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**Billerica Council on Aging
25 Concord Road, Billerica MA
Board Meeting Minutes**

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November 12, 2025, 5:30 pm

Present: Richard Carroll, Phil Doiron, Barbara Flaherty, Mary Jones, , Marguerite Massey, Bill Neeb, John Pellegrino, Mary Riley, Mike Rosa, Hemali Shah.

Absent: Dan Burns, John Burrows, Joseph Marino

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by Chair Richard Carroll, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence for the sick and departed.

Acceptance of the minutes of the October 8, 2025, meeting.
M/Phil Doiron. S/ Mary Riley With all in favor the Motion passed.

Director's Report

Program and Financial Updates

Financial Performance: On October 28th, which was our first day of registration for November programs we had 488 completed transactions, generating revenue of \$2,478 and the use of \$56 from credits in patron's wallet.

Conference Updates:

Rylee, David and I participated at MCOA's annual conference. It was a great opportunity to learn from our colleagues. One of the key takeaways from that conference was hearing from the Secretary of Executive Office of Aging and Independence, Robin Lipson, that we should all prepare for budget cuts, specifically our formula grant funding. As mentioned previously our formula grant does support the salary of 10 companions, one full time volunteer coordinator, 4 hr/week program associate, and 49 hours across three staff members.

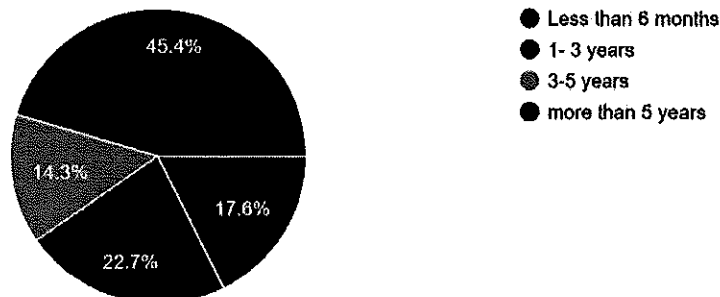
In 2025 Billerica has 11,723 residents aged 60 and above, versus 4,064 under the age of 18.

Patron Survey – Throughout the month of October we had shared both a link (via Facebook) and paper copies for patrons to fill out a survey. The survey responses will help inform us of how to improve our programs/services for 2026.

We had 122 completed surveys – 97 from online and 25 paper

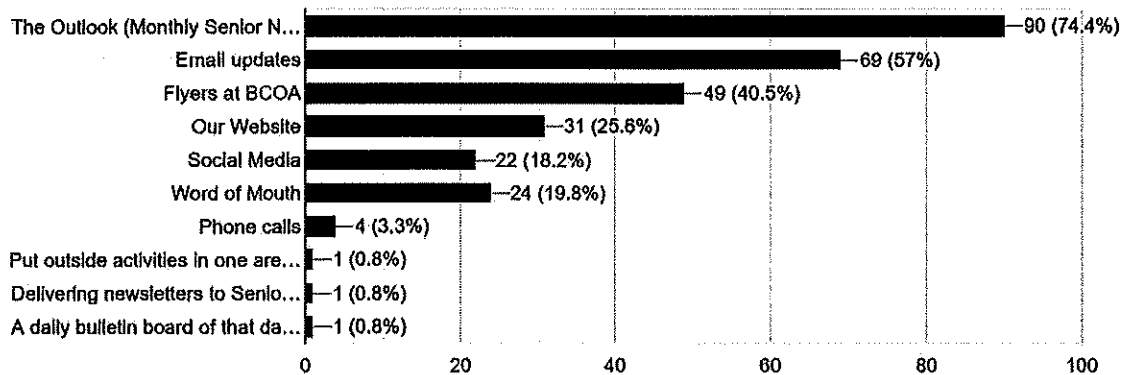
How long have you been a patron of this senior center?

119 responses



How do you prefer to get information about our upcoming programs and events? (Check all that apply)

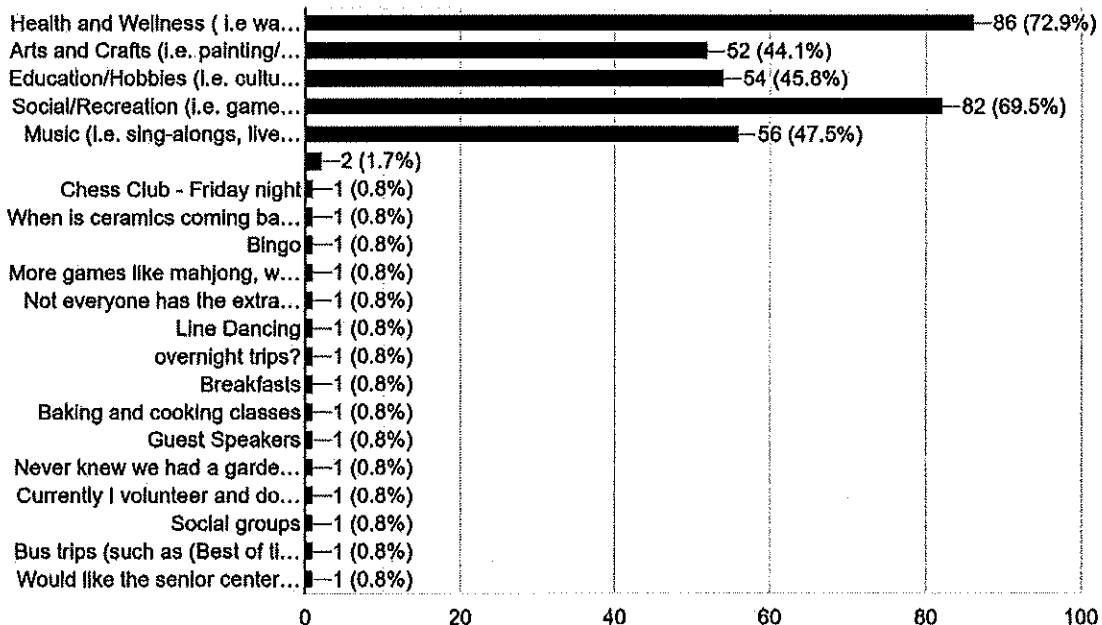
121 responses



2. Program Demand & Development

What types of programs are you most interested in? (Check all that apply)

118 responses



3. Operational & Facility Improvements

Responses frequently mention the physical space, administrative processes, and scheduling.

Area	Key Findings	Sample Suggestions/Comments
Space & Facility	Patrons noted a need for more space, often commenting on the center's size as a limiting factor.	Suggestions: Bigger place, more room, a new COA building, motion lights in the back parking lot.
Process	The sign-up process for classes is a point of friction, with some patrons disliking the new monthly sign-up policy. ** 8 out of 68 had this comment**	Suggestions: Automate registration/enrollment via My Active Center, offer an optional online sign-up, revert to pay-as-you-go.
Scheduling	There is demand for more activities and longer hours in the later afternoon and after 1 PM, especially for working seniors.	Suggestions: Increase fitness center hours, more programs after 1 PM, early evening events.

4. Center Environment & Culture

This theme captures feedback on staff, members, and the overall atmosphere.

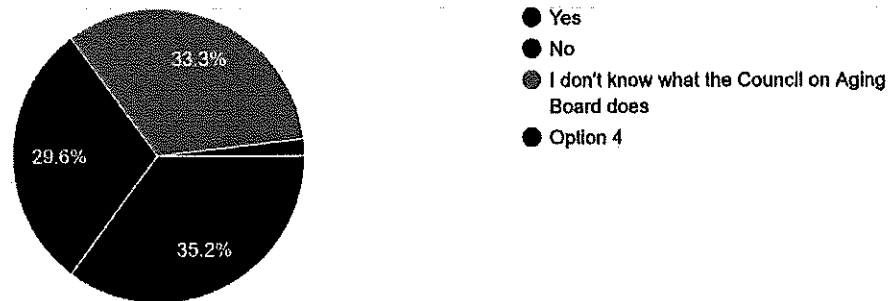
Area	Key Findings	Sample Responses
Strengths	The biggest strengths are consistently cited as the friendliness of the staff and members, the social outlet it provides, and the variety of offerings (especially fitness classes).	Quotes: "The people," "Gathering seniors together," "Friendly staff," "Various fitness classes."

5. Board Connection

A significant finding relates directly to the Council on Aging Board's visibility and

Are you more likely to attend a Council on Aging Board meeting if it were moved to an earlier time versus 5:30pm?

108 responses



The Board discussed the results of a recent survey about COA activities and programming. The Director noted that most responses were positive and that people appreciated the staff and volunteers. Pertaining to public knowledge of the Board's activities, it was decided to include more information about the Board's role in the January newsletter. Also, the Director was asked to post the COA bylaws on the website.

The Board talked about ways the COA might be able to serve more patrons during high-demand trips.

The methodology of the survey was also examined, especially the possibility that including multiple-choice questions could have affected the results.

Introduction of Health and Wellness Program Staff – Carolyn Savio and David Lamore

The Health and Community Program Coordinator oversees the health, wellness, and community programs through the Billerica Council on Aging with the support of the Program Associate. The Coordinator also manages 11 companions in the BCOA Companion Program.

BCOA Companion Program:

- Allows elders to age in place with companion support so they can maintain their dignity, wellbeing and independence.
- We offer transportation to our clients for errands and appointments
- We have contracts with Age Span Elder Services allowing us to serve their clients in Billerica and Tewksbury. We also serve private pay clients in Billerica, Tewksbury, Wilmington, Burlington, Bedford and Carlisle.
- We have acquired 13 new clients from January to October 2025 and I conducted 27 home visits in that time frame.
- David and I conducted an additional 12 drop in visits.
- I conduct 2 trainings sessions per year for the companions on a variety of topics including dementia training, stroke prevention, falls prevention.
- We market the program by bringing brochures into the community and doing presentations at local elder facilities (River Street, Rosewood Manor, Kennedy Meadows)
- Fees cover the cost of the companions and their expenses, but not the administrative staff. The department served 50+ clients in 2025.
- The program shares marketing materials using several methods. The Board also considered additional ways to spread information, such as including it with real estate tax bills.
- The group discussed whether it would be possible to expand the program or increase fees. Although there are opportunities for growth in the private sector, most clients are from AgeSpan, which is governed by a contract.

SHINE Program

- Offering Medicare Counseling to our patrons. 104 seniors took advantage of this program last year.

Community Involvement:

Memory Café

- Co-facilitate monthly program for individuals with dementia and their caregivers as part of Dementia Friendly Billerica.
- Different activities every month, many involving music

Billerica Health and Wellness, Inc.

- Work as acting secretary and organize events throughout the year including the annual Health Fair at the Elks Club.

Tax Work Off Program

The Tax Work Off Program enables 125 individuals to volunteer for up to 100 hours in various municipal departments. Through their service, participants can earn a reduction of up to \$1,500 on their annual real estate taxes. Placements are offered in departments such as the Police Department, Town Hall, the Library, the Council on Aging (COA), and local schools, with efforts made to match volunteers' skill sets to their assignments. The program tracks volunteer hours beginning July 1st and ending at the close of February. Qualified participants receive their tax rebate based on the total hours worked during this period.

Removing the financial status requirement increased applications, which prevented some in need from obtaining positions. Solutions are being considered to prioritise those who need the program most.

Clinics

- Foot Care (3 times per month serving 24 patrons)
- Blood Pressure Clinic (Monday – Thursday from 9:30 – 11:30)
- Flu Clinic (annual)
- Diabetic Shoe Clinic (annual)
- Reiki (2 times per month) 15 participants per session

Support Groups

- We offer grief support and currently offering Caregiver Support Group once a month.

Daily Walking Wonders Group

- Daily Walking group that walks town loop
- Special monthly walks (Narrow Gauge Rail Trail, Reformatory Branch Trail Walk, Great Brook Farm)

Strength, Cardio and Mind Body Classes:

- We offer a variety of exercise classes for all ages and stages (from Chair Aerobics to Zumba and Cardio Boost. Mind/body classes include: Yoga and Tai Chi

Health Education Programs

- Monthly programs offered to provide health and wellness information to elders:
- Upcoming events:
 - Memory Café with Billerica Garden Club
 - Healthy Holiday Eating Presentation with Registered Dietician Leigh Hartwell
 - Holiday Destress Guided Meditation
 - 5-Week Falls Prevention Program with Bay State PT
 - Strong Bones Presentation with Michael Stare, DPT

Fitness Room – Managed by David Lamore who oversees maintenance, scheduling, and medical vetting of the users.

Other Responsibilities

- Interview and do tours for new members
- Create Outlook newsletter articles

Challenges for our Department:

- Low reimbursement rate for our companion program clients (private pay and Age Span).
- Many clients and families need help and do not know where to turn. We provide resources and refer to the Outreach Department.
- We are dealing with more mental health issues with clients in our work. (Suspected elder abuse, family issues, hoarding, etc.)
- We could use more space for programming in our building.

Board Discussions

- Future Board Initiatives

There was a discussion about how the Board views its goals and objectives. The idea of continuing to pursue plans for a new Senior Center was raised, indicating that this possibility remains open and should not be dismissed. With a new Town Manager and Assistant Town Manager joining, they can be brought up to speed on the project. The conversation also covered past efforts made over the previous year and strategies for maintaining progress. It may be helpful to invite the new Town Manager and Select Board members to tour the Senior Center during busy hours.

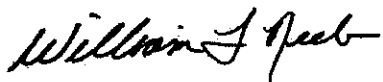
The Board considered if it has the option of initiating discussions with the Town Manager regarding funding shortfalls and potential salary support for the companion program?

Next meeting date December 10, 2025. M/Phil Doiron S/ Barbara Flaherty / With all in favor the Motion passed.

Motion to adjourn made by Phil Doiron S/ Barbara Flaherty / With all in favor the Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 7:57 pm.

Respectfully Submitted



William Neeb, Recording Secretary