

Town of Richmond Wellness Committee Report of Findings and Recommendations

Presented to the Richmond Town Council by the Town of Richmond
Wellness Committee:

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Daniel Fitzgerald (Clerk)
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Town of Richmond Wellness Committee Findings and Recommendations

<u>Table of Contents</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>Task from the Town Council</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Process/Methods</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Data regarding needs and existing resources</u>	<u>4</u>
Behavioral Health	4
Healthy Aging and Senior Health: Seniors Aging in Place for independence	5
Transportation.	6
Coordination and communication of human service needs to the Richmond community	6
Current Community/Senior Center Facility	7
Existing services and Programs that support Wellness for Citizens	7
<u>Recommendations to the Richmond Town Council</u>	<u>10</u>
Immediate Needs	10
Long Term Needs	10
Foundational Importance of a Human Services Director:	11
<u>Appendix I Suggested Job Description and Qualifications for Town of Richmond Human Services Director</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>Appendix II Potential Models to Consider</u>	<u>14</u>
<u>Appendix III. Cited Documents and Links</u>	<u>15</u>

Task from the Town Council

On October 5, 2021, the Richmond Town Council created a Resolution to Establish a Wellness Committee based on an identified need to expand wellness services in the Town of Richmond and based on general public support for a new facility. The Resolution tasked the newly formed committee to:

- assist in deciding what wellness services need to be provided,
- make written recommendations concerning wellness services and
- recommend availability of facility appropriate for such services

Process/Methods

In addition to Town Staff members, Finance Director, Laura Kenyon and Chief of Police, Elwood Johnson, nine volunteer committee members were accepted and sworn in at or after the Town Council Meeting on November 16, 2021. The volunteer members on that date were Thea Brennan, Alison Croke, Daniel Fitzgerald, Adrienne Grafius, Dr. Robert Harrison Jr., MD, Gary Kowalewski, Julie Leusner, Pamela Rohland, and Jessica Wolke.

At the first meeting on December 15, 2021, led by Chief Johnson, all were present and officers were chosen as follows: Pamela Rohland, Chair; Thea Brennan, Vice Chair; Daniel Fitzgerald, Clerk; and Alison Croke, Deputy Chair. After the new year, Adrienne Grafius unfortunately resigned, and an alternate applicant, Dennis McGinity was sworn in as her replacement.

The Committee met twice per month (1/5/22, 1/20/22, 2/2/22, 2/17/22, 3/3/22, 3/16/22. Meeting agendas and minutes are publicly posted as required.

We clarified the assigned task and established two small working groups each to operate between meetings. The Data Group (Leusner,

Croke, Rohland) was to identify the evidence of need from established records and from various state sources about Richmond and its citizens.

The Resources Group (Brennan, Kowalewski, Fitzgerald and Wolke) was to identify existing social and wellness resources, as well as important wellness venues that do not exist, in the town of Richmond and nearby areas..

Pamela Rohland, of the Data Group, personally interviewed the Chief of Police (Johnson), the Finance Director (Kenyon), and the Coordinator of the Senior Center (McGinity).

The Committee invited Robert Robillard, Director of the Coventry Department of Human Services and Director of the Coventry Resource and Senior Center to speak at the February 17, 2022 meeting. He provided a powerpoint presentation and a sample of their center's newsletter as he spoke about various topics such as need, funding, budgets, etc.

A third working group of four members, consisting of two from each of the Data and Resources working groups (Kowalewski, Croke, Fitzgerald, and Rohland) set out to summarize findings and recommendations based on the discussions, ideas and presentations at the various meetings.

This report is the result of the committee's research, discussions, and recommendations.

Data regarding needs and existing resources

From December 2021 through March 2022, the Town of Richmond Wellness Committee, through its meetings, discussions, research and presentations identified several main areas of need, and we also looked at the existing Richmond Community/Senior Center. Here, in outline form, are issues of concern as well as existing beneficial programs for your review. From this information and analysis, we believe the central, foundational element missing in the Town of Richmond is a Human Services Department housed in an accessible and modern Community/Senior Center building. The main areas of need are Behavioral Health, Seniors Aging Well and in Place, Transportation, Coordination and Communication of human services resources, and a new facility to support these needs, all of which would be facilitated by a full-time Human Services Director.

Behavioral Health

Behavioral Health includes Mental Health, Addiction and other issues that influence quality of life. The Richmond Police Department is currently one of the primary interventions, in the town of Richmond proper, for calls, supports and transports regarding behavioral health episodes. In many environments and for many years, behavioral health has been a rising concern in our society, and has particularly been exacerbated by COVID-19.

- Public Safety: Break down of calls for service:
 - **Wellness Checks.** According to Richmond Census data, the population of Richmond increased from 7708 in 2010 to 8020 in 2020; an increase of 4%. During the same time period, the number of calls to the Richmond Police Department for wellness checks increased from 81 (in 2010) to 140 (in 2020); an increase of over 72%. (2020 Census Data, Richmond RI; RPD Database 2/10/22).
 - WPRI Channel 12, 2/10/22: Mental Health Calls to the [Providence] Police grew by 92% from 2018 to 2021. Anecdotal similar in Richmond, RI.
- Mental Health/Support
 - Of 60+ giving self report of anxiety/depression - 23%/28%
 - Services/support - None in Richmond:
 - No Mental health practitioners
 - No NA meetings
 - No AI-anon meetings
 - No Parenting support
 - No grief/loss support
 - No Domestic Violence support
 - No LGBTQ+ support
 - No spiritual/wellness groups
- Substance/opioid addiction

- Strong Arms, 2xs/month, St. Thomas Episcopal-Alton
- AA, weekly, Richmond Senior Center
- Women's Road to Recovery - Providence Center only
- Adolescent/high risk behaviors - Chariho Youth Organization
- Parenting support groups - none in Richmond
- Underserved populations
 - Low income:
 - No insurance or Underinsured: Census 2.1%
 - Young adults
 - People with disability
 - LGBTQ+
 - Seniors
- Spiritual/wellness
 - Religious institutions in Richmond
 - St. Thomas Episcopal-Alton
 - Wood River Baptist-Wyoming
 - New Hope Chapel Wyoming
 - yoga, massage, meditation, herbal, workshops)
 - NONE

Healthy Aging and Senior Health: Seniors Aging in Place for independence

1. Senior Center has a number of programs but is limited in its capacity and operates part time.
 - a. Game nights
 - b. Visiting nurse once per month
 - c. Some volunteers
 - d. Meals on wheels
2. Senior Center is not networked with other centers in the state through the RI Association of Senior Center Directors
3. TheCommunity/Senior Center location is difficult to access for some seniors and persons with disability.

Transportation.

Richmond Public Safety has identified transportation as a difficult situation for some citizens. People who have suspended driver licenses cannot get to support meetings. The Police are often transporters for individuals which takes time from their regular duties.

- No known regular or consistent public transportation for the town (including bus or cab or uber services)
- RI Department of Elder affairs age 60+ and medicaid recipients (<https://eohhs.ri.gov/Consumer/TransportationServices.aspx>)
- (email exchange with RIPTA 1/25/22)
 - RIPTA connecting Westerly to Ashaway park & ride;
 - RIPTA considering continuation to Richmond/URI (ridership concern)
 - FLEX bus donation program

Coordination and communication of human service needs to the Richmond community

1. Richmond Police Department
2. Public School Personnel
3. Religious Institutions
4. Other than the above, no central staff person exists who is accountable for human services.

Current Community/Senior Center Facility

Results of Community/Senior Center Survey 2019 (A new survey of 65+ residents is pending 2022). Other wishes, pool, community garden, pavilion/picnic areas, expanded library, gym, indoor playground

1. Most prefer Community Center for all ages rather than separate facilities.

Town of Richmond Wellness Committee Findings and Recommendations

2. Building, space, and staffing limitations prevent: expansion, kitchen access, meals, large programming, community services (e.g. tax prep, legal advice, retirement/financial workshops, AA/NA meetings, etc)
3. Programs are often scheduled at other town's community centers
4. Current Community/Senior Center issues
 - a. Labeled as Community/Senior Ctr., but function and website is primarily Senior only.
 - b. Accessibility - very problematic.
 - i. Heavy doors,
 - ii. small ramp,
 - iii. ramp lip on entry,
 - iv. chair in small elevator,
 - v. intermittent elevator,
 - vi. Limited or no signage,
 - vii. no auto door opener,
 - viii. Visitors may need to call ahead for assistance to enter the building,
 - ix. front door entrance is stairs only.
5. Richmond residents must travel to other towns for some programs
6. Financial limitations, staff stipend only.
7. Senior Center functions sometimes interfere with Police Department functions
8. More town/state dollars are available for new programs than are used by senior center.
9. Town survey indicates wish for indoor Center as well as outdoor recreation.
10. Location in the Police Department building may deter some participants.

Existing services and Programs that support Wellness for Citizens

1. The Town of Richmond, with many rural areas has had a Recreation Focus Historically

Town of Richmond Wellness Committee Findings and Recommendations

- a. Arcadia Management area (Richmond/Exeter)
 - b. Outdoor trails, e.g. North/South Trail, Richmond Heritage
 - c. Preserves - Nature Conservancy and Private preserves
 - d. Biking, running
 - e. Parks playgrounds
 - f. tennis/basketball courts
 - g. Baseball and other sports (school and town)
 - h. URI/Richmond Rec collaboration 2014
2. Nutrition/Food Insecurity support in Richmond proper or town line.
- i. Document: Food Bank annual report (all RI, not town specific)
 - ii. **RICAN_Rhode Island Center Assisting those in Need_2021** report for Richmond residents receiving assistance
 - iii. **Food assistance:** 53 Richmond households received food assistance, representing: 91 Adults, 47 children, and 18 seniors.
 - 1. We provide an additional bag of healthy/age appropriate snacks to families with children and seniors.
 - 2. We provide seniors with frozen-prepared meals from Hope & Main every other week.
 - 3. **Kindness Program** - is our financial assistance program to help guests with utilities, rent/mortgage, child care, home repairs, gas cards, and other miscellaneous requests.
 - 4. Eight Richmond residents requested assistance with rent, utilities, and gas cards.
 - iv. Retail, Stop and Shop (snap and wic)
 - v. Retail, Richmond Fresh
3. Health/Wellness services available in Richmond proper
- i. Gym/Wellness
 - 1. Ocean YMCA-Arcadia Branch, 1190 Main Street, Wyoming
 - ii. Medical

Town of Richmond Wellness Committee Findings and Recommendations

1. Chariho Eye Care and Optical Center, 1171 Main St., Wyoming
2. Performance Physical Therapy, 12 Stilson Road, Wyoming
3. Wood River Health Services in Hopkinton, requiring transportation.
4. Other Health Services in Neighboring towns, requiring transportation.
- iii. Religious - Churches, 1 Episcopal, 1 Baptist, 1 Evangelical. No synagogue or mosque
- iv. Education
 1. Richmond Elementary
 2. Chariho MS and HS and CTC Campus
- v. Substance Use/Recovery (very limited)
 1. AA meeting closed (1) Sundays - Senior Center
 2. AA meeting open (1) Thursdays
 3. Strong Arms Support Group Chariho Youth Task Force
 4. Wood River Health Services (Hopkinton)
- vi. Volunteerism (Charlestown/Chariho)
 1. Southern RI Volunteers (eligible seniors in need in Washington County) <https://www.southernrivol.org/>
- Internet/Computer Connectivity (almost all residents have)
 - 2020 Census: Households with Computer 93.7%
 - 2020 Census: Households with Internet subsc. 92.1%
 - Shawn Cole, Dir. Information Systems, Chariho: during distance learning, very few without access, Cox discount for eligible families, individual household assistance on as-needed basis (discussion 1/27/22).
- Census Data: Estimated Demographics For the Town of Richmond.
 - Seniors 65+: Census 14.9%; Tufts estimate 13.1%; voter records (1588 of 6787 voters) 23.4%
 - Adults 50-64: voter records (1952) 28.8%

Town of Richmond Wellness Committee Findings and Recommendations

- Adults 18-49: (inferred from census 66.1%) inferred from voter records 47.8%
- Under age 18: census 19%;
- Under age 5: census 3.9%
- Percent disability under age 65: census 7.3%; Tufts healthy aging - 2.7%-18.6% depending on disability;
- Education levels:
 - Census: HS or higher-96%, BA/BS or higher 35.8%
 - Tufts Healthy Aging age 65+: less than HS 10%, HS, some college 72%, college degree, 7.5%; Grad/Prof Degree 10.6%
- Income levels:
 - median household-\$95,391;
 - persons in poverty-2.1%;

Recommendations to the Richmond Town Council

- **Immediate Needs**

- Immediately fund and hire a full-time Human Services Director (Town Employee or Contracted Individual) dedicated to continuing the work of the Wellness Committee. In the first year of this position the following goals would be met:
 - Make recommendations for expenditures of Richmond ARPA funds to meet immediate needs exacerbated by COVID-19 to include behavioral health, healthy aging and transportation, as prioritized by the Wellness Committee.
 - Establish partnerships between public and private organizations to resolve immediate needs (e.g. behavioral health, transportation, accessible spaces, etc.).
 - Assess funding and timeline for Community/Senior Center Project.
- Fund and expand the Public Safety Department Clinician Program
- Initiate grant-like process to support and reimburse local organizations addressing health and wellness needs in Richmond exacerbated by COVID-19.
 - Examples: Wellness checks program for residents, transportation to follow up visits to primary care appointments and health/wellness related meetings, and provide funds to support existing community organizations that service Richmond Residents.

- **Long Term Needs**

- Fund and staff a full-time Human Services [Director] Department
- Build and Staff Community/Senior Center
 - Ensure it is accessible to all residents

- Space to bring in specialists
- Space for social interaction and activities.
- Transportation for residents to access the community center and other health services
- Build out comprehensive volunteer program to support health and wellness needs

- **Foundational Importance of a Human Services Director:**

A Human Services Director for the Town of Richmond will be of foundational and central importance in the town's ability to support behavioral wellness and healthy aging for all of its citizens, regardless of age, identity, or economic status.

- *Members of the Wellness Committee would be available to the future HS Director for consultation. We ask the Town Council to include members of the Wellness Committee in the search process for the Director of Human Services.*

Appendix I Suggested Job Description and Qualifications for Town of Richmond Human Services Director

For review and editing by Town Administrator

A Human Services Director for the Town of Richmond will be of foundational and central importance in the town's ability to support behavioral wellness and healthy aging for all of its citizens, regardless of age, identity, or economic status.

Reports to: Town Administrator, Town of Richmond

1. Job Duties include but may not be limited to the following:

- a. In the first year of this position, the following goals would be met:
 - i. Make recommendations for expenditures of Richmond ARPA funds to meet immediate needs exacerbated by COVID-19 and lack of transportation.
 - ii. Establish partnerships between public and private organizations to resolve immediate needs (e.g. behavioral health, transportation, accessible spaces, etc.).
 - iii. Assess funding and timeline for Community/Senior Center Project
 - iv. Assist in the expansion of the Public Safety Department Clinician Program
- b. With the Town Administrator, help to initiate a grant-like process to support and reimburse local organizations addressing health and wellness needs in Richmond exacerbated by COVID-19; and provide funds to support existing community organizations that service Richmond Residents.
- c. With the town administrator, support Public Safety in collaboratively organizing wellness check programs for residents.
- d. Organize volunteers and staff in providing transportation to qualified residents for health and wellness needs (e.g. follow up visits to primary care appointments, health/wellness related meetings, obtaining food and groceries, etc).

Town of Richmond Wellness Committee Findings and Recommendations


- e. Supervise and support activities related to the Senior Center/Community Center.
- f. Supervise and coordinate Richmond Community/Senior Center building maintenance and operations.
- g. Establish a comprehensive volunteer program to support health, wellness, and nutritional needs for town residents.
- h. Work with the Town Administrator and the Finance Director to procure funding toward the goal of building, staffing, and sustaining the Community/Senior Center that: Is accessible to all residents, has space to bring in specialists as needed, and that has space for social interaction and activities for seniors and other town residents.
- i. Other duties as requested by the Town Administrator

2. Qualifications:

- a. Required Qualifications
 - i. Bachelor Degree in a Health or Human Services related field; or five years of equivalent experience.
 - ii. Demonstrated Experience Communicating with a wide variety of socially diverse citizens of all ages, ethnicities, and economic status.
 - iii. Demonstrated ability to develop programs and services that support wellness and wellbeing.
 - iv. Demonstrated ability to build connections between groups of people, and between people and available resources.
 - v. Demonstrated willingness and ability to pursue grant-funded opportunities.
 - vi. Demonstrated ability to work effectively within a team environment.
 - vii. Demonstrated ability to supervise and engage volunteers and staff in a Community/Senior Center or other environment.
- b. Preferred Qualifications
 - i. Graduate Degree in and Health or Human Services related field
 - ii. Demonstrated history in successful procurement of state and federal grant funding.
 - iii. Experience with state or town government operations.

The Town of Richmond is an Equal Opportunity Employer

Appendix II Potential Models to Consider

1. Coventry Community/Senior Center Model tailored to size and format of Richmond
 - a. Contact Bob Robillard, Director of Human Services, Director of Coventry Resource and Senior Center <https://coventryri.org/human-services>
 - b. Power point presentation to the Wellness Committee
 Town of Coventry Department of Human Services-Strategic.pptx
2. Volunteerism
 - a. "Villages" models
 - i. The Westerly Village, A Community of Mutual support for Older Adults, Partner of The Village Common of Rhode Island..
https://www.villagecommonri.org/content.aspx?page_id=0&club_id=90831
 - ii. Villages at Beacon Hill
https://www.beaconhillvillage.org/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=332658&module_id=349807
 - b. Southern RI Volunteers (eligible seniors in need in Washington County)
<https://www.southernrivol.org/>
 - c. Trust in the Community, an association of town managers, offering volunteers (contact through Richmond Town Manager, Karen Pinch) Website:
<https://www.ritrust.com/>
3. Nurse Practitioner Home visit program
4. instED - in-home skilled medical visits for urgent care
<https://www.insted.us/>
5. PACE programming for senior residents.
6. Potential Grant Funding for Community and Senior Centers
 - a. USDA Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program
<https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program>
 - b. USDA Community Facilities State Director for Rhode Island (according to above website):
Scott Soares, State Director
451 West Street
Amherst, MA 01002-2999
Voice: 1 (800) 352-8015 (toll free) or (413) 253-4300
Fax: (855) 596-7673

Appendix III. Cited Documents and Links

Historical surveys and other documents re: Richmond RI

1. Resolution establishing Wellness Committee
 - i. Assist in deciding what wellness services need to be provided
 - ii. Make written recommendations concerning wellness services
 - iii. Recommend availability of facility appropriate for such services
2. Community Center Need Study Report, May 2019
3. Recreation Center Design (Landscape Architecture URI/RichmondRec
(<https://www.richmondri.com/DocumentCenter/View/475/URI-Report?bidId=>)
4. Community Center Questionnaire (410 responses)
5. WoodRiver Health Services Needs Assessment
6. Tufts Health Plan Foundation/Healthy Aging Comm Prof-Richmond RI (est.)
http://healthyagingdatareports.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/RI_Towncode29_Richmond-1.pdf
7. RI Kids Count 2021 Factbook, Child Wellbeing, Snapshot of Richmond
<https://www.rikidscount.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Factbook%202021/Community%20Profiles/Richmond%202021FB.pdf?ver=2021-05-24-091529-377>
8. U.S. 2020 Census quick facts, Town of Richmond RI
<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/richmondtownwashingtoncountyrhodeisland/PST045219>
9. Voter Records analysis from Richmond Town Clerk (2/4/22)
10. RPD_Report_Wellness_checks_2010_2021 (email from Chief Johnson, 3/1/22)
11. RI Senior Center Directors Member Agencies, PPT presentation by Robert Robillard, President.
12. Data from the RPD reports: RPD Annual Report Data Spreadsheet for 2021

Town of Richmond Wellness Committee Findings and Recommendations

13. WPRI Channel 12, 2/10/22: Mental Health Calls to the [Providence] Police grew by 92% from 2018 to 2021
<https://www.wpri.com/target-12/mental-health-calls-to-police-grew-92-from-2018-to-2020-in-providence/>
14. **RICAN_Rhode Island Center Assisting those in Need_2021** report. Email to Julie Leusner
15. <https://bodiesminds.org/data/>
16. <https://bodiesminds.org>
17. Federal Grant funding resource for rural, small town community centers,
<https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program>
18. Power Point Presentation from Bob Robillard
19. Newsletter, Coventry Services and Senior Center.
20. Newsletter, Richmond Senior Center
21. Westerly 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment, Health Impact Collaborative of Greater Westerly and Age Friendly Westerly Partner Meeting, January 26, 2021. Community Research Consulting LLC. Presentation