

**Director's Report – April 2024**  
**Ayer Senior Center / Council on Aging**

Many thanks to my talented and dedicated staff and volunteers who kept the Senior Center bustling like usual while I was away in March!

**Budget:**

Spending is on track for the fiscal year. The meals budget will run out of money before the end of the year, but there are funds available in the meals donation account available to get us through. The \$2500 removed from my budget for the additional fitness instructor was restored at the second public budget forum.

**Programs:**

My Senior Center reporting statistics for March 2024:

- Seniors In Attendance (unduplicated): 105 + 16 guests
- Total Event Sign-Ins (duplicated): 585
- Total Person-Programming Hours: 686

\*These statistics do not count the approx. 20 Meals on Wheels clients & the 71 van riders in March.

In March, special programs included: AARP Tax Aide, Irish Sing-Alongs, Spring Day of Beauty, a trip to the Fitchburg Art Museum to see Atomic Artistry and On Her Terms: Feminine Power Embodied, Decorative Paper & Collage Class, and Supper Club. Our first annual Walk In the Park Day was rained out, and look forward to rescheduling later in the spring.

**Hybrid Programming Grant**

The OWL Labs system has been tested and will be available for the COA Board meeting and Center programs in May. Efforts to engage student volunteers as part of the Cyber Seniors Program is ongoing.

**Outreach**

Staff provided outreach services to 28 seniors a total of 44 times in March. Housing concerns continue to be the most frequent topic of interaction, followed by wellness checks (as part of the Friendly Caller Program and also due to safety protocols). Staff also provided assistance with disability benefits, financial skills/money management, health benefits counseling, wellness checks, and transportation concerns. Scores of additional simple referrals are made each month without official documentation.

**Meals**

In March, 283 meals were served to 55 registered users and 16 guests (likely users who didn't check in with their key fob), across 22 meals (6 MOC, 15 catered and 1 supper club). The meals program remains very popular, although March illnesses typically lowers Senior Center participation overall. Four of the 15 catered meals were filled to capacity, with most others near capacity.

**Volunteers & Donations**

In March, 13 volunteers worked a total of 239 hours, valued at \$3,409. The Senior Center could not run efficiently without their assistance, and we are very appreciative of their time. Many thanks to Shop & Save for their Monday baked goods donations, Barbara Gibbons for her weekly desserts, and the anonymous donor who established a meal scholarship.

**Site Selection / Building Committee Update:**

The Committee continues to move the process forward, meeting on February 29<sup>th</sup> and March 25<sup>th</sup>. Their work focused on issuing an RFP for private landowners to contact the Town if they are interested in selling land suitable for the Senior Center project, as well as interviewing the three architect finalists.

**Transportation:**

The COA van provided 71 riders a total of 423 trips in March. The new Rides software continues to work through development challenges but is for the most part productive and a great asset for required reporting. Anecdotally, we have more riders and requests than we can accommodate, but most riders are able to get transportation services most of the time. The flexibility to provide access to health systems in Leominster, Fitchburg, Acton, Concord, and Westford more than one day a week is a priority, as are expanded social opportunities. Training is underway for a per diem driver we hope will be ready before Sam's much-deserved vacation in late April.

**COA Board Opportunities:**