

**COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
DIRECTOR'S REPORT
FEBRUARY 2026**

SUBMITTED TO: Jill Goldsmith, Town Manager
SUBMITTED BY: Leah LaCross, Director of Community Services

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES:

Like all departments, Community Services made it through the grueling Blizzard of 2026 through teamwork, grit, and a lot of collaboration and communication with our Emergency Services Team, Town Departments, staff and outside agencies. As we worked to ensure that our older adult population was safe, warm and secure, we were reminded of just how much a community makes a difference in the lives of our residents.

On February 13, I completed the 6-week Suffolk University/Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) graduate level Human Resources Seminar. This program reviewed human resources management, and policies and practices specific to Massachusetts cities and towns. Other important topics included hiring and onboarding, policy development, collective bargaining, labor laws, and best practices in municipal management.

On Thursday, February 12th, I had the pleasure of addressing the staff of the Eldredge Public Library (EPL) on their Staff Development Day. This highly engaged team learned about all the programs and services that the Community Services Department offers, and how they can initiate referrals if they feel an older adult is in need.

In preparation for presenting the winning bid for the full renovation at the Center for Active Living (CFAL) at Town Meeting, we hosted a Bidder's walkthrough on February 20th, where potential bidders came by and toured the CFAL and had the opportunity to ask questions of both the architect and the Owner's Project Manager (OPM).

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CLINICIAN / CLINICAL SERVICES:

In the month of February, I had 79 interactions with 17 Chatham residents (not including the numerous contacts I made with Chatham community members during the 2 days I spent working at the Warming Center).

This month, I spent an additional 16 hours of non-clinical work, participating in my monthly Massachusetts co-responder meeting, my supervision meeting with Leah LaCross and Lieutenant Harris, The Chatham Elder Working Group (CHEWG), the monthly Community Crisis Intervention Team (CCIT) meetings in Orleans and Dennis, and the Barnstable Children's Behavioral Health Work Group (BCBHW).

New for me this month was a presentation I made to the Chatham Library staff, The Chatham Police Department's Citizens Academy, and The Chatham Men's Club. I also made myself available at the Community Center for several hours, meeting and greeting residents who frequent the Center, explaining my role and answering questions.

The latter part of this month brought a snowstorm that resulted in power loss, cold homes, lack of food, inability to contact families due to no phone service or dead phone batteries. Although at times residents were a bit panicked, the Town employees quickly came together to come to the aid of their most vulnerable residents.

I saw firsthand how the Chatham Fire and Police Departments, Center for Active Living staff, Facilities, and small business owners, quickly adjusted to the needs of their community and showed up for them.

What I realized is that this recent storm highlighted that our employees go beyond their job descriptions in times of need without complaint in order to provide excellent customer service to the residents.

COA DIVISION:

DEPARTMENT ASSISTANT:

In the past month, we experienced a decrease in phone call volume due to the number of snow days and related weather closures. The inclement weather significantly impacted regular operations and participant engagement during this time. However, following the distribution of a PSA email encouraging participants to call or visit the office to update their contact information, we saw a positive response. Approximately 20–30 participants reached out or came in to update their records. This demonstrates strong engagement and responsiveness when clear communication is provided.

- Transportation: ~166
- CFAL Programs: ~141
- SHINE: ~37
- Outreach Resources: ~78
- Adult Supportive Day Program: ~10
- Socialization & Recreation: ~0
- CFAL Renovation: 1
- Administrative/ Miscellaneous: ~82
- AARP: ~105

OUTREACH:

For the month of February Chatham Council on Aging Outreach had 342 separate interactions for 145 individuals. This includes 215 phone interactions and 63 office visits. Healthy Meals in Motion served 32 households and added 4 new families this month. With the winter weather in full swing, Outreach managed the Towns' Special Assistance list, which resulted in 86 separate interactions for 26 individuals coordinating storm-related responses, over the 4-day event.

TRANSPORTATION:

Despite a shortened month with only 16 regular workdays due to the blizzard during the week of February 23, 2026. Our Transportation Department worked closely with the Chatham Fire Department and the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to coordinate pre-storm transportation for residents who wished to relocate to shelters and continued those efforts the following week by providing rides to and from the Warming Center at the Chatham Community Center between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., after 94% of Chatham lost power. To further assist residents recovering from extended outages and food spoilage, we added a special Stop & Shop trip on Friday, February 27, ensuring access to essential groceries before the weekend. Our regular Stop & Shop program continues to see steady growth, with 12 interested participants

and an average of eight riders each week; in total, we supported 20 different residents with grocery access in February, reflecting our continued commitment to serving the Chatham community with care and flexibility during these challenging times.

	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26
CFAL Programs:	11	9	12
Grocery Access:			
Stop and Shop Trip	29	26	30
Chatham Village Market Deliveries	16	13	10
Healthy Meals in Motion	7	6	6
Medical Appointments:	42	38	39
Orlean Supportive Day:	22 (3 Participants)	21 (3 Participants)	15 (3 Participants)
Personal Errands:	19	17	7
Prescription Deliveries:	13	6	3
Ryders Cove Respite :	6 (2 Participants)	22 (2 Participants)	17 (3 Participants)

Please note: All rides listed above are round-trip rides (to and from the scheduled destination), except for Grocery Access, Healthy Meals in Motion, and Prescription Deliveries.

PROGRAMMING:

In February, the Center for Active Living (CFAL) offered 65 program opportunities to support older adults in our community. All programs are aligned with the Council on Aging’s (COA) mission and are organized into three core categories: Health & Wellness, Social, and Educational. Of the total offerings, 19 were educational programs, 22 focused on health and wellness, and 32 provided opportunities for social engagement. These programs continue to promote lifelong learning, healthy living, and meaningful connection.

Programming at the end of the month was impacted by weather-related closures, which resulted in the cancellation of several scheduled activities. Despite these disruptions, CFAL maintained a strong level of engagement throughout the month, welcoming 341 participants to the building.

This month’s most popular program was AARP Tax-Aide, which served 39 members of the Chatham community through free, volunteer-led tax preparation services. The Valentine’s Day party was the second most well-attended program, with 23 participants. This event was possible in part through a grant from the Chatham Cultural Council and featured storyteller and folk singer Tim Van Egmond, who performed traditional folk music centered on themes of love and relationships.

The CFAL Volunteers continued to provide invaluable support to the efforts of the COA staff by donating 112 hours of their valuable personal time. In Massachusetts, this amount of donated

time is worth \$4,704 (\$42.00 per hour). Additionally, the CFAL student intern was on site for 16.5 hours this month providing support in the Adult Supportive Day Program, at special programming, and with administration tasks.

RYDER'S COVE RESPITE PROGRAM:

The Ryder's Cove Program continued to thrive in February, serving seven participants, with one seasonal participant eagerly expected to return this summer. We remain fully-staffed, allowing us to provide attentive, individualized support and maintain meaningful connections with each person in our care.

We are also pleased to welcome a new volunteer who has joined us to lead structured art programming, expanding creative expression opportunities for participants.

We were pleased to welcome one new participant into the program this month. The transition has been smooth and encouraging. The participant has demonstrated consistent attendance, active engagement in activities, growing social connections, and increasing independence in structured tasks.

Wellness remains a cornerstone of our program. Staff observed improvements in strength and endurance this month, including participants independently increasing repetitions and progressing to heavier resistance weights during chair-based strength training.

Daily chair yoga and seated Tai Chi continue to be well attended and enthusiastically received. These evidence-informed practices support balance, mobility, fall prevention, and stress reduction—key protective factors for older adults living with cognitive impairment.

Music continues to be one of the most joyful and connecting parts of our schedule. Participants engaged consistently with our two contracted music providers.

February's programming included structured memory games, problem-solving exercises, creative arts, and facilitated group recreation such as seated basketball and cornhole. These activities are thoughtfully designed to support executive functioning, communication skills, hand-eye coordination, and overall mobility.

Average attendance for February was 88%, reflecting strong participation, caregiver commitment, and overall program satisfaction. This consistency speaks to the trust families place in our team and the value participants find in their daily experience.

COUNCIL ON AGING BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

The Council on Aging Board of Directors met on Wednesday, February 18, to discuss and establish their goals and objectives for the coming year, ensuring they align with those of the Select Board. Directors also approved the FY27 Meeting Schedule and newest Board member Cyndi Kreisher proposed the idea of utilizing the AARP Speaker's Bureau for future needs.

HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE:

The Human Services Committee met on Monday, February 9th at 2 p.m., and welcomed Jennifer Gale, from Food 4 Kids, and Paul Potash, from Salty Paws Therapy Dogs, as speakers.

RECREATION AND BEACHES DIVISION:

PARK Program

The PARK Afterschool Program is for students in grades 3-7 to have a safe, fun, and engaging afterschool experience.

	November	December	January	February
Monthly Attendance	545	615	710	328
Money Collected	\$6,655	\$6,800	\$9,010	\$4,305
Average Daily Attendance	36	41	36	33

February School Break Field Trips: New England Aquarium (35 participants), Urban Air (35 participants)

Programming

Adults:

Winter Night Pickleball- 192 Participants, Winter Indoor Pickleball Mon-Fri- 322 Participants, Winter Adult Basketball- 25 participants, Pickleball Lessons- 12 participants, Yoga with Jackie!- 38 Participants, Winter Floor Hockey- 30 Participants, Winter Badminton- 8 participants, Fun and Functional Fitness- 13 participants, Fly Casting- 20 participants

Youth:

January Family Karate-9 participants, January Family Tai Chi- 5 Participants, Youth Skating Session 2- 30 participants, Grades 3-4 Boys Basketball- 1 team (14 participants), Grades 5-6 Boys Basketball- 1 team (10 participants), Grades 1-2 Basketball – 4 teams 21 participants, Kindergarten Basketball- 5 participants, Pre-School Basketball- 9 participants,

Special Events:

Annual Sweetheart Dance- Friday February 6th- 37 participants

Community Center Use:

Aerobics Room – 58 Reservations

Chatham Tai Chi, Lite Fitness with Susan Hunter, Fun & Functional Fitness, CFAL Chair yoga, Hatha Yoga, Heisig belly dancing, CFAL Strong at Heart, CC



Nordic walking group, Friday night family Karate, Friday night Family Tai Chi, Full body circuit with Rachel, Restorative Yoga, Vinyasa Yoga.

Club Room – 34 Reservations

First Night Committee, Women’s Club Stitchers group, Behavioral Health Innovators, AARP Tax Aide, Monomoy Dollars for Scholars, Bolus card games, Men’s Club weekly meeting, Women’s Club Board meeting, Friends of Chatham Waterways, CC Hospital Auxiliary Game Day, Chatham Democratic Town Committee, Working Waterfront Advisory Committee, Mary Byrbne/What Now?, Tony Boynton Fly tying, Chatham Chamber of Commerce, Women’s Club of Chatham Literary Group.

Conference Room – 15 Reservations

League of Cape Cod Board meeting, Chatham Orpheum Theatre, Chatham Republican Town Committee, Chatham/Harwich Fiber Arts, Chatham Garden Club, Friends of Trees, Women’s Club of Chatham, Chatham Ecumenical Council for the Homeless, Chatham Golf Advisory Committee, League of Cape Cod Book Club, Chatham Independence Day Parade Committee.

Gymnasium – 93 Reservations

Mo/We/Fr pickleball 10-12, Adult pick up badminton, Adult pickup basketball, CFAL indoor walking group, Tu/Th pickleball 8-10 & 10-12, Tues. night pickleball 7-9, We/Fr pickleball 8-10, advanced beginner pickleball lessons, rec basketball games, winter floor hockey, pre-school basketball, kindergarten basketball, Sat. night pickleball 6-8, fly casting.

Large Meeting Room – 13 Reservations

Men’s Club weekly meeting, Friends of Monomoy Coastal Study, Chatham/Harwich Hospital Auxiliary Game Day, Atwood House/Historical Society presentation, PARK Scavenger hunt, Women’s Club of Chatham, Chatham Garden Club, USCG Chatham Auxiliary Flotilla, Friends & Gardeners Movie Day, Annual Sweetheart Dance.

Serving Room – 21 Reservations

Weekly Mahjong private group, Chatham Merchants Association, Weekly Community Mahjong, Chatham Men’s Club, Chatham/Harwich Hospital Auxiliary Game Day, Chatham Garden Club, Chatham Drama Club.

Fitness Room Access Scans

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Total
December	36	181	168	147	92	86	107	817
January	43	58	141	121	128	187	135	813
February	39	58	92	104	119	108	106	626

Active Fitness Room Memberships: **Family Members- 503 Individual Members- 191**

Parks & Recreation Commission

The Parks & Recreation Commission met Monday February 2nd, and discussed the following topics: Facility Use Requests, Middle School tennis courts conditions, Non-Resident beach fee increases, Summer Rec fee increases, Beach & Park rules & regulations, and a CFAL project update.

Golf Advisory Committee

The Golf Committee met on Thursday February 19, 2026, and discussed the following topics: Chain link fence repair, numerous tree removal options, irrigation software, sand trap improvements, and invasive species projects updates.

Respectfully submitted,

Leah LaCross

Leah LaCross, MPA
Director of Community Services