

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Hudson Public Library

Council on Aging

Department of Veteran's Services

Hudson Housing Authority

Hudson Cultural Council

HUDSON PUBLIC LIBRARY 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

To the Honorable Board of Selectmen, the Executive Assistant, and the Citizens of Hudson,
I hereby submit the 2020 annual report for the Hudson Public Library.

Trustees

A board of three Library Trustees, elected for three-year terms, governs the Library. They share the overall responsibility for the Library and are the policy-making body. Their responsibilities include appointment of the Library Director, securing library funds, oversight of the Library's trust funds and building. The current Trustees are Thomas Desmond, Chair; Christopher Capobianco, Vice-Chair, and Maryalice McCormack, Secretary.

Staff

The Library is staffed by Aileen Sanchez-Himes, Library Director; Thomas Kenyon, Reference/Information Technology Librarian; Jillian Bennett, Children's Librarian; Nancy DeVecchio, Circulation Librarian; Susan Ramsbottom, Circulation Library Assistant; and Sara Moore, Children's Library Assistant. Melissa Caissie, and Tracy Landry, PT Reference Librarians. Rosemary Best, Sophia Francolini, Linda Rahmberg, Tom Rouse, James Thibeault, and Jenn Wheeler, PT Library Assistants. Helen Shaw, PT Technical Services Assistant. Andrea Bradford, Jaxon Capobianco, Jason Cunha, Hannah Leckrone, Cynthia MacDonald, Brandon Proteau, Matthew Sprague, and Jessica Tripp, Library Pages.

Statistics

More than 20,082 patrons visited the library last year and borrowed 73,372 books, audiobooks, DVDs Music CDs, and other materials. The Hudson Public Library has 14,309 registered borrowers. The Library collection is comprised of 63,926 items; 50,800 in print, 10,046 audiovisual, 2,449 periodicals, and 631 miscellaneous items such as videogames, puppets, e-readers, etc. Fines returned to the town totaled \$379.14. The Library was open for approximately 59 hours a week for a total of 3,072 hours during the year. In 2020, the Library purchased 3,880 books in the following categories: 509 nonfiction, 1,398 fiction, 1,482 children's books, 4 reference books, 41 large print, 375 young adult, and 71 paperbacks. In the category of audiovisual materials, we purchased 903 various materials in the following categories: 110 Books on CD, 30 Playaways®, 306 DVDs, 65 music CDs, 15 video games, and 377 digital books and audiobooks. Library staff members answered 962 reference questions. The Library fulfilled 27,352 item requests (item holds) for both Hudson owned items and items owned by other libraries. One thousand four hundred and ninety-eight (1,498) patrons spent more than 1,098 hours doing searches on 4 of the 9 Internet computers. Our 15 museum passes, funded by the Friends, circulated to our library patrons 286 times.

The digital collection provides 24/7 access to Consumer Reports, Hudson Sun (dates ranging from 1930-1979), Ancestry Library Edition, American Ancestors (NHEGS), Consumer Health Complete, Consumer Health Complete (Portuguese Ed.), Universal Class, Mango Languages, Hoopla (a digital media service offering movies, music, audiobooks, eBooks, comics, and TV shows), Freegal (a streaming and downloadable music service offering about 15 million free downloadable songs representing 40,000 music labels that originates in over 100 countries), 110,542 eBooks, 31,876 eAudiobooks, 1,312 eVideos, and 3,270 digital magazines through OverDrive resource sharing.

Grants and Donations

The Library received \$30,494.49 in State Aid to Public Libraries for FY20. Grants were awarded as follows: \$14,745.31 Library Incentive Grant; \$9,854.60 Municipal Equalization Grant; \$5,894.58 Non-Resident Circulation Offset Grant. The purpose of State Aid to public libraries is to encourage municipalities to support and improve library service; to compensate for disparities in municipal funding capacities and to offset the cost of circulating library materials to non-residents. Other significant donations and grants to the Library include:

- A total of \$2,700 donated by individual patrons and families: Borofsky \$100, Cosgro \$25, DeFranzo \$2000, Dutt \$25, Harmon \$50, Landry \$250, Parker \$200, Rooney \$50.
- A total of \$335 given in memory of Barbara Stout by individuals and families: Birchwood \$50, Brooks \$100, Donnerwirth \$75, Shaw \$100, Walsh \$10.

- A total of \$100 given in memory of Mary L. DeBeradinis by individuals and families: Debs \$50 and Romanelli \$50.
- The Robert Lloyd Corkin Charitable Foundation donated \$1,500 with a matching donation from Cary & Nancy Corkin in the amount of \$1,500. The Robert Lloyd Corkin Charitable Foundation request that the donation be applied to monthly entertainment in the children's room.
- A total of \$500 donated for the Summer Reading Program and Events: St. Mary's Credit Union (Marlborough, MA) \$500.
- A total of \$10,442.26 was donated by The Friends of the Hudson Public Library to support services and activities: \$3,889 for museum passes; \$2,615 for all of the Summer Reading Program entertainers; \$495 for ReadSquared Summer Reading Registration Program; \$231.30 for Large Print Books; \$3,211.96 for the copy machine lease and maintenance.
- The Doane-Perkins Foundation donated \$2,000 to the library in memory of Robert Emerson Doane, a former long-time resident of Hudson. The Foundation suggested that the money be spent on the teen and children's summer reading programs.
- The Hudson Cultural Council awarded a total of \$667 to support a STEM for Tweens library program series with Empow Studios.

Programming & Event Highlights

We have had a variety of book clubs and virtual programs offerings including, a renowned author, new museum pass, and various general interest programs.

Museum Passes

- American Heritage Museum Pass

Book Clubs

- Thursday Morning Book Club (2nd Thursday of the month)
- Thursday Evening Book Club (3rd Thursday of the month)
- Wednesday Evening Book Club (2nd Wednesday of the month)

Authors

- The House on Mango Street Author Talk with Sandra Cisneros

General interest programs

- Vertigo Trivia
- Rock Avenue Escape Room
- Jim Gibbons Historical Presentation: The 1980s: Royal Wedding, Regan, and Pac-Man
- Graff Tours: Graffiti Workshop
- Mullahy's Cheese Basics 101
- Tialina's Holiday Card Making

Services for Children

Children from infancy to seventh grade enjoyed the activities and programs offered by the Children's Department. Jillian Bennett, the Children's Librarian, reports that 1,913 attended 102 Children's Room programs this year. These programs include crafts, literacy, and entertainment programs including but not limited to 2-Year Old and 3-5 Year Old Storytimes, Laptime, Music and Movement, Makerspace, Brunch Bunch Book Time, and Kids' Book Club, and special performers. The children's librarians provided readers' advisory, offered assistance to children, parents, and teachers in accessing library databases and use of the library's print and digital collection.

Children were engaged through a variety of different programs including interactive music, craft activities, jewelry making workshop, baking classes, puppet shows, story walks, Lego fun, a visit from the Grinch, and an annual Noon Year's Eve Party. We participated in a program offered through "The YMCA Family & Community Partnership with STEM Beginnings" to provide a fall STEM "Young Scientists" program series for children ages 3-5 years old. We also hosted a wide range of performers and presenters including Animal Adventures, Bwana Iguana Reptiles, Cooking with Rob Scott, Fused Glass Jewelry Making, Hodge Podge Character Visit, Princess Storytime,

Pumpnickel Puppets, Shadow Puppets, Toe Jam Puppet Band, Vertigo Trivia, and much more. We were awarded a grant from The Hudson Cultural Council to have Empow Studios join us for three interactive STEM workshops for tweens.

The children's summer reading program is an important event in our programming calendar. We had 210 children participate. Infants to 1st graders read 1,418 books. Second through sixth graders read for 49,286 minutes. Special events and activities included: Cooking with Chef Rob Scott, Storytime with Princess Elsa, Matt Sandbanks: Shadow Puppets, Vertigo Trivia, Puppet Storytime, and a Hodge Podge character visit.

The summer reading program builds on the work children have done in their school classroom and provides an authentic reading experience for each child. The data shows that participation in the summer reading program helps reduce the loss of reading skills known as "the summer slide".

Library Outreach

The library provided information regarding the value of completing the U.S. Census. Door-to-Door Services launched in the fall. This initiative provides delivery and return services to homebound residents in Hudson. Registered members of this service have selected library materials according to their interests delivered to them on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month.

The library renewed its Wowbrary subscription. Wowbrary is a service that keeps patrons up-to-date on the newest books, movies and music via email and the library's website. Also, the library added the new subscription service, LibraryAware. LibraryAware is an online design program that helps us promote the library's collections, programs, and services as a way to connect with patrons and keep them engaged.

Building & Furnishings

In response to COVID-19, the library installed safety glass partitions at each public service desk and a handheld sanitizing sprayer. Maintenance and repairs to the library's aging HVAC and plumbing systems continue. Pest control maintenance and monitoring for rodents during the winter and ants during the warmer weather in spring or summer.

C/W MARS Network

While the residents of Hudson enjoy the items in our collection, they also take full advantage of our membership in the Central/Western Massachusetts Automated Resource Sharing Network (C/WMARS) consisting of over 150 member libraries. Our patrons are enthusiastic users of the online patron services provided by the network and regularly request materials from Hudson and other libraries. In 2020 patrons visiting the Hudson Library borrowed 15,563 items from other libraries. As a consortium, C/W MARS circulates more than 5.3 million items annually to more than one million registered borrowers. We offer a shared online computer system and combined collections of over 8 million items.

Borrowers can reserve books online any time, day or night, to be picked up/returned at the most convenient library location all across the state. Audiobooks now come in downloadable form as well as on compact discs. Reference resources can be searched by entrepreneurs, teachers, and students from home or office computers, greatly expanding the reach of the Reference Department. System wide holds can be set in motion automatically, supported by a fast, state-funded delivery. Our delivery traffic for this past year was 27,352 items.

Technology Updates

The Library renewed EnvisionWare, an Internet computer time and print management software which allows patrons to manage Internet searching sessions and on-site and wireless printing at one central printing station.

The Library renewed "Deep Freeze" a software product that allows patrons to use the Library's Internet computers without any restrictions to work on projects and search the internet. Any changes a patron may make to an Internet computer are wiped away by Deep Freeze after the computer is restarted.

The Library renewed Desktop Support from CWMARS to manage software updates and troubleshoot 23 Internet public and staff computers.

We currently have the Hudson Sun newspapers on 381 rolls of microfilm. It dates back to 1883. In order to allow easier access to the patrons of Hudson, we have decided to digitize the collection. It will take a few years but, we currently have the 1930's, 1940's, 1950's, 1960's, and 1970's online. It can be accessed on our website at www.hudsonpubliclibrary.com.

The Library renewed Consumer Reports Online. Library patrons have access to Consumer Reports online through our website at www.hudsonpubliclibrary.com. Library Patrons can get product reviews, compare products, and get thousands of products and services rated annually.

The Library added Consumer Health Complete and Consumer Health Complete (Portugues Edition) is an authoritative resource that provides content covering all key areas of health and wellness, from mainstream medicine to the many perspectives of complementary and holistic medicine.

Friends of the Library

The Friends is an organization dedicated to providing volunteer service and financial support to the Library. Membership is open to anyone interested in helping to further the goals and services of the Library. Activities include participating in Hudson Fest, the Lobster and Meat Shoot and the Fall Book and Bake Sale. The Friends usually meet once a month in the Library and always welcome new members.

These fundraising activities, along with the membership dues and a donation from the Apsley Fund, provide the means for the Friends to sponsor many ongoing programs and services such as the museum passes, the copy machine, and children's summer reading entertainers. This year, the Friends sponsored the online summer reading registration program, ReadSquared. We are grateful for their support and hard work.

The officers of the Friends are: Leah Litin, President; Barbara Chisholm, Treasurer; Lili Veruki, Secretary; and Gerry Gault, Book Sale Coordinator. The Friends wish to thank the following people and businesses for their support: the VFW, for providing free book sale space; Walter Watson Storage Plus and Hair Designs for free book sale storage space. After books are donated to the library, Gerry Gault and other volunteers take the donations to a small, temporary storage space where they are sorted by categories, labeled and re-boxed by another group of Friends. The boxes are then taken to a permanent storage area where they are kept until it is time to move them (approx. 500 boxes) to the VFW for the sale. The book sale is accomplished with the hard work and dedication of about 20 Friends along with volunteers from the Boy Scouts, the Boys & Girls Club and Hillside School. This three-day book sale is the Friends key fundraising event of the year.

Volunteers

Volunteers and Senior Tax Workers play an important role at the Library. This year three dedicated volunteers contributed more than 60 hours to help us with the processing of new library materials, sorting and filing date due cards, shelf reading, cleaning DVDs and compact discs, serving as a library greeter, and providing door-to-door services to homebound patrons. Not included in this number are the incalculable hours spent by the Friends of the Library in their many tasks including, managing book donations and fundraising initiatives that directly benefit the Library. The Trustees and staff truly appreciate the dedication and enthusiasm of the volunteers, who contribute so much of their time and expertise.

In Conclusion

The Trustees and staff greatly appreciate the support the Library receives from the Executive Assistant, the Select Board, the Finance Committee and the other municipal departments. Most importantly, however, I want to thank the people of Hudson who continue to support our Library with their tax dollars. I hope that our services, collections, and programs have helped you and added value and enjoyment to your lives.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Hudson Public Library and its staff,

Aileen Sanchez-Himes
Library Director

COUNCIL ON AGING - ANNUAL REPORT

Since Governor Baker issued the safety and emergency order requiring all businesses and organizations that did not provide "COVID-19 Essential Services" to close as of Tuesday, March 24, 2020, our Senior Center has not been the same.

The Covid -19 pandemic has drastically changed the day to day operations of our Senior Center, requiring staff to become more creative and innovative in an attempt to provide the necessary services in the safest possible way to our seniors.

This could not have happened without the help of many departments. Our IT department provided us with the tools we needed to work remotely from home. This allowed our Social Service Department to continue to offer the important social services that Hudson seniors are accustomed to. It also allowed our Administrative Secretary to do work from home and more importantly retrieve calls from home as people called in. This was essential to returning calls in a timely fashion.

The Hudson Board of Health provided the information we needed to outfit our building, and buses with the necessary PPE that will provide protection for seniors and staff. They also provided guidance for the August 2020 startup date for our buses. One person on the bus at a time for doctor, pharmacy and food shopping runs.

The Police and Fire Departments helped us secure the hand sanitizer, masks and sanitizing wipes that is all part of Covid-19 protocol. We will continue to work with Town Departments ensure we move forward in a safe manner, prioritizing the health and well-being of our residents and staff.

Nutrition

With our building closed, the Hudson Meals on Wheels Program, which is overseen by BayPath Elder Services, was temporarily relocated to a site in Marlborough and continued delivering food to Hudson seniors. In June 2020 BayPath returned the program to the Hudson Senior Center with approved Covid 19 protocol by the Hudson Board of Health. This move made it much easier for the many volunteers that continued to deliver meals during the early stage of this pandemic when not much was known about the virus. I am proud of the Meals on Wheels volunteers who delivered 15,246 meals from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020. This program is essential to many seniors. During this time, more seniors requested meals on wheels due to fear of going shopping.

There were instances of food emergencies that came to our attention. With the help of the Hudson Food Pantry we were able to quickly assist those needs. To prepare for any additional food emergencies, we secured approximately 20 large boxes containing 20-25 shelf stable food items from the Salvation Army in Tewksbury, MA. We then distributed some of the food to seniors at the Meadow Brook Mobile Home Park, the Covid-19 Food Relief Program at the First United Methodist Church and our Senior Center for emergencies. We also received another 20 boxes of shelf stable food from Fire Chief Johannes to help anyone with food issues.

In an effort to engage with seniors we started a "Grab and Go" meal program. Every month seniors can drive to the center and pick up a special meal. This gave us an opportunity to see the seniors as we handed them their food. This has become very popular with 100 plus seniors participating. Police Chief DiPersio, Captain Perry and Officer Wendy LaFlamme have often come by to help us with this program.

DayBreak, our Social Day Program 2020

Since March 24, 2020 our DayBreak Social Day Program has been closed. Although very sad the decision was in the best interest of the participants of this program who are the most vulnerable to the virus. Gathering of people was just too risky. This program offered caregivers respite and participant's socialization, lunch and activities from

11:30 to 2:30 three days a week at the Hudson, Marlborough and Northborough Senior Centers. We received a grant from MetroWest Health Foundation for \$24,000.00 to continue the program, however everything is on hold, until we can safely start the program again. Our two facilitators call our DayBreak families every other week and do a zoom program, with entertainment, at least once a month. These measures are clearly not as effective as the in person program at the senior center. The loss of this program has been especially hard for both the caregiver and participant. Caregivers who utilized DayBreak at all three Senior Centers have lost up to 9 hours of respite a week. Participants have lost the socialization and activities that were designed to help with cognition and mobility. We continue to stay in touch with the families and look forward to starting our program as soon as it is safely possible.

Wellness programs during the pandemic

Wellness programs are more important now due to the lack of socialization and increased isolation. We did not have Wellness programs in April due to the stay at home order. Once it became evident we would not be opening to the public we quickly found another way through zoom to offer this service. We now have 7 classes offered through zoom and all well attended. These programs include:

Stretch Class once a week, Strength Training twice a week, Flex and Tone Chair Yoga once a week, Chair Pilates once a week, Back to Basics Chair Pilates once a week, and Parkinson's exercise class once a week. From January 2020 till the end of December 2020 we had 374 seniors attend the zoom classes 3258 times. We saw a significant decrease in numbers from last year. Although zoom is great for some people others either do not have the technology to utilize the programs, or have the technology but find it difficult to use. There seems to be a preference for in person wellness classes.

Community Education with the help of Hud TV

Community education classes are being offered remotely through zoom. Some of the classes are recorded and shown on Cable TV. Hud TV has offered the Senior Center air time on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9am to 11am. This allows us to show the educational and entertainment programming to those who may have cable access but do not have the technology to participate remotely in a zoom. Some of our programming includes: Nutrition and Sleep: Fascinating Connections; Taming your Mind with Mindfulness Techniques, Genealogy, Seven Steps to Managing your Memory, Beware of Free Medicare Benefits, The History of Pilgrims 400 Years After, Medicare Advocacy Program, Intro to Social Security Part I and Part II, Great New England Blizzards, The Life and Legacy of Martin Luther King, and the Frail Elder Waiver Program, Keeping your loved one at home.

Trips

At the beginning of March, we offered an Irish Celebration at Venus de Milo. Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic we have not been able to offer trips.

Staff

Our Senior Center has a dedicated staff consisting of; a Director, Administrative Secretary, a full time Social Service Advocate (Outreach), and a part time Portuguese bi-lingual Social Service Advocate, a full and part time bus driver, all funded by the Town of Hudson. Additional two-part time drivers are funded partially by the Town and by our State Formula Grant.

Social Service

At the beginning of this pandemic we were very busy making phone calls checking in on seniors regarding their overall well-being and making sure they had enough food and medication. As the pandemic continued with no end in sight it was evident these phone calls became very important not only for Hudson seniors but for staff as well. We continue to make these calls of support.

Regardless of the pandemic, Medicare, public and private benefits continue to be a quandary for many seniors. The Director and both Social Service Advocates are SHINE Certified, (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Everyone on

Medicare) and are willing to help anyone who calls for assistance with Medicare. Total numbers for Community Case management, SHINE appointments, Fuel Assistance, SNAP (Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program) and Farmer's Market Coupons is 5523 duplicated service units for 1066 unduplicated seniors. In 2020 our Social Service Department had 143 NEW clients.

Medicare Open Enrollment is always a busy time of year. Oct. 15 through Dec 7 Medicare beneficiaries can review their health and prescription drug plans and change them if need be for January. In 2020 we assisted 438 Medicare beneficiaries during Medicare Open Enrollment and everything was done over the phone, mail and with some outside curbside meetings.

We also provided seniors information and resources regarding the vaccine. Once the vaccine became available we assisted seniors with their on-line registration for their vaccine appointment. This has been popular with seniors who do not have the technology to do the on line registrations.

AARP Tax Preparers

Three AARP tax preparers assisted 107 seniors with their 2019 tax returns at no charge between the first week in February 2019 through March 10th. Due to Covid-19 we had to cancel tax program on March 17th. Unfortunately, this resulted in 70 seniors losing their free tax appointment. This program is extremely helpful to Hudson seniors.

Transportation

Our senior transportation program had to stop on March 24, 2020, and restarted in August 2020. During the early summer months, we had both our buses outfitted with Plexiglas to protect drivers and riders, hand sanitizer for riders and cleaning materials drivers need to clean in-between riders. Under the guidance of our BOH and for the safety of our riders, we have limited our transportation to doctor's appointments, food shopping and pharmacy. Even though we were not able to run our bus for 5 months we still serviced 103 seniors with 1503 duplicate trips. Due to Covid-19 people still seem hesitant to use the bus even with all the safety protocols.

Socialization and Recreation

Pre Covid (January, February and most of March) we offered billiards, AM and PM bridge, cribbage, quilting, knitting and crochet, open paint studio, water color class, music jam, mahjong, movie day, daily lunch, chess, scrabble and camera club.

Due to Covid-19 guidelines we are limited as to what we can offer. We started offering a floral kit grab and go with Bemis Farms. Bemis Farms delivers a kit with instructions for seniors to make a centerpiece, door hanging, outside pots etc. Seniors love this as they say it keeps them busy. The Elks in Hudson allowed us to use their outdoor pavilion for bingo during late summer well into fall. During the holiday season, seniors rallied to help us fill gift bags for at home seniors by dropping items off at the center. With their kindness and help we were able to fill 50 gift bags for at home seniors. We continue to have coffee with the staff via zoom another way to check in with people. Grab and Go special holiday meals and continued phone calling to seniors in our community again to check in or follow up on their needs and well-being.

Collaboration with Town Departments

The Hudson Senior Center staff is proud of the "Collaborative Efforts" that is exemplified by all Town Departments. Our senior center's community outreach continues to be successful in part to the dedication and expertise of other Town Departments.

The COA Board and Friends of Hudson Senior's

The Board Members of the Council on Aging have been so supportive during this challenging period. Not only have they met every month for their COA Board meetings, via zoom, but happily attended additional meetings to provide advice regarding critical decisions affecting the Senior Center, senior citizens and staff during this difficult year.

The "Friends of the Hudson Senior Center Inc." have continued to provide financial support and encouragement during this horrific pandemic. Their hard work continues to support not only Hudson seniors, but the senior center staff in their efforts to serve the Hudson senior population in the best way possible. We are fortunate to have them and appreciate all that they do for Hudson seniors.

The Council on Aging would like to "Thank" the Board of Selectmen, Executive Assistant and Finance Committee for their continued support each year.

Respectfully submitted,

John Gill, Chairman

Trisha Desmond, Vice Chair

Melissa Esteves, Secretary

Nina Smith, Treasurer

Charles Corley

Edward Silveira

Anthony Monteiro

Diane Durand

Vincent Giombetti (Resigned August 4, 2020)

Janice Long, Director

Hudson Veterans' Services Annual Report 2020

Director's Report

To the Honorable Board of Selectmen, the Executive Assistant, the Citizens, and the Veteran Community of Hudson, this report is submitted for the year ending 2020.

Veterans Benefits

Veterans Benefits are governed under Chapter 115 of the Massachusetts General Laws and Commonwealth of Massachusetts Regulations 108. Benefits assist financially qualified veterans and their dependants based on income levels and in accordance with the Budget Standards Chart. The Town of Hudson is reimbursed 75% by the State for veterans' assistance payments issued by this office.

The Director of Veterans' Services is responsible for determining the eligibility of all cases processed through this office. The Director conducts interviews, establishes approvals, and conducts follow-up on veterans receiving assistance. Field investigations within the local community are also performed by this office to determine the recipients' continued eligibility to receive benefits.

Veterans' Services also includes assisting Hudson veterans in filing federal forms for benefits which include service-connected disability claims, non-service-connected claims, VA health care, requests for medals, requests for service records, bonus applications, burial assistance and other federal benefits such as counseling in vocational rehabilitation and employment.

Additionally, the Director acts under Power of Attorney for veterans researching and processing cases to the Rating Review Board (Department of Veteran Services), and prepares appeal cases to the Board of Veterans' Appeals on the veteran's behalf. The Director also acts as liaison between State and U.S. Representatives on behalf of veterans and their dependants.

Office

This department consists of one certified full time Director. This year we also had the assistance of one retired military officer as a part-time citizen volunteer and additionally a volunteer driver.

In 2020, the department assisted 2,228 Veterans and family members' requests for Federal, State, and Local Veteran benefits, some of which included Burial assistance, Service-Connected disability, Aid and Attendance, Pension, VA Healthcare, Transportation, Annuities, and Exemptions in addition to State Chapter 115 assistance.

Memorial Day and Veterans Day Parades and Ceremonies continue to be a long-standing tradition in Hudson. This year however, due to COVID, both parades and ceremonies were cancelled. Moving forward, the Veterans Office will continue to provide military affiliated guest speakers and displays to educate and inform our citizens and youths regarding the sacrifices and courage of our military men and women. We welcome all to attend and recognize those Veterans who have passed and those who are living that have supported our great nation through their service.

Federal

The Department of Veteran Affairs continues adjudicating claims for compensation and pension beneficiaries albeit at a slower rate than 2019. Due to the pandemic there have been significant delays in processing claims in 2020 due to staffing shortages at VA. Patience is the key to success.

VA Compensation Claims Metrics	Number of Claims Pending	Number Pending > 125 Days	Percent Pending > 125 Days	Average Days Pending
USA - All Missions Total	482,302	211,608	43.8%	148.8
Northeast District	21,469	6475	29.9%	110.0
MASSACHUSETTS	5538	2746	49.6%	166.8

Courtesy: VA (Dec 2020)

Passports

The U.S. Department of State is the official governing agency for passport issuance. The Town of Hudson is an official acceptance facility certified by the State Department. The passport program is available to any U.S. Citizen or U. S. National that qualifies. Applicants need not be a Hudson resident to apply. Application forms and fees) are available online at www.travel.state.gov or they may be picked up at Hudson Town Hall from the Town Clerk's or Veteran Services Office.

Jan - Dec 2020 **--- Passport applications processed: 25**
 --- Revenue: \$ 875

TAPS - 14

Respectfully Submitted,
 Brian Stearns \ Veterans Director

HUDSON HOUSING AUTHORITY ANNUAL REPORT 2020

The Hudson Housing Authority is authorized by and operates under the provisions of Chapter 121B of the Massachusetts General Laws. Founded in 1962, the Hudson Housing Authority manages and administers low-rent housing programs, which are funded by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The operations of the Authority are supported entirely by rents, grants, or contracts with the state or federal governments. The Authority is governed by a Board of five commissioners. The Board of Commissioners meets on the first Thursday of each month at the Brigham Circle office at 8 Brigham Circle (or online via Zoom during the COVID-19 state of emergency). The office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. weekdays.

Rental Assistance

The Hudson Housing Authority administers sixty-nine federal Section 8 Vouchers and twenty-four Massachusetts Rental Vouchers. These programs provide participant property owners with a direct payment on behalf of the family. Family participants contribute no more than 40% of their gross monthly income toward the rent, with the Housing Authority contributing the difference. The number of persons served by the rental assistance programs continues to be reduced by budget restrictions placed on it by the state and federal governments. The combined budget for the rental assistance programs is over \$700,000.00. The Hudson Housing Authority Section 8 waiting list is open. Applicants may apply through the Section 8 Centralized Waiting List at www.gosection8.com/masscwl. Applicants can expect a wait of several years for assistance. The Hudson Housing Authority Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program waitlist is currently closed.

Housing for the Elderly and Handicapped

The Hudson Housing Authority provides 218 one-bedroom apartments for elderly and handicapped persons at two locations, state-aided Brigham Circle and federally-aided Norma Oliver Village.

While waiting lists exist for both programs, a local resident and veterans' preference is granted at Brigham Circle for those who live and/or work in Hudson. A local resident and veteran's preference is also granted at Norma Oliver Village. Applicants can apply to Brigham Circle through the centralized state public housing waitlist (CHAMP) at the following website: <https://publichousingapplication.ocd.state.ma.us/>. Applications are also available for both Brigham Circle and Norma Oliver Village at the Authority office at 8 Brigham Circle. Please note that there is no asset limitation at either development, and at the Brigham Circle development a wage exclusion adjustment may be possible for elderly persons. The eligibility criteria are outlined below.

Eligibility Criteria

State-aided (Brigham Circle)

Income Limits – One Person	\$56,600.00
Two Persons	\$64,900.00
Age 60, disabled or handicapped	

Federally-aided (Norma Oliver Village)

Income Limits – One Person	\$44,800.00
Two Persons	\$51,200.00
Age 62, disabled or handicapped	

Housing for Special Needs

The Hudson Housing Authority, in cooperation with the Department of Mental Health and the Department of Developmental Services, serves sixteen persons in two group homes. These programs provide educational and employment opportunities in a traditional residential setting.

The Authority continues monitoring the 40B developments Coolidge Greene and J Highlands at Hudson (formerly Simrah Gardens).

Capital Improvements in 2020

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, capital improvements in 2020 were limited to only those that were necessary for health and/or safety purposes so that priority of resources could be directed toward our COVID-19 response efforts.

Brigham Circle

- N/A

Norma Oliver Village

- N/A

Housing for Special Needs (49 Washington Street)

- Front Porch Replacement \$ 9,350.00

Housing for Special Needs (8 Irving Street)

- Failed AC Condenser replacement \$ 6,905.00

Hudson Housing Authority Board of Commissioners

Board Members

Chairman:

Bryan R. Johannes, 198 Lincoln Street

Term Expires

May 2024

Vice-Chairwoman (State Appointee):

Annemarie Lourens, 4 Meadowbrook Road

May 2020

Treasurer:

Vacant

May 2017 (holdover status)

Commissioner:

Stephen Domenicucci, 9 Avon Drive

May 2022

Commissioner:

Sarah Cressy, 45 Pleasant Street

May 2021

Jaclyn Beaulieu continues to serve as the Authority's Executive Director. The administrative staff had some turnover in 2020, including the retirement of longtime Assistant Director Cherie Brigham and the hiring of Bookkeeper/Administrative Assistant Allison Carroll. Our new Assistant Director, Robert Milne, and Program Administrator, Madison Davies-Waterman, continue their outstanding work prioritizing serving the needs of our residents and program participants. Maintenance Supervisor Jon Orkiseski along with maintenance employee Peter Wolochowicz provide exemplary maintenance service for the Authority.

The Hudson Housing Authority wishes to acknowledge the continued service of the Hudson Fire Department and Hudson Police Department. We also wish to thank Executive Assistant, Mr. Thomas Moses, and the Board of Selectmen along with the departments of Council on Aging, Board of Health, Public Works, Town Clerk, Community Development and Veteran's Affairs for their continued support and assistance.

Respectfully submitted,

HUDSON HOUSING AUTHORITY

Hudson Cultural Council
2020-2021
Annual Report

The Hudson Cultural Council (HCC), appointed by the Board of Selectmen, was formed in 1983 in response to the creation of the arts lottery in Massachusetts. The Hudson Cultural Council is part of a network of 329 Local Cultural Councils (LCC) serving all 351 cities and towns in the Commonwealth. The LCC Program is the largest grassroots cultural funding network in the nation, supporting more than 6,000 cultural programs that include everything from field trips to lectures, festivals and dance performances in the arts, sciences, and humanities every year. The state legislature provides an annual appropriation to the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC), a state agency, which then allocates funds to each community. In addition to the state funds, the Town of Hudson also allots funds to the HCC. The HCC's role is to survey Hudson's cultural needs and interests, and to determine how public funds allocated by the Town and by the MCC will be dispensed.

Decisions about which activities to support are made at the community level by a board of municipally appointed volunteers. The current active members of the Hudson Cultural Council are: Dorothy Bagley, Peter Fiske, Ellen Kisslinger, Cheryl Lombardo, Patricia Luoto, Doris Monteiro, Debbie Papa, Stephanie Plourde-Simard and Donna Specian.

Each fall the HCC reviews grant applications from individuals and groups proposing a variety of cultural offerings. Award recommendations are based on proposed projects' eligibility, the availability of funds, and Hudson's particular needs and interests. When Covid-19 caused the shutdown of many organizations that received funding in 2020, HCC, under the guidance of MCC, voted on modifications to original grant applications to allow grantees to function virtually. A number of funded organizations took to Zoom to present programs in the arts, humanities and sciences. During the FY '21 grant allocation process the Council again approved grants for organizations to use a virtual platform.

The HCC evaluates grant applications based on the following criteria (listed in no particular order):

1. Maximum impact (largest number of Hudson residents of all ages served, including the ratio of dollars spent to the number served).
2. Preference given to programs serving Hudson youth, and to Hudson-based organizations, artists and interpretive scientists.
3. Preference given to programs which take place inside the town of Hudson.
4. Under-represented or marginalized communities or cultural disciplines in the Hudson community.
5. Collaborative projects between local cultural groups and community organizations.
6. New applicants and/or projects.
7. Applicant's track record: whether the applicant's prior HCC-funded project was (a) completed according to the original grant application (b) was successful, and (c) the applicant collected HCC reimbursement in a timely manner.

The amount to be awarded for the 2021 FY was \$14,300 (\$3500 from the Town of Hudson; remainder from MCC). There were sixteen grant application requests totaling \$16,305 to be considered. Grants were awarded to these ten recipients during the 2020-2021 Grant Cycle:

- Assabet Valley Chamber of Commerce - Market Music
- Assabet Valley Camera Club – Street Photography
- Hudson Cultural Alliance - Hudson Armory Fundraiser Project
- Hudson Public Library- Children's Room – Experience STEAM
- River's Edge Arts Alliance – Safe and Flexible Arts Programs
- Sounds of Stow - 2019-20 Concert Season
- Symphony Pro Musica – 2020-2021 Concert Season
- The Discovery Museums – Open Door Connections
- Town of Hudson Department of Recreation – Summer Concert Series
- Virginia Thurston Healing Garden - Mind, Body, Sound Therapy

The Hudson Cultural Council may be conducting its annual survey in the spring/fall, dependent upon the pandemic, and will seek grant applications for the Council again in the fall. For local guidelines and complete information on the Hudson Cultural Council see <https://www.hudsonculturalcouncil.org/> or contact the council via email at HUDSONCULTURALCOUNCIL@gmail.com. Application forms and more information about the Local Cultural Council Program are available online at www.mass-culture.org. Online applications will be available September 1, 2021 and will be due October 15.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia K. Luoto, Co-chair
Donna Specian, Co-chair