

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Please remember, include, and address the needs of Brookline's older adult population when making decisions about the allocation of the \$32 million dollars in funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The older adult population has been and remains the most affected and most vulnerable segment of society to the ravages of Covid 19 and now the persistent Delta variant. These moneys provide an opportunity to better the difficulties faced by the most disproportionately impacted group in our community, our seniors. Remember that over 20% of Brookline's population is over 60. Many struggle with consequences of the pandemic: isolation, food and housing insecurity, job loss, domestic violence, financial scams, difficulty accessing health care and technology, and even death.

The following is a list of 6 specific needs:

1. We need an additional full-time geriatric social worker to address mental health needs and isolation.
2. We need subsidized and efficient transportation both to the Brookline Senior Center and to health care and other necessary appointments.
3. We need job training and a restoration of previous employment opportunities for older adults as well as the development of new ones.
4. We need a variety of food insecurity programs specific to older adults, including daily meals, grocery delivery, and assistance with applying for benefits and access to other food programs.
5. We need to identify and train people to provide homemaking services to address the shortage of trained homecare workers, as well as their traditionally low pay.
6. We need to address the technology needs of seniors with laptops and training; and we need to update the technology capacity of the Senior Center.

The Council on Aging will be submitting proposals to effectively deal with these pressing issues. We urge that the community supports and prioritizes older adults as Brookline allocates ARPA funds.

Betsy Pollock, Board President