

Harwich Community Center FY 2022 Budget Narrative

The proposed FY 22 Community Center budget is consistent with the directive to level fund relative to the FY 21 appropriation. The proposed budget goes further and offers a net 1% reduction from FY 21 to FY 22, accounting for all cuts that could feasibly be absorbed within current operation and in recognition of the current financial climate facing the Town and its residents.

The largest budget increase from FY 21 to FY 22 is tied to contractually mandated Salary and Wage costs. While the 0% COLA increase was factored in for all department employees, contracted step increases and longevity payments netted an overall 1.8% increase in this category. This increase required cuts to the expenditure portion of the Community Center budget to comply with the level funding directive.

Of the expenditure budget line items, approximately 74% of the department's budget is accounted for solely in utility costs (electric, gas, and water). Other non-negotiable costs needed to operate the building, including phones, grounds keeping, trash removal, building/equipment repairs, and inspections, comprise an additional 20% of the budget. The Community Center absorbs the full cost of these expenses, though it is important to note that they are utilized by five other Town Departments (Council on Aging, Channel 18, Recreation, Cemetery, and Veteran's Affairs). Utility costs were calculated based on guidance from the Finance and Water Departments.

The proposed reductions are reflective of lower actually incurred costs (relative to the budgeted amount) in certain line items. For example, due to equipment upgrades in recent years, the total amount paid annually for maintenance and repair work has been reduced. Further, the grounds keeping line is reduced in recognition of the in kind services provided by both Community Center and Senior Tax Work Off volunteers.

This budget would allow the department to maintain the current level of services. Any further reductions would impact on Community Center operations, the operations of the other Town Departments located within the building, and the hundreds of community groups (and thousands of residents) that utilize this space.