

Charlotte Senior Center Board Meeting Minutes

May 6, 2026 |

Attendance

Present: Loretta McManus, Magdalena, Lane, Lori York, Brandon, Carl, Natalie, Ron

Absent: Susan Hyde, Polly, Paul

Guest / Liaison: Natalie Kanner

Approval of Prior Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the April 8, 2026 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Volunteer Appreciation Event

The Board discussed plans for the Volunteer Appreciation event scheduled for Thursday, June 11, 2026, from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m.

Lori reported that she met with Bill Fraser-Harris regarding the menu and event setup. Bill is prepared for the event and plans to provide heavier appetizers because the event begins at noon. He also plans to adjust the food and service format from the prior year by offering easier-to-eat items and more direct serving, with fewer tables, so guests can continue socializing without needing to leave conversations to get food.

Board members are asked to arrive at 11:00 a.m. to help with setup. Bill has regular volunteers available to help serve the meal and does not anticipate needing additional food-service help from the Board.

A volunteer invitation list was printed from the database and circulated for additions. The list may also be sent electronically. Members discussed adding any missing volunteer names, including possible former or periodic volunteers. The event will be alcohol-free.

Future Identity / Possible Renaming of the Senior Center

Brandon reported on the work of the renaming committee. The committee reviewed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with a possible name change and spoke with people connected to the founding and history of the Center, including Mary-Ann Gatos and Emily Morrow, the attorney who worked with Walter Irish's estate and helped bring the Center into existence.

The committee concluded that a name change would be a positive step for the Center to consider. The committee's reasoning was that the word "senior" may discourage participation by adults who are eligible for or would benefit from the Center but do not identify with the term. The committee also

noted that the Center is strong today, with active programming and high participation, and that this discussion is about positioning the organization well for the next five to ten years rather than responding to a current participation problem.

The committee's initial recommendation favored a name that:

- includes "community";
- maintains a visible connection to Walter Irish;
- may or may not include "Charlotte" directly in the formal name;
- preserves the Center's mission and history while broadening how the public understands it.

An initial design concept was shown using the name "The Walter Irish Adult Community Center." The Board discussed whether "adult" is helpful or awkward, whether "Charlotte" should be included directly in the name or reflected through the Center's location and public identity, and whether the name should instead be simpler, such as "The Walter Irish Community Center."

The Board discussed legal and governance considerations. Brandon reported that Emily Morrow did not believe the name change would violate the intent of Walter Irish's bequest or impair the Center's legal position. The Board also discussed whether any town vote, original funding language, article language, or other municipal documentation should be reviewed before a final decision, particularly because the Center receives town support.

Natalie Kanner said she did not believe the name change itself should be a Selectboard decision, but it may be appropriate to bring the matter to the Selectboard for discussion or notice. The Board noted that public discussion could lead to wider community attention and questions, including potential Front Porch Forum discussion.

Brandon will circulate the committee materials and draft design concept to the full Board. The Board expects to revisit the matter at the next meeting and may vote on whether to concur with the committee's recommendation and how to proceed. Brandon will also contact Emily Morrow and ask whether she is willing to provide feedback or attend a future meeting, in person or remotely.

Roof Replacement / RFP

The Board discussed proceeding with a request for proposals for a standing-seam roof replacement.

Natalie Kanner reported that Carrie does not currently have time to prepare the RFP. The Board discussed having Lore prepare a draft RFP using a recent town roof project, such as the library or town hall roof, as a template. Carrie would then review the draft. The Board agreed that this approach would likely move the project forward more quickly.

The roof is expected to be a standing-seam roof. The Board briefly discussed possible colors, including red, copper, gray, black, and matching the current color. Members noted that a more conservative color may be the path of least resistance, particularly if any design review issues arise.

Lori will obtain a recent town roof RFP or contract template and prepare a draft for review.

Treasurer's Report

Carl reported that the regular account is in good shape, with \$24,829 currently in the bank. Donations continue to come in, including a recent \$1,000 donation for the kitchen / meals account.

Carl recently transferred \$1,000 from the regular account into the kitchen / meals account. The kitchen / meals account is remaining approximately balanced and currently has more than \$2,800.

The Center received \$4,000 from Shelburne, which will be held until after July 1 and then transferred to the Town.

Director's Report

Lori reported the following items.

Staffing

Thyleen's Friday schedule will change from Friday mornings to Friday afternoons, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. She prefers the afternoon, and it is a quieter time when she can get more work done. With this change, she will work afternoons five days per week, which matches the original job posting.

Cleaning Schedule

Lori spoke with Doug Stone about the current cleaning schedule. The current Tuesday morning cleaning does not fit well with the Center's operations because volunteers have already emptied trash on Mondays. Lori suggested that a better schedule would be Wednesday mornings and either Friday after closing or Saturday mornings, depending on rentals. This would help ensure the building is clean before rentals and would reduce the amount of Friday cleaning currently being done by Lori and volunteers.

Doug will check with the library because the cleaner also cleans the library.

Budget

Revenue is currently strong, helped by additional rentals and programming, and is at approximately \$58,239. Expenses are also expected to be higher. The Center has not yet received its share from the Fire Department for dumpster and recycling costs and has not yet received the final snow-plowing bill.

Database / Credit Card Processing

The Center continues to work with My Senior Center on credit card processing. My Senior Center is working with Square regarding the ability to pass along fees. Thyleen is now working with My Senior Center as a beta tester, which may help move some of the Center's requested improvements higher on their list.

Dementia-Friendly Community

Lori has a meeting on Monday, May 11, 2026, regarding designation of the Center as part of a dementia-friendly community. The Center is already offering related programming, including the Alzheimer's

caregiver support group and memory cafe. The designation is expected to be largely a formality and may include a window sticker or similar recognition.

Partnerships and Programming

Lori has a meeting with Lindsay Kahn, Charlie Russell, and Rebecca regarding a possible fall presentation or panel on accessory dwelling units. The topic could be relevant to older adults who are living in large houses and considering downsizing, including situations where adult children take over the main house and the older adult moves into an accessory dwelling unit.

The Charlotte Energy and Climate Action Committee has reached out about using the Senior Center for a guest speaker in the fall.

The Center continues to partner with the library. The partnership includes cross-promotion of programs in each organization's newsletter. A new book discussion group will use interlibrary loan to make books accessible to participants.

The Center is also starting a menopause cafe, joining the existing death cafe and memory cafe programs.

The Center will again serve as the backup location for the Charlotte Grange's Grange on the Green.

Closures

The Senior Center will be closed on Monday, May 25, 2026, for Memorial Day and Friday, July 3, 2026, for Independence Day. These are town holidays and are not floating holidays for the Center.

Landscaping

At the prior meeting, Lori was asked to contact Roberta regarding landscaping suggestions. Lori circulated the resulting recommendations, including pruning and possible plant purchases.

Magdalena offered to help with the landscaping effort. The Board discussed whether some work should be handled by the landscaping company, particularly tasks that may require professional help. The Friends have typically paid for some replacement plantings in the past.

Suggestions

American Flag

The Board discussed a suggestion that the Senior Center have an American flag. Lori noted that Louise McCarren had previously considered donating an indoor standing flag in memory of family members. The Board discussed both indoor and outdoor options.

Members noted that an outdoor flagpole would be more expensive and could require policies regarding what flags may be flown. The Board favored a simpler wall-mounted or angled outdoor flag as a practical first step. Lane offered to provide a quality American-made flag and related equipment.

Chairs in the Foyer

The Board discussed a suggestion that the foyer chairs be replaced or adapted because the current chairs are low and difficult for people with hip or knee challenges. Members noted that the chairs are worn and may date back many years. Rather than reupholstering them, the Board discussed looking into new, more ergonomically appropriate chairs.

Loretta and Magdalena will look into chair options.

MOA / Documents

The Board briefly discussed the MOA and related documents. Lori will circulate copies to the Board. These documents may also be useful as a baseline for questions related to the roof project and the possible renaming discussion.

Board Membership and Succession Planning

The Board discussed the need for future board members and the importance of recruiting people who currently participate in or volunteer with Center activities.

Members also discussed the need to plan for the work currently handled by Board members who may eventually step down, including Susan's responsibilities and Loretta's rental-related work. Lori noted that staff capacity is already limited and that duties historically handled by a working board cannot simply shift to one and a half staff positions without either reducing responsibilities, increasing support, or advocating for additional staffing.

The Board discussed the importance of clarifying expectations for board members, considering membership terms, and developing succession planning. Members also discussed the broader question of whether the Board will continue to be a working board or whether some responsibilities will need to be handled through paid support, subcontracting, or additional staffing.

Ron circulated or referenced a one-page document on attributes of a board member and asked members to review it and provide feedback.

Adjournment

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 11:53 a.m.