

**WARD COUNCILLORS**

- 1 – David R. Thibault-Muñoz
- 2 – Dana M. Heath
- 3 – Paul G. Tassone
- 4 – Karen G. Hardern
- 5 – Aleksander H. Dernalowicz, Esq.

**COUNCIL PRESIDENT**

George C. Tyros

**COUNCILLORS AT LARGE**

- Calvin D. Brooks
- Craig R. Cormier
- Brad E. Heglin
- Elizabeth J. Kazinskas
- Judy A. Mack

**CITY OF GARDNER  
MASSACHUSETTS**

**CITY COUNCIL**



**PUBLIC WELFARE COMMITTEE MEETING NOTICE**

**Date:** Thursday, March 12, 2026  
**Time:** 8:00 A.M.  
**Location:** City Council Chamber, City Hall

**AGENDA**

**CALL TO ORDER**

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF OPEN MEETING RECORDINGS**

*Any person may make a video or audio recording of an open session of a meeting, or may transmit the meeting through any medium, subject to reasonable requirements of the chair as to the number, placement and operation of equipment used so as not to interfere with the conduct of the meeting. Any person intending to make such recording shall notify the Chair forthwith. All Documents and exhibits used or referenced at the meeting must be submitted in duplicate to the City Clerk, as they become part of the Meeting Minutes.*

I. Reading of Minutes of Prior Meeting(s)  
 • February 6, 2026

II. Department Updates  
 • Historical Commission

III. First Time on the Agenda

**11794** – A Communication from the Mayor regarding the January 2026 Monthly Report of the Gardner Community Youth Center

IV. Councillor questions/concerns/comments.

V. Adjournment.

RECEIVED  
 2026 MAR -9 PM 14:30  
 CITY CLERK'S OFFICE  
 GARDNER, MA

*NOTICE: The listing of Agenda items are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.*

CITY COUNCIL OF GARDNER

*Craig R. Cormier*

Craig R. Cormier

Chair, Public Welfare Committee

**GARDNER CITY COUNCIL  
PUBLIC WELFARE COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF FEBRUARY 6, 2026**

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Councillor Craig Cormier, Chairman of the Public Welfare Committee, called the meeting to order at 8:15 a.m. at the City Council Chambers, City Hall, Room 219. Committee members, Councillor Calvin Brooks and Councillor Karen Hardern were present.

Also present was Senior Center Director Mike Ellis; GETV Director Tim Josti; Library Director Marita Klements; and Administrative Coordinator Suzi Severance.

**Reading and Acceptance of Meeting Minutes**

On a motion made by Councillor Karen Hardern and seconded by Councillor Calvin Brooks it was voted to waive the reading and accept the minutes of October 16, 2025, and November 18, 2025.

**DEPARTMENT UPDATES**

**Library**

Library Director Marita Klements spoke on her attached report as well as on the children, teens and adult programs offered at the library.

**Cable Commission**

GETV Director Tim Josti spoke about his attached report.

**Council on Aging/Senior Center**

Director Mike Ellis spoke on the senior center programs and services as well as the projects and initiatives. The director provided the Welfare Committee and Clerk with the attached documents.

**Adjournment**

On a motion made by Councillor Karen Hardern and seconded by Councillor Calvin Brooks, it was voted to adjourn at 9:00 a.m.



## Report to the Public Welfare Committee February 5, 2026

### **STATE REQUIREMENTS (Mass Board of Library Commissioners certification)**

**Current Status:** In FY26 the Levi Heywood Memorial Library is on track to meet all of the requirements for state certification in full.

**Goal:** Maintain certification standards in FY27 while providing the highest level of professional library services to the City of Gardner by remaining open for 50 hours a week and spending 15% of the overall budget on books, periodicals, and circulating collections.

**Goal:** Remain open on Saturdays throughout the summer of 2026.

### **GRANT FUNDING**

**Current Status:** In December the library applied for 3 grants:

- The Connected and Online Grant through the Massachusetts Broadband Initiative would fund 30 computers, including desktops, laptops, tablets, and accessories, to be used by library patrons for education, healthcare, and workforce development. We intend to tailor some of our children, teen, and adult programming in the spring and summer to take advantage of this opportunities.
- A request to the Beaman Foundation which would fund \$3,000 for children's read-along audiobooks, including multilingual audiobooks, supporting not just children's literacy, but also our growing multilingual collections.
- A request to Fidelity Bank Community Giving which would fund \$12,000 for new furniture in the children's room of the library.

We will receive a total of \$4,000 in grant funding for large print and audiobooks from the Knowlton Foundation for the Elderly in FY26.

We have received \$500 for children's programming from the Ryan Patrick Jones Heart of a Hero Foundation.

We have applied for five grants from the Gardner Cultural Council, and supported 4 programmers who applied on their own behalf to perform at the library.

**Goal:** Continue to apply for grants to support the library, especially programming and capital expenses.

**BUILDING/INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Current Status:** The Levi Heywood Memorial Library is 21 years old, and while it is in good repair, many of its systems are aging. The building is privately owned by the Levi Heywood Memorial Library Association, and the Association takes responsibility for most capital expenses. The city covers most operational expenses. We have recently had an energy assessment and are waiting on the results.

**Goal:** Update lights and any other systems that can be retrofitted to make the building more energy efficient in order to decrease the utilities expenses, and reduce the library’s overall energy consumption.

**Goal:** Explore solar power, heat pumps, or any other technologies that could create a long term positive change on the library’s overall climate impact.

**LIBRARY PROGRAMMING**

**Current Status:** Due to the hard work of the library staff our overall programming numbers continue to trend upwards, and we receive continual positive feedback from the community.

In particular, the increase in attendance at our young adult programs has been remarkable. The first chart below shows the number of young adult programs and attendance at young adult programs before we hired a staff member dedicated to serving the young adult population.

# of YA Programs	FY24: <b>1</b>	FY25: <b>19</b>	July-October 2025: <b>10</b>
# of YA Participants	FY24: <b>7</b>	FY25: <b>122</b>	July-October 2025: <b>22</b>

This second chart shows the same statistics, in our young adult librarian’s first 3 months.

# of YA Programs	November 2025: <b>8</b>	December 2025: <b>9</b>	January 2026: <b>10</b>
# of YA Participants	November 2025: <b>53</b>	December 2025: <b>59</b>	January 2026: <b>49</b>

**GOAL:** Increase the young adult staff member’s time from 18 to 25 hours per week to allow them to dedicate more time to planning, collection development, and other administrative needs.

**Goal:** Upgrade the library’s website, making it more accessible and user friendly, and include a digital catalog of library programs, continuing our goal of making the library more accessible to all.



**Recent and Upcoming Highlights:**

- Our teen advisory board now meets monthly, giving Gardner's teens an opportunity to advise the library on collections, programs, and other issues that best suit Gardner's young adult population.
- All of Gardner's third grade students will be visiting the library next week. It will be their second of three visits to the library this school year.
- In FY26 we have begun to purchase Spanish and Portuguese materials for the library's circulating collection.
- Our Fearless Writing Workshop, which started as a 4 week program and is continuing on a monthly basis has been very popular.
- On February 25<sup>th</sup> at 6 PM we will be hosting a round table program called Peace Corps through the ages, arranged by local Peace Corps veteran Arthur Young and facilitated by Mark Gearan, 14<sup>th</sup> director of the Peace Corps.
- This year's summer reading theme will be Plant a Seed: Read. Our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual summer reading kick-off block party will be Wednesday, June 24<sup>th</sup>. We have already begun planning our summer programming, and will soon be looking for summer reading sponsors to donate books to give away or raffle prizes.

Thank you for your support of the library.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marita B. Klements  
Library Director

# LEVI HEYWOOD MEMORIAL LIBRARY



# PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS

## December

**Wed. Dec. 3 5-6:45PM**

### **Winter Social for all ages!**

Make holiday cards and enjoy seasonal treats as you visit with your friends and neighbors. We'll also have a photo booth and hot chocolate bar!

**Wed. Dec. 10 5-7PM**

### **Ayurveda Workshop with Jessie James**

Learn about the ancient practice of Ayurveda. Translating into "the wisdom of life," Ayurveda is a 5,000 year old practice that offers a wide variety of holistic tools to help us maintain balance in mind, body and spirit throughout the seasons of the year, as well as the seasons of our lives. Join us for an introduction to Ayurveda and learn strategies and tips to stay in balance this winter.

*Space is limited. Registration is required.*

*Stop by or call the library to register.*

**Sat. Dec. 13 10AM-12PM**

### **ProCRAFTinators**

#### **Book Ornament Craft**

Make an ornament containing your favorite reads or your TBR list! Free.

*Space is limited. Registration is required.*

*Email [gverrelli@cwmars.org](mailto:gverrelli@cwmars.org) to register.*

**Wed. Dec. 17 3:30-4:30PM**

### **Afternoon Book Group**

This month's book is

The Uncharted Flight of Olivia West by Sara Ackerman.

**Wed. Dec. 17 6-7PM**

### **Fringe Fiction Book Group**

This month's book is

Secret Santa by Andrew Shaffer.

### **Wrapping Station**

**Dec. 8-23**

#### **During open Library hours**

We will have wrapping paper and tape available in our Exhibit Gallery for you to wrap gifts away from prying eyes!

## January

**Wed. Jan. 7 7-8PM**

### **Reiki Infused Sound Bath w/ Brandy Lefsyk**

Relax and unwind with a FREE Reiki Sound Bath at the library! Bring your own blanket and/or yoga mat and let the soothing vibes take over. Space is limited, so come early and get your zen on!

**Sat. Jan. 10 9AM-3PM**

### **House Plant Swap**

Celebrate National Houseplant Day by joining our Plant Swap! Bring a healthy plant or cutting to exchange for a new one, meet fellow plant lovers, and grow your indoor garden while celebrating the beauty and benefits of houseplants. Drop-offs of plants/cuttings start on Monday, January 5.

**Wed. Jan. 14 5:30-7PM**

### **ProCRAFTinators**

#### **Tile Coasters**

Make a set of tile coasters.

Limited to the first 30 participants.

**Sat. Jan. 24 10AM-12PM**

### **Winter Painting w/ Christina**

Learn to paint clouds and snow in a quaint farm scene with acrylic paint. Will demonstrate techniques to paint fluffy clouds and a coat of snow.

*Space is limited. Registration is required.*

*Stop by or call the library to register.*

**Wed. Jan. 28 3:30-4:30PM**

### **Afternoon Book Group**

This month's book is

James by Percival Everett.

### **Fearless Writing w/ Chad Lorion**

#### **4-Week Series**

**Tuesdays Jan. 6, 13, 20, & 27**

**5-6PM**

In this four-week series, learn how to overcome common writing obstacles and gain insight and encouragement in creating your best writing life.

## February

**Tues. Feb. 3 5PM-6PM**

### **Monthly Writing Meetup**

Need time and inspiration for your writing project? Join our Monthly Writing Meetup to jumpstart your creativity!

**Sat. Feb. 7 10AM-Noonish**

### **Puzzle Race**

Form a group of four to six friends, and race to be the first team to complete the same 500-piece puzzle. At least one adult is required per team. Space is limited to eight teams. The fastest team to assemble the puzzle will win a prize!

*Space is limited. Registration is required.*

*Call the library to register.*

**Wed. Feb. 11 6-7:30PM**

### **Fill in the Blank: The Love Story**

#### **Local Author Program**

Join authors Janet Raye Stevens and Jean M. Grant as they take you on an interactive and engaging "mad lib" adventure – romance-style.

**Sat. Feb. 14 10AM-12PM**

### **ProCRAFTinators**

#### **Book Vases**

Celebrate Valentine's Day with a fun craft! Join us to create unique book vases—perfect for a date or an outing with your best friends.

*Space is limited. Registration is required.*

*Call the library to register.*

**Wed. Feb. 25 3:30-4:30PM**

### **Afternoon Book Group**

This month is Readers' Choice. Come with a title that you would like to discuss with the group.

**Wed. Feb. 25 6-7:30PM**

### **Peace Corps Thru the Decades**

Discover how Peace Corps service has evolved over time in this special roundtable event.

Volunteers from different decades—plus one from the first-ever group—will share their experiences and insights.

**All programs are free!**



**Levi Heywood  
Memorial Library**

55 W. Lynde St. Gardner, MA 978-632-5298 [www.leviheywoodmemlib.org](http://www.leviheywoodmemlib.org)

## Recurring Programs for Adults

### Walking Club

Tuesdays @ 9AM

Meets at the Library. Dress for the weather!

### Stitch Social

Tuesdays from 1-3PM

Knitters, crocheters, and other needle crafters welcome.

### Book Club

Meets @ 3:30PM

**Dec. 17** The Uncharted Flight of Olivia West **Jan. 28** James

**Feb. 25** Readers' Choice

A welcoming book group exploring a mix of fiction and nonfiction—where stories meet ideas and every voice matters.

### Gardner Language Circle

Wednesdays from 10AM-12PM

Learn English in a friendly, informal setting.

Aprende inglés en un ambiente amigable e informal.

### LIBRARY HOURS

MON 9AM-6PM

TUE 9AM-6PM

WED 9AM-7PM

THU 9AM-7PM

FRI 9AM-3PM

SAT 9AM-3PM

Holiday Closings: Dec. 24-26,  
Thurs. Jan. 1, Fri. Jan. 2, Mon. Jan. 19,  
Mon. Feb. 16

Closing at 1PM Wed. Dec. 31

Borrow  
ebooks &  
audiobooks

Libby.

The reading app from our  
library, built by OverDrive.

**Borrow digital books, audiobooks, and magazines for free with your library card! Download the Libby app today!**

**Need help? Stop by the library for help getting the app and a quick tutorial.**

## **Looking for something to do on these long, cold winter days? Take advantage of all the library has to offer!**



**Free Puzzle Swap Table** – Leave a puzzle, take a puzzle, or do both!

**Community Puzzle Table** – Help add a few pieces to the ongoing puzzle set up on the lower level of the library.

**Study Rooms** – Need a quiet space to work? Use one of our small study rooms located in the Reference area.

**Computers & Free Wifi**- Use one of our computers or bring your own and take advantage of our free wifi which is available 24/7.












**Comfy Seating & Tables**- Need a warm place to work or relax? We've got plenty of seating for everyone!

Follow us on:



# Levi Heywood Memorial Library




## February Children's Programs

SUN CLOSED	MON 9AM-6PM	TUE 9AM-6PM	WED 9AM-7PM	THU 9AM-7PM	FRI 9AM-3PM	SAT 9AM-3PM
1 	2 Lego Club @4pm	3 Storytime @ 10am	4 Wiggle Worm @10am for 6M-24M Pinecone Owls @5pm	5 Storytime @ 10am	6 	7 Storytime @ 10am
8	9 Lego Club @4pm	10  School Visits No Storytime	11 Wiggle Worm @10am for 6M-24M Valentine Paint Session @ 5pm	12 Storytime @ 10am **Cupcake Decorating @ 5pm** Registration Required	13 New Scavenger hunt 	14 Storytime @ 10am Valentine Card Creation @1pm
15 	16 Closed for Presidents' day	17 Winter Olympics @ 1pm	18 Wiggle Worm @10am for 6M-24M Bobsleds @ 3pm	19 Olympics Culture Crunch @ 1pm Stuffy Sleepover Drop Off by 4pm 	20 Winter Olympics @ 1pm Stuffy Sleepover & Movie @ 10:00am	21 Storytime @ 10am Winter Olympics @ 1pm
22	23 Lego Club @4pm	24 Storytime @ 10am	25 Wiggle Worm @10am for 6M-24M	26 Storytime @ 10am Book Club @ 5pm	27 New Scavenger hunt 	28 Storytime @ 10am Lego Club @1pm
Scan for more details: 				<b>Stick Together Sticker Puzzle</b>  You asked, and we listened! The sticker-by-letter puzzle is back. Work together, place the stickers, and watch the mystery picture come to life. Can you help us figure out what it is?		

### February Vacation Week: Winter Olympics Edition

Get ready to jump, race, and cheer!

We're bringing the Winter Olympics to life with a week full of fun, games, and friendly competition.

-  Winter Olympics - Visit us to do different challenges all week
-  Bobsled Challenges
-  Olympic Culture Crunch
- Let the games begin!

### Stuffy Sleepover

It's our very first Stuffy Sleepover and your cuddly friend is invited. Drop off your stuffy by 4:00 PM on February 19 for a night of fun after dark.

While you're home sleeping, your stuffy will be busy having adventures and getting into a little mischief.

Come back at 10:00 AM on February 20 to see what they were up to and snuggle in for some short movies together.  
Bring your stuffy; We'll bring the fun.

**Early Childhood Programs:**  
ages 0-5

**Early Elementary Programs:**  
grades k-2

**Upper Elementary Programs**  
grades 3-5

**Kids in grades K-5**

**All Ages Programs**

Visit and follow us online:

<https://www.leviheywoodmemlib.org/>



Can you spot the 10 Hearts?



Levi Heywood  
Memorial Library

55 W. Lynde St. Gardner, MA 978-632-5298  
[www.leviheywoodmemlib.org](http://www.leviheywoodmemlib.org)

# TEEN FEBRUARY 2026

for folks ages 12-18 at the Levi Heywood Memorial Library

Sunday	Monday	Tue.Sday	Wedne.Sday	Thur.Sday	Friday	Saturday
Closed	9AM-6PM	9AM-6PM	9AM-7PM	9AM-7PM	9AM-3PM	9AM-3PM

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		Library @ The Youth Center 3:45-4:45	Speed Read Dating 4-5	Queer Media Club 5-6:30		
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
			D&D 4-7		Crafternoon 1-2	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	LIBRARY CLOSED	Shrinky Dinks 1-2	Teen Advisory Board 3:30-4:30			
			Pizza Game Night 4:30-6:30			
	23	24	25	26	27	28
			D&D 4-7		Creative Writing Workshop 12:30-2:30	



## FEBRUARY TEEN PROGRAM GUIDE

for folks ages 12-18 at the Levi Heywood Memorial Library



**Library @ the Youth Center** - sign up for a library card, check out books from our mobile Teen Library, and more!



**Game night** is back by popular demand. This time, with pizza!



**Queer Media Club** is a safe space to dish about your favorite queer books, shows, music, movies, etc.



**D & D** - Whether you're new to the game or a seasoned warrior, we're glad to have you!



**Crafternoon** - This month, we're making bookmarks! We'll have several fun templates to choose from.



Make jewelry, key chains, and more with **Shrinky Dinks!**



Love books but hate commitment? Try **Speed Read Dating!** Read the first page, the last page, or thumb through the whole thing before the timer goes off.



**Teen Advisory Board** - join us to help make decisions about the teen space and our programming



Bring your WIP or fresh ideas to our monthly **Creative Writing Workshop!**

# Gardner Educational Television

200 Catherine St.  
Gardner, MA 01440  
(978) 632-7836

February 4, 2026

Members of the Public Welfare Committee,

Gardner Educational Television has been running well since we have last update. We have continued to broadcast live City Council and School Committee meetings and continued to record for rebroadcast the Zoning Board of Appeals and Planning Board meetings. GETV has completed the fall lecture series at the Gardner Museum's and will be preparing for the Spring series that should start around mid-March. We have continued to produce monthly Senior Moments, GCAT Chat and to record events at the Senior Center. We also have continued the recording of City announcements and monthly Mayor's Updates. We also recorded this year's Inauguration Ceremony, produced the Memorial Lights video and the Caroling with the Mayor Video.

GETV has continued our GHS sports coverage. We cover as many of the GHS teams home games of Varsity Boys and Girls basketball as we can. We will again cover Varsity baseball and softball home games depending on schedule and availability. We have also recorded both the GHS Fall and Winter Concert.


GETV's equipment is running well and being cared for. Unfortunately, the cameras that we planned to add for sports recording have been discontinued. Luckily, we were able to locate some brand-new cameras that were still in stock and we were able to purchase two cameras. We are still working on researching the closed caption system for the station. There are two styles that we have been researching for performance and pricing and hope that be moving forward soon pending spending approval.

GETV has done research into options for upgrading outs switchers in the Council Chamber Studio and in the Office Studio from Windows 10 computer-based system to the Windows 11 based system. At the last update meeting we need to wait to hear back from a vendor that was checking with the company to see if they could just be upgraded. I have heard back and unfortunately the systems we have cannot be upgraded. This would require us to purchase at least one new switcher for our City Hall studio. This cost is somewhere between \$11,000.00 - \$15,000 depending on vendors. I am in the process of pricing for the FY'27 budget.

I am currently preparing the GETV budget for FY'27. My staff is always the priority because the fanciest equipment won't cover any event by itself. The only major purchases I see are the new switcher and another camera if they are still available by July.

We will soon be preparing for GHS and GALT Graduation ceremonies the Relay for Life broadcast, Gardner Museum Spring Lecture Series, and summer concerts in the park.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Tim Joshi  
Director, GETV

# CITY OF GARDNER

MASSACHUSETTS 01440

## COUNCIL ON AGING

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Charles P. McKean Building  
294 Pleasant Street



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T: (978) 630-4067  
F: (978) 632-5965

October 14, 2024

The Honorable Michael J. Nicholson  
Office of the Mayor of the City of Gardner  
95 Pleasant Street  
Gardner, MA 01440

Dear Mayor Nicholson,

The Gardner Council on Aging recently conducted a review of Michael F. Ellis, Director of the Gardner Senior Center and Chief Executive of the Council on Aging. The reason for the evaluation was to examine the role of the Director and to determine his efficacy and the level of satisfaction of those that work with and for the Gardner Senior Center. Furthering our desire to conduct this evaluation were numerous positive comments about the Director and our hope to determine from our perspective whether the results of the recent salary study were consistent with his work.

A group of five members was identified and unanimously selected by the Council to complete this task. These five members of the Council met and discussed methods of evaluating Mr. Ellis, and after extensive deliberation and investigations, determined it would be appropriate to use a 360° evaluation approach, affording us the opportunity to get feedback on Mr. Ellis' performance from a larger group of people and organizations with which we are associated and with whom we work.

The group worked to create the final evaluation tool over the course of almost 5 weeks. After finalizing the evaluation tool, comprised of 20 questions from which Mr. Ellis would be ranked on his performance regarding the quality of programs and services, people and organizations that included supervisors, staff, vendors, seniors, City of Gardner Department Heads/Peers, and departments that had a financial oversight and/or role with the Gardner Senior Center were selected and interviewed beginning in July of 2024. Interviewees were also allowed to add their comments in areas that may not have been covered by the evaluation tool.

Para-phrasing comments from those interviewed include:

1. The Center is well run with many activities and programs that are inclusive. There is good outreach (communication) and staff are friendly, helpful and courteous. The Center is not run as a club but a location for information and fun programming. It is a destination for many.
2. Many comments regarding improvements were related to areas not directly controlled by the Director. The number one issue identified as needing improvement was parking. It must be noted that the Senior Center now has a Memorandum of Understanding that allows us to use the Mission of Grace Church Parking area and has implemented shuttle buses for large events from the Mission of Grace Church and Gardner Police Department Parking lots as ways to address the parking issue. The slow elevator and better access were other areas identified as

needing improvement. Many of those interviewed rightly commented that the proposed relocation of the Center to the former Waterford Street School would in large part address these two concerns.

Other comments included attracting younger senior participants, an area the Board has started to look at and address, and the lack of diversity in many ways at the Center, an area being reviewed by the Council on Aging and the Center's work with HEAL Gardner.

3. Comments directly related to Mr. Ellis's performance included:
  - a. Michael is a great force to move the Senior Center forward.
  - b. Mr. Ellis is on top of everything, understands issues that seniors are facing, and can find creative options and solutions.
  - c. Mike is instrumental in driving programs positively and acts/interacts positively with seniors.
  - d. Director Ellis does a lot of extra things including opening the center for evening activities such as dance classes and support groups

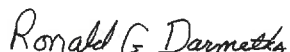
The final evaluation results were not surprising to the evaluation group or the Gardner Council on Aging. Overall, Mike scored consistently above average or higher in every category, with a combined average rating of the 20 areas evaluated of 4.79 on a 5-point scale. Areas scoring the highest ratings included the day-to-day activities necessary for a well-run center, demonstrating strong work ethic and good character, using competent skills in center relationships with stakeholders, and demonstrating alignment with community partners, organizations and agencies. Our interviewees also noted the high level of confidentiality, compliance with regulations, use of best practices, involvement in the community, ability to address long term issues, ability to coordinate services and understanding needs of constituents, work to seek input and suggestions and respond effectively to the same, drive to increase utilization at the Center, and ability to create new opportunities when actionable.

The Gardner Council on Aging met in Executive Session to review and discuss the final results of the evaluation and the process we used. The results were received enthusiastically. As a result of the recommendation from the Council on Aging, I am sending you the results of this evaluation as well as a blank copy of the tool for your reference by way of attachment.

On behalf of the Gardner Council on Aging, I am happy to express our satisfaction with the work being done by Mr. Ellis and to convey to you the overall high level of satisfaction Mike has earned from a multitude of people, organizations and people with whom we work.

Of course, if you have any questions regarding this communication, please feel free to contact me directly at (978) 632-6285 or by email at [ronalddarmetka@comcast.net](mailto:ronalddarmetka@comcast.net).

Sincerely,



Ronald G. Darmetka  
Chair, Gardner Council on Aging

cc: Members, Gardner Council on Aging  
Judy Mack, Chair, Welfare Committee, Gardner City Council

**Gardner City Council  
Subcommittee Update Template**

**Department:** Gardner Senior Center/Council on Aging  
Michael F. Ellis, Director

**Submitted to:** Welfare Committee  
Councilor Craig Cormier, Chair

**Reporting Period:** February, 2026

**Monthly Highlights**

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**Top Accomplishments:**

- Increased Holiday Program participation by 12%- fostering well-being and engagement- record numbers of engagements exceeding 11,000 in FY2025
- Managed over 750 volunteers who performed more than 23,000 hours of service collectively with value of over \$350,000
- Completed Ramp Repairs with no interruption of service
- Amplified impact of programs and services through expanded strategic partnership in community- increasing resources and funding for programs
- Introduced Talk with a Doc and Nurse drop in program twice monthly
- Expanded travel consultant office hours to 2-4 times monthly at 4 hours
- Expanded exercise and fitness programs
- *See attached full report on programs and services*

**Significant Issues or Challenges:**

- Boilers- cold weather and age of system putting strain on heating system- work needs to be done at an estimated cost of between \$4,000 and \$5,000
  - Primary supply line/manifold to circulating pumps is rusted and in poor condition-repairs put on hold because of the extreme cold weather and inability to heat building when down.
  - Two circulating pumps are leaking and need to be replaced- one has been taken entirely offline. We have been able to mitigate loss of heat in this zone using other strategies.
  - Domestic hot water boiler continues to experience intermittent failures, tripping the system off. We have been able to have repair work done to keep it operational but a full examination will be done during the boiler line repair work
- Ice and Weather Concerns
  - Ice damage has caused a leak in the rubber membrane roof. We cannot address until snow and ice melt for roof access.
  - Ice dams and ice accumulation have been an issue requiring a great deal of time and resources to manage.

## **Gardner City Council Subcommittee Update Template**

- Parking areas and access points have been cleared and maintained by staff, contractors and DPW.
- Parking Changes in the City's ordinances and response to weather emergencies (including signage that was recently removed) could impact our ability to continue to maintain clear and safe parking for seniors participating in Center events.

### **Key Operational Metrics**

- Unique individuals engaged – 11,600
- 751 volunteers performed over 23,000 hours of volunteer work valued at over \$384,000
- Inbound Calls per month average over 400/Outbound calls per month exceed 800 not including robo calls (which are 2,300 per call, and they are made monthly)
- Case Manage an average of 4 seniors per month
- 3292 program/services per year with over 16,000 hours of programming
- Financial impact on seniors
  - Medicare Savings (elimination of part B premiums, Medex premiums and high-cost prescription co-pays) **exceed \$1.187 million**
  - RAFT benefits exceed **\$210,000**
  - Recouped charges, liens, etc **\$232,699**
  - 143 Tax Returns scheduled for this season **(\$21,450)**
  - SNAP benefits exceed **\$139,000**
  - Farmer's Market Coupons distributed July 24/July 25 totaled **\$16,000**
- Marketing
  - Develop and distribute 2,000 twelve-page full-colored newsletters. Distribute emailed newsletter that exceeds 30 pages
  - Increased email marketing to over 1,900 individuals
  - Hosted 12 cable television programs
  - Created new tri-color brochure
  - Developed Medicare counseling rack cards- distributed 4000 to local health and social service outlets
  - Increased views on social media to over 86,930 and reach over 5,900. Followers now exceed 1,130. The 65+ age group is our primary social media audience with over 47.4% of the engagements, and women comprise most of this group.
  - Google rating of 4.7, Facebook rating of 5/5
  - In final stages of Gardner Magazine series

### **Project & Initiative Status**

- **Project: Boiler Repair**  
Status: delayed ensuring heat in building  
This Month's Progress: Repairs to domestic hot water heater  
Next Steps: Replace entire feed line with sub stems for independent zones

**Gardner City Council  
Subcommittee Update Template**

- **Project: Ramp Repair**  
Status: complete  
This Month's Progress: removed and replaced rusted and broken legs
- **Project: Emergency Exit Repair**  
Status: complete  
This Month's Progress: removed and replaced rusted stair treads and platform
- **Project: Rubber Roof Repair**  
Status: on hold until we get access to roof to examine areas needing work. If we can repair it using our staff, we will have to acquire materials including rubber, rubber seal tap and lapping adhesive. Otherwise we will employ a roofing contractor  
This Month's Progress: obtained quotes and working on access
- **Project: Waterford Street Community Center Furniture**  
Status: In process  
This Month's Progress: moved/relocated furniture for the Senior Center which has been stored at the Community Center from the elementary side of the building to the junior high side enlisting 14 volunteers, Senior Center Director and maintenance staff
- **Project: Outreach Wellness Checks**  
Status: In process  
This Month's Progress: Continue outreach to seniors who have had experience at the Center but who have not been present in the last year to determine needs and provide resources
- **Project: Waterford Street Community Center Relocation**  
Status: In process  
This Month's Progress: See above move, group working on color scheme, initial conceptual designs for office space and room utilization

**Financial Update**

- **Budget V. Actual Spending:**
  - Personnel Costs are within budget with the following exceptions
    - At 58% of the year, we have spent 62% of the Custodian's Salary
    - At 58% of the year, we have spent 87% of overtime. With expanded center hours to include three nights per week and up to three hours on weekends, we will need additional funds for the overtime account
  - Operational expenses are within budget **with the following exceptions:**
    - At 58% of the year, we have spent 43% of the maintenance budget. Additional purchase orders and outstanding work amount to an additional \$15,500 plus normal daily operational maintenance expenses. We anticipate a deficit in this account of almost \$9,000.

**Gardner City Council  
Subcommittee Update Template**

- Information Technology has a fixed monthly expense of \$275. At 58% of the year, we have spent over 64% of the budget amount and expect a deficit of about \$300 by year end.
- Energy and Utilities expenses are currently under budget; however, Jan-Apr are our highest billed months. Generally, we have experienced a 30% increase in energy and utilities to date compared to the same time last year. We are unable to forecast projected expenses for the remainder of the year. We will continue to monitor expenses in this account
- The supplies expense budget has been exhausted. We are working on ways to redistribute eligible expenses to other funds
- Revolving Fund
  - Our current cap set by the Council on the Revolving Fund is \$80,000. As of January 31, we received \$75,136 in revenue and have spent \$44,828. We have outstanding purchase orders of \$18,223.21, plus a recurring expense for our technology equipment internet access (billed on actual usage and projected to be about \$12,000). Both revenues and expenses are projected to exceed \$80,000 and therefore we will likely need authorization to increase the cap on this fund
- Lifeline Account
  - All accounts were migrated to the Gardner Senior Center in December effective January 1.
  - Subscription billing is projected to be \$18,000 annually; revenues projected at \$27,600. Additional expenses include part time program manager.
- **Unexpected spend:**
  - Repairs and Maintenance- The balance in this account as of February 5, 2026, was \$6,607.71. Included in the current expenses were costs related to the back emergency exit repairs of \$2,535, and work to address frequent circuit trips and inadequate power supply on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of \$2,018. Our projected deficit in this account including normal ordinary repair expenses and the following purchase orders/outstanding work is approximately \$9,000.
    - Roof- \$1,600
    - Boilers- \$5,000
    - Air Purifier Filtration- \$6,500
    - Generator Maintenance- \$2400

**Personnel & Resources**

- Staffing:
  - The Center operates with three full time permanent positions. The Director, the Administrative Assistance, and the Facilities Manager.

**Gardner City Council  
Subcommittee Update Template**

- The Center has four part time administrative staff who cumulatively make up 41 hours.
- Maintenance staff salaries and overtime are over budget at this point in the year.
- Equipment:
  - Snowblower will likely need to be replaced next season
  - Seeking a truck and plow to clean residual snow/ice in lot after storms and to use to tow trailer for equipment used off site
  - Will be asking for floor maintenance equipment (ie buffer/burnisher)

**Requests to the Subcommittee**

- Ordinance:
  - Changes to snow emergency ordinance creates confusion for people who use lot during off hours. The lack of signage and direction in this regard makes it more difficult to keep lot free of snow and ice debris left from cars in lot when it is being cleared.
- Funding:
  - Seeking approval for increases to the Revolving Fund limits
  - Seeking approval for increases to the Lifeline Account to be more in line with projected revenues and expenses
  - Salary Review and increase
  - Seeking support for supplemental budget appropriations
- Equipment:
  - Review acquiring a retired snowplow/vehicle from other departments to be deployed at the Gardner Senior Center
  - Funding authorization to purchase a buffer/burnisher for the current and future center

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Michael F. Ellis  
Director**

# CITY OF GARDNER

MASSACHUSETTS 01440

## COUNCIL ON AGING

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Charles P. McKean Building  
294 Pleasant Street



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T: (978) 630-4067  
F: (978) 632-5965

February 3, 2026

City Councilor Welfare Committee  
Councilor Craig Cormier, Chair  
Councilor Calvin Brooks  
Councilor Karen Hardern  
Gardner City Hall, 95 Pleasant Street  
Gardner, MA 01440

**Dear Gardner City Council Welfare Committee Members,**

The Gardner Council on Aging/Senior Center is pleased to provide this update of projects and initiatives. Some of this information was included in our report to the Committee in September and has been updated.

The Gardner Senior Center stands as an essential pillar of our community's social and economic fabric, providing a vital network of support and engagement for thousands of seniors and non-seniors in our area. This past fiscal year has demonstrated not only the profound need for our services but also our capacity to deliver them with excellence and measurable impact.

I am excited to report to the Gardner Welfare Committee the financial/economic impact from the services provided by the Gardner Senior Center *conservatively* exceeds **\$2,650,000**, with over **\$2,300,000** of that going directly in the pockets of area seniors. Since the beginning of FY2026, we continued to provide the regularly scheduled programs and services for seniors including:

- **Food and Nutrition-** such as food bags, food pantry, SNAP and HIP Benefit Assistance, Congregate Meals, Bread & Pastry Raffle, Food Drive, Thanksgiving Holiday Meal, Christmas Holiday Meal
- **Recreation & Entertainment-** Concerts throughout the months of November and December, trips and excursions including holiday performances, Pitch and Cribbage, Bingo, Majong, billiards, Ukulele Class and Ukulele Open Strum, Cajon Drum Class, Halloween Party, and Christmas Holiday Party
- **Health, Exercise & Fitness-** Yoga, Mat Yoga, Line Dancing, Ballroom Dancing, Fun & Fitness, Tai Chi, Walking Group, Mindful meditation, meditation with Music, durable medical supply loan program, vaccine clinics, blood pressure clinics, information and advocacy, and drop in hours with both a physician and nurse
- **Technology-** Tech Insights, Chrome Class, Video for Seniors
- **Education and Information-** Frauds and Scams, Harvey Leonard, Boston Tea Party Museum, Breakfast with a Badge
- **Crafts and Skills-** Craft Fair, Quilters, Crochet, Knitting, Caricature Carvers, Quilling, Basketry, macramé, Bead Crafts

- **Groups and Support-** Medicare Counseling, Housing Assistance, Benefit Enrollment, Men's Support, Women's Support, TOPS Weight Management, Memory Café, Veteran's Support, Travel Advisor, AARP, Golden Age Club, Books with Friends, Lifeline
- **Administrative-** marketing and communications, print newsletter, online newsletter, tech boards, WGET slide deck, social media posts and updates, financial reports, Board representation to ASNCM, personnel management, facility updates, tech updates, broadcast emails and phone calls, Lifeline, Case Management (housing, benefits assistance, food, transportation), shuttle services, grant management

I am also pleased to provide this update on major accomplishments over the past year:

#### Medicare and Health Insurance:

- Designed and developed Medicare Programming for off hour and evenings
- Created and distributed over **4000** Medicare Counseling Rack Cards to area health, social service and financial institutions
- Counseled almost **1000** individuals for Medicare and/or Health Insurance
- Enrolled over **430** Seniors in Senior Buy in saving them over **\$964,920**
- Enrolled seniors in the Low-Income Subsidy, saving them **\$264** month through the elimination of their Medex and Prescription Drug Premiums (approximately **\$136,000**, and eliminating their **\$2,000** annual co pay on high-cost medications- **\$86,000**)

#### Case Management and Support:

- Provided extensive **case management** for seniors facing housing, transportation, medication, health insurance, and protective services concerns.
- Offer **advocacy and assistance** in dispute resolution, online services and resources (DMV, Social Security, DFAS, etc) resulting in seniors ability to recoup expenses or lost assets.
  - In just four examples, we were able to assist a senior file appeals on pension liens, initiated emergency social security applications, and assisted with disputes of liens resulting in **\$232,600** in recouped money
  - We have helped place 26 homeless seniors/individuals into permanent housing
- Started development of **Friendly Visitor Program** and Outreach
- Offer **utility utilization reviews** and assistance in partnership with National Grid
- Offer Housing Counseling Services in partnership with RCAP Solutions
  - Enrolled approximately **30** individuals in Residential Assistance for Families in Transition Program (RAFT), allowing them to access up to **\$7,000** each annually, **\$210,000**
- Provide Tax Return Preparation Services partnership with the AARP Tax Foundation
  - Prepared approximately **125** returns with an average value of **\$150**, or **\$18,750** total
  - Recruited several new volunteers to be trained as preparers, allowing the program to expand to other centers in our area
- Provided weekly support groups for men and weight management
- Provided a monthly support group for women and veterans
  - Expanded the Veteran's Support Group to lunch time program providing lunch and a monthly speaker in partnership with the Gardner Veteran's Service Office, Beacon Hospice, and Brookhaven Hospice
  - Connected at least 40 Veterans to the City's Veterans Service Office for disability
    - As a result, at least 35 veterans Café members received **between \$175 and \$4000 per month** depending on the percent of the service related disability
    - As a result, at least 35 seniors were enrolled in VA Healthcare, increasing coverage and saving money on co-pays and deductibles

- As a result, all these veterans were connected to Chapter 115 benefits which provided for **up to \$2,600 per month** in medical reimbursements
  - Planned and implemented five (5) veterans and Senior Center Support Group Trips to the American Heritage Museum, Battleship Cove, the USS Constitution, the WOOSOX, and Cathedral of the Pines
- Started the Memory Café for folks either with dementia or caregivers of folks with dementia

#### **Food and Nutrition:**

- Increased participation in our congregate meals program
- Provide SNAP and HIP Counseling three days per month
  - Enrolled approximately **54** seniors and eligible individuals, providing an average monthly benefit of **\$215** and collectively over **\$139,320** to supplement their food budgets
- Distributed **200** Farmer's Market Coupon Books to area Seniors (one of the largest Farmer's Market Coupon Distribution Sites in Central Massachusetts), putting **\$5000** into their pockets for fresh fruits and vegetables. Last year (FY2024), we distributed over **\$11,000** in Farmers Market Coupons to area seniors
- Hosted food drives for our local food pantry, providing over **\$12,000** of food to the Gardner CAC
- Hosted the annual Thanksgiving Holiday and Christmas Holiday Meals Programs, serving **350** people at each event, over **800** people total and supporting local police, fire, and ambulance workers with meals on these holidays
  - Increased the number of volunteers and participating community organizations
  - Increased the amount of funding support for these programs
  - Increased the menu and other give-away products for these programs

#### **Programs:**

- Increased participation in Center Programs and overall utilization- delivered **3292 programs** and over **16,000 hours** of programming
  - Over **4000 unique individuals** served in FY2024/**11,500+** unique individuals in 2025
  - Average weekly utilization exceeded **600 individuals**
  - Increased number of **off hour/evening programs** to extend reach to working seniors
  - Increased number of volunteers
    - Over **750 volunteers** performed over **23,000** hours of service to the Center
    - Volunteer time for FY2025 is valued at over **\$384,000**
- Planned and coordinated monthly regular speaker programs for Senior Center, AARP, TOPS, and Golden Age Club, designed and implemented numerous special programs, and recruited speakers and presenters for these programs
- Identified, recruited and on-boarded new instructors and facilitators for these programs
- Developed and introduced new programs including standing Travel Time Tea's (twice monthly) and craft programs including Crafter's Club, Beading, Advanced basketry, Walking Group, and crafters open house at the Gardner Senior Center featuring the Center's Craft groups and activities
- Continued to experience record participation special programs including AARP Annual Meeting, Summer Outing, Tax Aide, Annual Holiday Event, Holiday Sing Along, and Holiday Meals including St. Patrick's, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.
- Partnered with the Gardner Board of Health to host a shredding/recycling event where we shred over 3.16 tons of paper, 1000 lbs of electronics, and over 12,600 lbs of textiles

- Expanded our technology and related programs to include:
  - The **Digital Classroom Program**, offering beginner and advanced classes multiple times each month
  - Purchased **20 chrome books** for lending library in partnership with the Templeton Senior Center
  - Created a **Video Production Class** for Seniors in partnership with WGET and MWCC
  - Provide **weekly technology assistance** sessions for seniors
- Expanded programs with partners including Care Central VNA, Edward Jones, The Highlands, RHR, American Red Cross, Registry of Deeds and Registry of Probate
- Expanded our Friendly Visitation Check in Call Program
- Developed and scheduled, In partnership with the Gardner Lion's Club, a fall **Craft Fair** at the Senior Center
- Expanded the Center's **trips and excursions** programs including Veteran's trips, Center trips, and holiday program trips and excursions
- Initiated a vendor representative **TABLING AND TALK PROGRAM** for Friday morning programs
- Initiated a drop in coffee program twice monthly with a physician and register nurse
- Initiated the **Lifeline Program** for Seniors at the Gardner Senior Center
  - Developed and launched marketing and communications program for Lifeline
  - Provided training to staff and volunteers

#### Transportation:

- Expanded transportation and access for seniors
  - Enrolled over **100** seniors in MART Senior Transit and Paratransit Services
  - In partnership with the Gardner CAC, **547** trips were provided for medical transportation in FY2025 valued at over **\$50,000**
- Hosted informational programs on transportation services
- Created and implemented a **shuttle program for seniors** to and from their home to attend specific programs including BINGO
- Expanded transportation services for events to **provide shuttles** from remote parking areas and address limited parking opportunities in our current facility
- Partner with the District Attorney Joseph Early's Office, the Gardner Police Department, GFA Federal Credit Union, Edwards Jones, and the Women's Circle of Giving to reduce the impact of fraud and scams on the senior population through programming, forums, and information

#### Development:

- Experienced growth in revenues including grant funding, donations, program support and newsletter/kiosk advertisements
- Developed a staff focus on social media and marketing
- Developed and delivered training for staff and volunteers
- Increased part-time staff and volunteers to provide for continuous weekly support coverage to front office
- Developed an annual scheduling system for multi-room scheduling

- Provide monthly detailed financial reports to the Council on Aging
  - Increased level and amount of **material donations** to the Gardner Senior Center
  - Purchased **new equipment** for programs, classes and activities including weights, stretch bands and video equipment
- Developed and delivered **two (2) comprehensive board member orientations**

### Marketing:

- Developed volunteer and staff highlights for newsletter and electronic messaging
- Expanded internal staff capacity to have a part-time focus on marketing and social media
- Created new Gardner Senior Center tri-fold brochure
- Increased broadcast voice and electronic messaging to seniors with important notices and announcements
- Hosted **12 (monthly)** Gardner Educational Television Programs
- In final stages of launching new outreach program with Gardner Magazine
- Created monthly program updates for message boards at Center
- Created monthly program updates for message slides at WGET
- Created marketing messages at Community Health Connections
- Created and published advertisement for Theater at the Mount Program Book and Electronic Message Boards
- Increased content pushes with new posts weekly resulting in continued growth in social media presence
  - Increased the number of views for content to over **40,000**
  - Increased the reach of social media content to over **6300**
  - Increased the number of followers to **974**
  - Increased the content likes to **717**
  - Increased engagements and clicks on Google Business Page
  - Earned a **4.7/5 rating on Google** and a **5/5 rating** on Facebook
- Developed expanded sandwich board messaging throughout the city in partnership with DPW Lines and Signs Department
- Published monthly newsletter
  - Publish and distribute two thousand **(2000) PRINTED** full color newsletters monthly. In past five years we have:
    - Increased size of publication to twelve pages
    - Increased color content to entire publication
    - Increased the number of advertisers
    - Increased number of distribution outlets
    - Published and distributed two thousand **(2000) ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTERS** monthly
    - Increased size of electronic publication to **24-36 pages** monthly
    - Develop monthly customized Constant Contact content
- Featured article about the Gardner Senior Center in Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Massachusetts state-wide publication

- Provided support to Board of Health for Annual National Night Out
  - Assisted with set-up and take down at both events
  - Hosted resource tables for the Gardner Senior Center and AARP
  - Co-Sponsored food tent- in 2025 served over **1100** people
  - Co-Sponsored food tent in 2025 in Ashburnham and served over **750** people
  - Managed the food preparation at annual Gardner Housing Authority picnic/barbeque
- Partnered with the Gardner City Clerk on the City Poll Worker Volunteer Recruitment
- Partnered with the Gardner Board of Health and the Gardner City Clerk on the Annual Dog License Renewal Initiative
- Partnered with the Massachusetts State Chapter of AARP and the Greater Gardner Chapter of AARP to develop special programs and speakers
- Partnered with the Office of the Mayor and the Director of Human resources for the City to promote the VIPS Program, increasing awareness and participation by seniors in the program

#### **Facilities Management:**

- Installation of new coaxial lines for internet to building
- Installation of cat6 cabling in building
- Restoration of all the floors including stripping, sealing and waxing
- Installation of display racks
- Re-organization of storage space to accommodate new donations of equipment/furnishings
- Re-organization of main office to accommodate new workspaces and equipment
- Installed new electrical outlets for air conditioning units to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor
- Installed new sound system for large function room
- Repaired and installed new covers on all three pool tables
- Expanded planters and landscaping improvements to parking area
- Completed repairs, repainting/resurfacing ramp
- Completed extensive welding/repairs to emergency exit/fire escape from main hall
- Completed repairs to roof
- Repaired and cleaned mini-splits and installed protected conduit coverings
- Coordinated snow clearing and removal from adjacent City Parking Lot

#### **Projects in the works:**

- Developing an identification badge system for all volunteers
- Restoration of back exit platform and stairs and fire escape to 2<sup>nd</sup> floor
- Relocation to the Waterford Community Center

#### **Concerns/Issues:**

- Boilers- this year has been particularly problematic for our boilers. We have implemented pro-active strategies to prevent lack of heat in the building including the Senior Center and CAC spaces.
  - The primary line/manifold from the boilers to our 6 circulating pumps is severely rusted and in poor condition and is currently scheduled to be replaced

- Two circulating pumps have experienced failures. We have been able to get them both online but leaking from rust and deterioration requires constant monitoring. These pumps will be replaced/repared when the line is repaired
- The hot water furnace/boiler has been tripping off. We have had this examined and while we believe the issue has been resolved, we still experience intermittent failures. This issue will be addressed during the line work
- Ice and Weather Concerns
  - A new leak has been detected in the rubber roof at 294 Pleasant Street. Once the snow and ice have cleared, we will inspect the roof to determine the extent of repairs needed
  - The staff have been working hard at minimizing the impact of significant ice dams and ice accumulation at key points of egress. Numerous strategies have been implemented to manage and mitigate from further damage to the building
  - We have been able to maintain clean and safe parking areas and access to the Senior Center. There have been recent changes to the City's Parking Ban which may not afford us the opportunity to enforce parking restrictions which allow us to schedule plowing and snow removal in a lot free of vehicles. We are hopeful that we can provide some input into this City Ordinance and Policy not only for our current Center but also our future center
- Relocation of the Gardner Senior Center to the Waterford Street Community Center.

If you have any questions regarding this submission, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



**Michael F. Ellis**  
**Director, Gardner Senior Center**  
**Council on Aging**

**The Gardner Senior Center provides the following programs and services. Many require appointments or advanced registration.**

- Medicare Counseling
- Housing Counseling

- **Tax Assistance**
- **Public Benefit Counseling including:**
- **SNAP/Hip Applications**
- **MassHealth Assistance**
- **Residential Assistance for Families in Transition**
- **Benefit Applications Assistance**
- **Information and Referrals**
- **Social Activities**
- **Exercise and Fitness Programs**
- **Arts and Crafts**
- **Concerts and other Music Programs**
- **Musical Instrument Instruction**
- **Recreation, games, billiards, Bingo**
- **Meals and Food Assistance**
- **Workshops, Seminars and Speakers**
- **Technology Classes and Assistance**
- **Library and Computer Center**
- **Support Groups**
- **Health Screenings and Programs**
- **Trips and Travel**
- **Volunteer Opportunities**
- **Advocacy and Dispute Resolution**
- **And so much more!**



City of Gardner - *Executive Department*

Mayor Michael J. Nicholson

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February 17, 2026

Hon. George C. Tyros, Council President

And City Councilors

Gardner City Hall, Rm 121

95 Pleasant Street

Gardner, MA 01440

RE: A Communication from the Mayor regarding the January 2026 Monthly Report of the Gardner Community Youth Center

Dear Mr. President and Councilors,

Attached, please find the January 2026 update report from the Gardner Community Youth Center.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael J. Nicholson

Mayor, City of Gardner



# JANUARY REPORT

## OVERVIEW:

With another month in the books, I'm pleased to bring you another report about the Gardner Community Youth Center. Through the ice, snow, and cold weather our Youth Center continues to be a safe and fun place our members can rely on.

## STAFFING:

In our last days of December we added a new Assistant Youth Center Director, Ana Frushell. Ana enthusiastically brings a passion for Artistic Expression and hopes to help youth express themselves through Art and Photography. Ana has worked with youth of this age through a variety of programs including experience as a summer camp counselor.

## EVENTS:

Members are already inquiring about our availability during February Vacation. Our plan is to open for extended hours (12pm - 6pm) from February 17th - February 20th. Each day will be accompanied by a theme and include unique activities and offerings.

## PROGRAMMING:

With a new assistant on-board on a daily basis, I am excited to announce a new slate of in-house programming that will take advantage of the talents of our staff and hone in on the interests of our members. Starting in February, we will have a schedule of programming that includes Computer Programming, Artistic Expression, Guitar Lessons, and more!



Our new Assistant Youth Center Director, Ana Frushell.

# 65

Registered  
Members

# 35

Unique  
Visitors this  
Month

# 19

Average  
Members per  
Day