

# CITY OF GARDNER

MASSACHUSETTS 01440

## COUNCIL ON AGING

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Charles P. McKean Building  
294 Pleasant Street



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### COUNCIL ON AGING MINUTES

January 6, 2026, 2:00pm

Gardner Senior Center, 294 Pleasant Street

Meeting Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DfVKKoWQjm0>

**Present:** Ronald Darmetka (Chair), Michael Ellis, Paul Leone (Vice Chair), Terri Hillman (Treasurer), Kathy O'Brien (Secretary/Clerk), Stanley Luczko, Nancy Hebert, Brenda Crumb, Ken Fournier, Mary Shaffer, Kristi Livingston, Keith Aubin

**Absent:** Julie Meehan, Cheryl Howe, Daniel Kelley

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#### 1. Call to Order & Opening Announcements

- Chair Ron Darmetka called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM.
- Recording Announcement: The Chair announced that sessions may be audio/video recorded subject to reasonable requirements to ensure no interference with the meeting conduct. All referenced documents must be submitted in duplicate and will become part of the official record.

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#### 2. Election of Officers (Reorganization)

- Pursuant to a city ordinance passed last year, the reorganization meeting was moved from May to January. Michael Ellis oversaw the initial nominations.
  - Chairman: Ron Dameka nominated by Brenda, seconded by Paul. Motion made to cast one vote to close nominations and elect Ron Darmetka as Chair. Vote: Unanimous.
  - Vice Chairman: Paul Leone nominated by Kathy, seconded by Terri. Motion made to cast one vote to close nominations and elect Paul Leone as Vice Chair. Vote: Unanimous.
  - Treasurer: Terry Hillman nominated by Brenda, seconded by Stanley. Motion made to cast one vote to close nominations and elect Terri Hillman as Treasurer. Vote: Unanimous.
  - Secretary: Kathy O'Brien nominated by Terri, seconded by Barbara. Motion made to cast one vote to close nominations and elect Vote Kathy O'Brien as Secretary. Vote: Unanimous.
  - CEO of the Board: Michael Ellis nominated by Terri, seconded by Keith. Motion made to cast one vote to close nominations and elect Mike Ellis as CEO of the Board. Vote: unanimous. *Note:* Director Ellis clarified that while the Board appoints him as CEO of the Board, the Mayor appoints the position of Director.
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### 3. Approval of Minutes

- The minutes from the prior meeting were reviewed. Motion made and carried to accept the minutes of the December 1 Council on Aging Meeting by Keith, seconded by Mary. Vote: Unanimous.

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### 4. Treasurer's Report (Presented by Terry Hillman & Michael Ellis)

#### A. General Fund:

- The budget is at the halfway point of the fiscal year (50%).
- Department head and custodian salaries are tracking on schedule. Outreach coordinator expenses exceeding the general fund budget are covered by grant funds. Overtime is Currently at 90% due to three-night-a-week operations. A supplemental budget request may be necessary.
- Maintenance & repairs is roughly \$1,500 over budget.
- Energy costs are roughly 33% higher than last year, though currently offset by National Grid credits.

#### B. Gift Funds:

- Current balance of \$96,298.91 (with \$25,000 earmarked for painting).

#### C. Revolving Fund:

Current available balance is \$36,880.57 (Cash balance of \$57,710.36 minus \$20,829.79 in payables/POs). Expenses for December were \$14,890 for a total expense in the account (ytd) of \$43,000. Significant income in December (~\$10,000) was driven by holiday meal sponsorships, program income, and holiday programs. Total yearly income was \$70,354.54.

#### D. Grants:

- **FY25 State Grant:** Ending cash balance of \$67,834.72. Monthly expenses in December totaled \$4,322.40. Salary Expenses posted against this account were estimated for December at \$3,397.37 and yearly estimated to be \$6773.25. There are \$33,120.36 of purchase orders against this account, leaving an available balance of \$27,941.11. Estimates were recorded because the last week of salary occurred during the holidays and were not updated by the COA for that accrual.
- **FY26 State Grant:** Ending Cash balance was \$89,136.
- **FY24 State Grant:** Closed
- **FY Tech Grant:** Closed

Motion was made and carried to accept Treasurer's Report by Stanley, seconded by Paul. Vote: Unanimous.

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### 5. Old Business: Waterford Street Project Update

- **Bathrooms:** Freshly painted; fixtures are installed, and urinals are being finalized.
  - **Doors:** Delivery is expected toward the end of January (based on the 8–10 week lead time).
  - **General:** Progress is steady; a formal group meeting is expected following today's city ceremonies.
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## 6. Director's Report (Michael Ellis)

- **Tax Aid:** Appointments opened today at 7:30 AM. Out of 120 slots, 70 were booked before noon.
- **Personnel Changes:** Recognition of City Auditor John Richard's departure. The Director and Treasurer expressed their gratitude for his mentorship in developing the department's detailed financial reporting.
- **Appreciation:** Mike thanked all the various City Departments and Department Heads for their continued support as well as Hanover Theater, Wood's Ambulance for their shuttle services, and the many very generous donors and supporters
- **Facilities:** The fire escape has been repaired (8 treads rebuilt/welded). Special thanks to the Fire Department for coordinating safety watches during the repair.
- **Programming & Trips:** Recent successful trips included 80 people to the Boston Pops and a group to *A Christmas Carol*.
- **Community Support:** 11,000 unique individuals were served last year through various outreach programs. \$1.3 million dollars recaptured for area seniors. Volunteers do amazing things each and every day!
- **In Memoriam:** The Council noted the passing of longtime volunteer **Dave "Mo" Morris**. Services are scheduled for next Friday and Saturday.
- **Reminder:** Mike noted that overall participation decreases during the months of January through March because of the number of snowbirds that seek out warmer weather. Mike encouraged folks that don't travel to participate in our many programs.
- **Grounds:** The Chair commended the snow removal and salting efforts by "New Drain Solutions" and the DPW.
- **Personnel:** Mike expressed appreciation for the staff and all that they do.

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## 7. Open Discussion

- **Property Future:** Paul Leone inquired about the future of the current building once the move to Waterford Street is complete. Director Ellis noted there is no official determination yet that he is aware of. Safety and Health related improvements or repairs must be done while we are still in the building.
- **Roof issues:** We have some leaks in the rubber roof. The staff are getting people to come look at it.
- **Waterford work:** it was suggested we contact Monty Tech or Sheriff's Department for help with improvements at Waterford including painting and cabinetry. We have not yet solicited bids or proposals for painting. Colors have not been selected.
- **Holiday Decorations:** Ron complimented the staff on the holiday decorations & Programs.

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## 8. Adjournment

The next meeting is scheduled for February 2, 2026 at 2pm. Motion was made and carried to adjourn by Paul Leone and seconded by Keith Aubin, VOTE: Unanimous.

**RESPECTFULLY submitted by,  
Kathleen O'Brien, Secretary**