

Human Services Subcommittee Report

Council on Aging FY 2021 Budget

The Human Services Subcommittee of the Advisory Committee conducted a hearing on the FY2021 budget for the Council on Aging on February 27, 2020. In attendance were co-chairs Kim Smith and Harry Bohrs, member Claire Stampfer, and from the Council on Aging: Chair Yolanda Rodriguez, Director Ruthann Dobek, William Wong, Sonia Wong, and Justin Casanova-Davis, Assistant Town Administrator.

The COA provides extensive cultural, educational and physical activity programming, from art to zumba. The COA also provides assistance with transportation. The COA helps seniors to take advantage of the many town programs to help seniors, such as Parking Access for Resident's Caregiver (PARC), and partnering with AARP trained volunteers to help with completing income tax forms, for example. The COA also provides safety net services to the almost 1000 Brookline seniors who are eligible for Federal low income assistance programs. FY21 Objectives are to continue and to expand their broad range of services and to accommodate their diverse population.

Members of the COA explained that the Brookline Senior Center at 93 Winchester Street which opened in 2001, is "maxed out" for program and office space. In 2001 the state census included 9,000 adults over 60, today there are more than 13,000. In 2001, 300 individuals used the center, and in 2019, 3,100 seniors made 15,000 visits to the senior center. Currently 150 to 400 seniors are accommodated daily. There are many different scheduled programs and little room to accommodate the many requests for and offers of additional programming.

The 2020 census is expected to show an increase in the senior population which in Massachusetts is defined as over 60. In 2010 there were 10,816 seniors in Brookline. Projections for 2025 show the senior population increasing to 14,721. In the Coolidge Corner area the senior population is expected to increase further with the completion of To Life at Congregation Kehillath Israel, the Hebrew Senior Life Center at 100-112 Center Street and the renovation of the Jameson home at 108 Center Street. These new residences are being marketed as being convenient to the Brookline Senior Center which is already full.

Currently the COA has one full time and one part-time custodian for the Senior Center. The part-time position carries no benefits. More custodial help is needed even now and definitely in the coming years. The COA requests that this position be upgraded in future budgets to at least ½ time with benefits. Much of the programming and administrative assistance is done by volunteers; in 2019, 513 volunteers filled 711 volunteer jobs.

Looking to the near future, the senior population is anticipated to increase significantly and the over 85 age group is its fastest growing segment. Currently Brookline is doing an excellent job of accommodating seniors aged 55 to 102 and helping them to continue to participate actively in our community. Soon, however, more space and services will be needed. The Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs and the National Council on Aging recommend 5 square feet per senior resident. The senior center at 36,000 square feet needs another 30,000 square feet to meet this recommendation. We recommend that the growing needs of our growing senior population be considered as an integral part of Brookline's long term planning. We urge that developments for

needed senior housing be designed with concomitant expansions of space for senior community engagement as is exemplified by the Senior Center.

Expand All	FY19 Actual	FY20 Budget	FY21 Budget	2020-21 Variance	2020-21 Variance
▶ SALARIES	\$ 865,600	\$ 857,424	\$ 862,243	4,819	0.56%
▶ SERVICES	38,991	43,583	48,418	4,835	11.09%
▶ SUPPLIES	19,883	19,763	19,763	0	0.00%
▶ OTHER	1,254	4,250	4,250	0	0.00%
▶ UTILITIES	57,438	61,601	67,042	5,441	8.83%
▶ BUDGETED CAPITAL	5,598	5,700	5,700	0	0.00%
Total	\$ 988,765	\$ 992,321	\$ 1,007,416	15,095	1.52%

Data filtered by EXPENSES, COUNCIL ON AGING and exported on March 2, 2020. Created with OpenGov

The FY 2021 budget includes \$862,243 for salaries. The total budget is \$1,007,416, a 1.52% increase of \$15,095 over FY2020. The small increase is due to increase in heavy cleaning services, utilities, and salaries.

The Human Services Subcommittee voted 3-0-0 to approve the Council on Aging budget for 2021 at the requested \$1,007,416.