Town of Somers
Advisory Committee for Seniors
Meeting Minutes
November 10, 2026
Senior Center

Present: Pat Bachetti, Samantha Charette, Matthew Cox, Eileen Fedorowich, Marilyn Gaskell, Phyllis Gwilliam, Ailene Henry, Donna Richardson

Absent: John Kelleher, Joan Sizer

Guests: Pamela Caso, Gloria Coles, Lynn Goss, Timothy Keeney.

All members and guests introduced themselves.

Call to order at 1:00 p.m. by chairperson Matthew.

Approval of Minutes of October 13: Eileen moved and Pat seconded a motion to approve the minutes as presented. There was no discussion. Motion carried.

Discussion with First Selectman

Somers First Selectman Timothy Keeney attended the meeting to address the Committee's concerns regarding recent budget cuts and to explain the Town's budget development and approval process.

Mr. Keeney explained that department heads submit their budget requests to the Board of Selectmen between September and December. During January and February, the Board reviews these requests at its weekly meetings, which are open to the public. The proposed budget is then forwarded to the Board of Finance for further review. Opportunities for public comment are provided at meetings throughout the process. The Town Meeting is held in May, followed by the budget referendum.

Mr. Keeney also explained that the State requires municipalities to conduct a real estate revaluation every five years. The revaluation took place this year, creating some confusion among residents who believed the process would automatically result in an increase in their property taxes.

The Committee discussed the impact of recent budget cuts, which resulted in reduced days and hours at the Senior Center, decreased Dial-a-Ride services, and reduced staffing at both the Senior Center and Human Services. Donna and Pam emphasized the importance of the Senior Center in supporting the health, wellness, and safety of Somers' older adult population. Samantha also underscored the value of the Senior Center and the services it provides to the community.

The importance of communication and collaboration among Town departments was discussed. Members agreed that it would be beneficial for department leaders to meet regularly to share budgetary challenges, explore ideas, and discuss potential solutions. Mr. Keeney encouraged residents to share their opinions and experiences through public comment at Board of Selectmen meetings, by writing directly to Board members, and through ongoing conversations throughout the year. He noted that the Board typically meets weekly during the January-through-March budget review period.

Mr. Keeney acknowledged that certain municipal expenses are difficult to reduce, including public safety services such as police, fire, and emergency medical services. He also noted that the Town continues to face increases in fixed operating costs, including oil, gas, electricity, and water. He further acknowledged the need for improved communication between Town government and the Board of Education.

The Committee also discussed grant writing as a potential strategy for bringing additional funding into the community. Gloria noted that Asnuntuck Community College offers a grant-writing program. Matthew and Samantha both shared that they have experience preparing grant proposals and pointed to recent grant writing successes.

Department Reports

See attached Human Services report.

See attached Senior Center report.

Senior Center Supervisor Announcement

Donna announced that she has submitted her resignation as Senior Center Supervisor. Her last day will be November 25. Committee members expressed their sadness at her departure and their appreciation for her dedication and the valuable work she has done on behalf of the Senior Center and the community.

Adjournment

With no further business, Marilyn moved to adjourn the meeting, and Phyllis seconded the motion. There was no discussion, and the motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 2:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted
Ailene Henry, Secretary
Minutes not official until approved at subsequent meeting.

Senior Advisory Meeting – Tuesday, November 10th, 2026, at 1:00pm

Senior Center Updates

- Grants:
    - Awarded $1830.00 from Somers Community Fund to support raised garden beds. Funds will be used to purchase 4 raised garden beds, gardening supplies and to fund a healthy cooking class in the Winter/Spring.
    - New Britain Museum of American Art was awarded a grant from Somers Community Fund to provide a free tour and free transportation from the SSC for 20 members.
    - UR Community Cares was awarded $4,750 from Somers Community Fund to support empowering Somers Seniors with technology classes. Donna and Samantha are meeting with Michelle Puzzo on Thursday to discuss in greater detail.
    - Awarded the CT DOT 5310 Grant for FY 2025 to purchase a new Senior Center Bus

Programs/Activities

- Mahjong training started last Thursday morning 9am-10am and Pam Johnson will continue to teach.
- Tuesday & Wednesday 12/1 & 12/2 – Spa Services (by Appointment Only)
- Wednesday 12/2 – Painting w/Sandy-New fee $20 starting in January 2027
- Saturday 12/5 – Holiday Festival, 4pm-6:30pm
- Wednesday 12/9 – Holiday Breakfast w/Santa
- Thursday 12/10 – Friendship Tours Salem Cross Inn (Full)
- Monday 12/14 – Chair Massages by Casey (by Appointment Only)
- Tuesday 12/15 – 1pm Book Club
- Wednesday & Thursday 12/16 & 12/17 – Footcare (by Appointment Only)
- Thursday 12/31 – New Year's Eve Party at Joannas (currently 51 registered and on 11/16 will open up to non-residents to sign up).

Trips

- Working with The Travel Group and Friendship Tours for "2027" Day Trips

Statistics (October)

- Member Check Ins: 1,037
- Active Members: 188 (61.2% Residents, 38.8% Non-Residents)
- Average Daily Attendance: 52
- Dial A Ride
    - Passengers: 57
    - Passenger Rides: 241
    - Total Bus Hours: 117
    - Total Miles: 1583.4

Somers Senior Advisory Meeting
Tuesday, November 10, 2026, at 1:00 PM
Human Services Report

Program Metrics October 1, 2026, to October 31, 2026

Service	
Overall	74
New Clients	3
Energy Assistance	46
Eversource Discounted Energy	20
Farmers' Market Cards	0
Renters' Rebate	0
Emergency Financial Asst	7
Town Emergency Fund Spent YTD	$19,860
Senior/Disabled Case Management	24
Meals on Wheels	7

October was a very busy month for Social Services with more than 66 community members getting help with applications for energy assistance. (*Est. $1,400 each; $64,400 total.) Calls for assistance continue to increase due to the significantly rising costs of housing, energy, and other basic needs.

Several community members were referred to the United Way 211, North Central Area Agency on Aging, CT Department of Social Services, and local food pantries to help meet their needs. Community members report being chronically behind in their rent, mortgages, utilities, as well as vehicle payments and insurances.

We hosted National Drug Take Back Day on October 24 at Woodcrest Elderly Housing and at the Fire department. Thanks to Somers Police and Fire Departments for their partnership and support. 33 community members dropped off prescription and over-the-counter pills, liquids, needles, etc. weighing more than 40 pounds.

Upcoming Priorities include launching the **Season of Giving fundraising campaign** to help us replenish the Town Emergency fund; continued facilitation of **financial/application assistance** for low- and moderate-income Somers individuals, seniors, and families; and in partnership with Amplify, Inc. we will provide **Suicide Awareness training** at Woodcrest.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew Cox