniors who each pay a membership to FOCCA of \$5.00. They want to know what events the Senior Center is offering, including our bus trips.

Now comes an additional obstacle in attracting Seniors who want to travel on our bus trips. The Landmark is ceasing publication on September 15th. I do use the New Leader Press in Spencer to attract Seniors, but Paxton seniors do not see the articles.

My problem: No Senior Newsletter, No Landmark, how do we run the trips as Wilson requires a minimum of 40 passengers. I do use the Town website, run by Scott Wilson.

Finally, I am asking the COA board to ask Mrs. Love to reinstate having space in the newsletter for our trips.

Paxton and other area seniors want these trips. Other area seniors groups have resumed their trips.

Finally, I established this program to serve the seniors. Without good communication to our seniors, I may have end this program. We must have buses that are reasonably full, or the bus company will cancel, as it has already this year three months/times.

I am in no way criticizing Mrs. Love as she has a job to do and must work on behalf of the Paxton Seniors. Many people feel that the COVID-19 pandemic is over and they must return to some kind of normal. Seniors have lost 2 ½ years of their freedom to travel and people want to get out.

Respectfully Submitted,
Bob Wilby
Bus Coordinator