SOMERS
Youth Services

Somers Youth Service Bureau Advisory Board Minutes
November 11, 2026
Meeting Minutes

In attendance: Matthew Cox, Ellen D'Angelo, Renata Bowers, Colleen Meier, Kelley Garrison, Vicki Clark, Alex Murdoch, Gerard Joyal

Absent: Jen Griger, Ed Depeau, Nathan Poirier

Guests: None

Call to Order: called the meeting to order at 4:34pm. Colleen moved to approve the March minutes; Alex seconded and the motion carried

New Business/Updates from the Field

- none

Program Updates and Next Steps

Youth Services

- Welcome to **Ellen D'Angelo** who joined the program as Youth Services Coordinator in October
- **Teen Center** – more than 120 registered – average daily attendance 35. Teen Cuisine on Mondays is a big hit. Crafts, game day, Universal Yum box were mentioned as particularly popular. The Community Give-back project helps bring youth closer to community needs, engaging them to play and carry out activities that make a difference. Last month, a teen collected more than 100 new teddy bears for Connecticut Children's. This month, on Friday, there will be a Friday Bingo Bash in the Teen Center; there are 70 people registered. There will be raffles and prizes. All moneys go to Champs Place. In November the give back will engage youth and members of the senior center to be pen pals.
- Launched **Snack Shack** component of Teen Center – youth manage ordering, inventory, cash handling. Staff have found that it is a great platform for helping kids learn how to place/take orders, track/adjust inventory, make change, and practice leadership.
- Planning continues for special programs like **Holiday Toy Shop**, Intergenerational Programs (**Senior Pen Pals**), **Community Give Back** (Connecticut Children's; Champ's Place), **Back to School 2027**, etc.
- **Outreach** through community events like National Night Out, Scarecrow Festival, etc.
- 6 teen center/middle school youth served as Youth Ambassadors at the Scarecrow Festival
- Youth Services also participated in school **Open House** events at Somers Elementary, Middle School, and Teen Center

- **E-Bike and Bicycle Safety Training** at the library with Somers Police a couple of weeks ago was a great success. Approximately 20 people participated. Really focused on kids not wearing helmets, not biking safely. Might provide reflective vests in the future; lots of visibility issues.
- Youth Service Bureau received formal announcement of funding from the Department of Children Youth and Families - $25,500 – which supports salary of the Youth Services Coordinator, supplies, etc.
- Jen and Matthew attended a planning meeting with administrators and social work/mental health staff at Somers High School to work on **drop-out prevention**. There are several students at SHS who are at risk of dropping out in the near future. Together we are working to identify and offer resources that will help to curb this.

Prevention Services

- **20 Minute Project** and **Start the Conversation.** These continue, to help foster good discussions within the home and to promote trust and accountability.
- **Suicide Awareness Campaign** was launched in September, including signage, social media, training for adults through partnership with Amplify, Inc – promoted 988 and other resources. We had about 25 participants in one of the trainings. A suicide prevention event is planned for seniors, at Woodcrest, in December.
- **Narcan Administration Training** was provided by Amplify
- **Narcan distribution box** installed at Somers Public Library – open access for the community through partnership with Change the Script CT. Self-serve, stocked with 12-16 doses of Narcan.
- **Red Ribbon Week** at MBA in the middle of October included targeted messaging/posters culminating in Drug-Free Pledge activities during lunchtime.
- **Youth and Parent Recruitment** for SHINE. Difficult to find viable and interested applicants. They have to be under 18 while they're serving, so seniors can age out quickly.
- **Youth Diversion Team** (formerly Juvenile Review Board) – continues to meet but no recent cases from Somers. Most issues in Somers are small and being handled within the school.
- **Planning for Biennial Youth Survey** – Youth Voices Count Survey - tentatively scheduled for MBA in February. Designed to get a read on what Somers youth are using/struggling with regarding substances, mental health, and toxic stress. In Somers, most students have indicated they don't approve of other students who use substances. Much of this mindset seems to stem from home. Law enforcement also plays a part; kids don't want to get in trouble.

<u>Ideas</u>

- Find a way to communicate to families the things we're finding at the Teen Center that kids don't know: how to vacuum, wash dishes, mop a floor, etc. Possibly a "one a day" task suggestion for the summer. Possibly even at Somers day camp, or a camp at the library.
- Is there demand for internships among high school students, especially over the summer? Could we check with local businesses to see where there is a need?

Meeting was called to adjourn by Matthew at 5:25.

Respectfully submitted,

Renata Bowers, Secretary
Meeting minutes are not Official Until Approved at a Next Meeting