



May 1, 2025

Town of Manchester-by-the-Sea

New Manchester Senior Center Sets Sail

On Monday, April 28, 2025, the Town of Manchester-by-the-Sea and Manchester Masonic Lodge finalized terms and signed the Purchase and Sale Agreement of the Masons building, located at 10 Church Street, the future site of the Town's new senior center. The process began exactly a year ago when residents appropriated \$1 million to purchase a portion of the building at the Annual Town Meeting.

Upon closing, within 60 days, the Masonic Lodge will be divided into two condominium units where the Town of Manchester-by-the-Sea owns two-thirds, and the Free Masons own one-third of the current structure. A condo association consisting of four trustees, two Town and two Mason representatives, will be formed to oversee and review common costs and interests. All operating costs such as staffing and utilities for the new senior center will be paid for with Town funds.

However, completing the purchase of the physical structure is just the first step towards creating a permanent home for Manchester's senior center. The next step is to make the space accessible and safe for Council on Aging programming. The building, originally built in 1965, will require an extensive renovation and expansion to transform it into a suitable space. Voters have approved funds to get the preliminary design of these improvements underway, but construction costs will be paid for entirely through community gifts and donations. To assist with these efforts, a fundraising consultant has been hired, through a grant, to create an actionable fundraising plan that will formally kick-off this fall.

Since 1984, the Manchester-by-the-Sea Council on Aging (COA) has provided a sense of place for thousands of senior residents over 60 through a multitude of programs such as hot meal delivery, transportation to vital doctor appointments, tax assistance, exercise classes, shopping trips, cultural events, monthly lunch gatherings, and everything in between. The COA is more than these tangible amenities though, it's the friendship, sense of belonging, social enrichment, and simply knowing that someone cares that means the most to our members. Operating out of a small office in the basement of Town Hall, the Council on Aging has continually provided these essential services and support at various locations in Town despite not having a central location



of its own. Our seniors are the anchor of Manchester-by-the-Sea providing invaluable wisdom, knowledge, and citizenship that make our community thrive.

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