Memo

To: Mike McGovern and Town Council Members

From: Russell Packett, Community Services Director

Kathy Raftice, Adult/Senior Program Coordinator

Re: 14 Passenger Bus Request

Date: Monday, September 26, 2016

Dear Mike & Council Members,

Please consider our request to fund the purchase of a 14 passenger bus to primarily serve the adult/senior population of Cape Elizabeth. Having a 14 passenger bus would greatly enhance our current senior programming while also broadening future programming opportunities. Furthermore, the purchase would align Community Services and the Town with the recommendation by the Senior Advisory Board regarding transportation.

Currently Community Services’ utilizes either a school bus or a for-hire van service for its senior programming. Each of these options presents their own unique set of obstacles. Boarding and exiting a school bus can be a physical challenge, intimidating and scary for those less mobile and fearful of falling. The standard school bus seats are uncomfortable providing limited leg room therefore reducing the length of travel involved in any trip we offer. The safety and comfort issues notwithstanding, the use of the school’s buses also create a scheduling problem for Community Services as we must work around the school’s everyday transportation schedule. The van for-hire option has provided some flexibility in scheduling and additional comfort for our participants however, the cost for providing this service only adds to the cost of registration fees.

Having our own 14-passenger bus would allow us to eliminate the shortcomings of both of our current options, improve the overall experience of existing programming and open up a whole new world of leisure opportunities targeting Cape’s senior population. A common problem associated with aging is a lack of social inclusion or participation which can lead to depression and isolation. The additional activities we would be able to offer will positively impact the lives of our aging population.

Having access to such a vehicle is not a new concept amongst municipal recreation departments. Many of Cape’s surrounding communities (Scarborough, OOB, Kennebunk, Gorham, Standish, Windham, Falmouth and South Portland) all own a similar vehicle, and in some case they have more than one. Community Service’s often offers joint programming with these communities and we frequently get asked by our patrons, when we arrive to such an outing in our school bus, why Cape can’t have a similar vehicle to all of these other communities.

Based on our research we know that we could secure such a vehicle for about $62,000, we can expect to travel between 5,000 – 10,000 miles a year and have a vehicle life expectancy of 10-12 years. It would

be our plan to have the Public Works department provide all general service and maintenance similar to other community vehicles, and for the vehicle to be stored at the Public Works facility.

It is our belief that this investment, combined with the expectant life of the vehicle, offers the community an opportunity to provide a service to its senior population at a relatively nominal long-term cost.

Lastly, while such a vehicle would be used primarily for Adult/Senior programming, it would be our intent to also utilize the vehicle for other Community Services programming. This additional use would augment our programming and help maximize utilization of the Town’s investment.

We are extremely grateful that the Town Council is willing to consider our request. It has long been a goal of ours to have such a vehicle and to be able to provide a quality transportation experience to Cape’s older participants. Our excitement about such an opportunity is not so much how we can improve what we are currently offering, but where we might be able to go in the future.

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Note from Town Manager

I support this request as unfinished business from the recent report of the senior citizen advisory committee. This purchase will enable us to enhance our services to seniors as our population continues to age. It is recommended to allocation $65,000 from the unassigned fund balance to purchase a vehicle.