

Council on Aging (541)

For the Finance Committee: Elaine Baird

Expenses	Salaries	Expenses	Total
FY24	751,041	93,599	844,840
FY23	715,566	90,884	806,450
FY22	683,717	86,529	770,246
FY21	549,625	67,331	615,956
FY20	635,064	65,891	700,955
FY19	585,853	73,159	659,012

This past year, the Council on Aging revised its Description of Operations which communicates the growing responsibility this department has. From, “enhance the quality of life for seniors and their care partners.....,” to, “.....serve and empower older adults 60+ to age well in Orleans through support, enrichment, and advocacy.....we provide transportation, adult supportive day care, and outreach to frail and vulnerable residents to connect with appropriate resources.” The COA continues to offer food assistance and supportive meal programs, fitness, health and wellness programs, along with health insurance counseling to those on Medicare. The COA supports an array of senior-related support groups, recreational and educational programs, and technology teaching for older adults.

The COA works closely with multiple other town departments, especially Police and Fire, but also DPW, Snow Library, Health and Veterans Services. We have an unsung network of town employees who provide services for our elderly and vulnerable. The Police Dept morning call-in program, the Fire Dept emergency services, the DPW’s attention to road/sidewalk safety/handicapped accessibility and the Health Dept’s commitment to vaccine accessibility together combine to make a wide town support system for Orleans’ elderly population.

Estimated Annual Fee Revenue

FY24 Supportive Day Care Income (goes to General Fund): \$125,000

- FY23 \$114,000 estimated
- FY22 \$107,812
- FY21 0 due to Covid
- FY20 \$141,345
- FY19 \$130,167

Income variations are not only a result of the different number of participants allowed to access the program (per Covid guidelines) but also from the policy that if a participant does not show up (either cancellation or no-show), they are not charged. A no-show policy should be developed, as these daycare spots are in high demand. Also, a fee increase needs to be implemented to cover inflation-related costs (especially food). Parameters of fees for this program are largely established by state through homecare contracting processes.

The increase in salaries, particularly FY21 to FY22 (up \$134,092) occurred when a staffing study showed the director's job needed a significant increase to have that salary commensurate with other Barnstable County COA directors.

A serious challenge for the COA is staffing. Multiple jobs remain open and require creative approaches to recruitment. For example, rather than having three part-time positions, create two full-time positions with benefits. (This will impact the future salary line). Also, a reorganization of existing positions should be done to create an "Assistant COA Director" position, to support stronger succession planning within the department.

Proposed budget changes include:

- \$2,930 in Repairs/Maintenance due to increased costs, particularly in trash removal
- \$3,342 in Supplies for Supportive Day Care program, due to increased cost in food and related supplies
- \$5,712 for the Newsletter "Tidings" had been cut from the original FY24 budget

The FY24 "Tidings" funds were initially adjusted to come from the COA Gift Account. However, at a February 2023 Select Board meeting, those funds were

restored to the budget. The Finance Committee suggested that the “Tidings” newsletter could be utilized for other department communications. For example, the Fire Dept could explain its need for additional firefighters. The DPW could alert citizens to its changes in sticker purchases. Police/DPW could review road issues, as in the Route 39/28 “round-about” construction.

In January 2023 the Fire/Water/Police Departments coordinated a “flushing” of the COA water system. Water comes into the COA through a wide fire line, not a narrow residential line. The water “sits” in that larger line, getting less potable, though not a health hazard. Could COA’s water supply be routed/sourced differently?

Update (3/23/23): a “residential” water line will be installed, with the work done by the Water Department and the cost of materials (eg, pipes) borne **by the COA.**

The COA has been addressing its needs for landscape maintenance. Twenty years ago, the COA received a gift of landscape design, materials, and installation of garden walkways and garden exercise areas. The town will provide simple maintenance of mowing, mulching, some raking but will not provide weeding, pruning, fertilizing, etc. As such, the COA has obtained a CPC grant to restore the space, and the Friends and COA Special Funds will be utilized for the design phase. The COA Board has requested funding for garden maintenance as a funding priority for the COA department, once the restoration project is complete.

Ongoing HVAC repairs have been paid directly from the COA to a local contractor. Substantial replacement costs are included in the FY24 Buildings and Facilities budget, which includes \$155,000 for HVAC/attic and kitchen improvements. The 3 yr-old \$8,000 commercial dishwasher was replaced using Trust funds. Trust funds also paid for \$16,000 in interior painting. The Finance Committee has encouraged the COA to coordinate a policy of how its Trust and Gift funds are to be spent.

Update (mid- to late March 2023): in subsequent discussions with the Select Board, the Interim Town Manager, the Finance Director and Town Counsel, it was confirmed that monies donated to the COA (and similar Town Departments and agencies) are actually donations to the Town with spending priorities determined

by the Town unless the donor specifically states what the donation should or should not be used for (thus a restricted fund).

The COA continues to need to replace its 22 yr-old phone system. The Motor Vehicle and Durable Equipment schedule for FY24 includes \$15,000 for this, which according to MIS is inadequate. Finance Director Cathy Doane indicated at a recent Select Board meeting that she will review the FY24 Motor Vehicle & Durable Equipment schedule with Interim Town Manager Charlie Sumner to confirm spending priorities.

The COA has masterfully managed the profound challenges of the preceding three years, under its deft and able leadership team, headed by Judi Wilson.

Further information from Director Judi Wilson's 2/2/23 conversation with the Finance Committee is in the minutes, below.

<https://www.town.orleans.ma.us/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Minutes/02022023-2764>

