Town of Somers
Advisory Committee for Seniors
Meeting Minutes
October 13, 2026
Senior Center

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

Absent: Joan Sizer

Guests: Gloria Coles, Lynn Goss. All members and guests introduced themselves.

Call to order at 1:05 p.m. by chairperson Matthew.

Approval of Minutes of September 8: Eileen moved and Phyllis seconded a motion to approve the minutes as presented. There was no discussion. Motion carried.

See attached services report from the Senior Center by Donna:
As well, she reported that, with their reduced time, staff has been fitting in existing programs but it is hard to fit in new programs. She reported that the Senior Center is participating in a "Scares for Bears" program sponsored by Somers Youth Services and the Teen Center that is collecting new teddy bears for the CT Children's Hospital.

Donna reported that due to scheduling conflicts with the vendor, there will be no flu vaccine clinic or health fair this year. Ailene reported that the Hampden, MA police department provides a service that calls homebound town residents for a daily wellness check and asked if Somers has a similar program. Matthew reported that there is no program in Somers at present, but he is familiar with this type of program, which can serve as an important support for vulnerable seniors. There may be opportunities to develop a volunteer-led program of this type sometime in the future.

Ailene presented a resource listing emergency supplies for sheltering in place in case of a disaster, such as power loss due to winter storms. Donna agreed to make this important resource available to members.

Matthew and Samantha reported that they have started putting together information for the FY27 budget. Sam noted that she has been documenting unmet needs of seniors due to cuts that resulted in no services on Fridays. Seniors have reported difficulty finding affordable and accessible transportation to critical medical appointments, physical therapy, and others that are scheduled on Fridays.

See attached Human Services report presented by Matthew:
Matthew reported an increasing number of people coming to Human Services for help with basic necessities. The recent behavioral needs assessment survey has been completed. Matthew will put together a list of mental health resources to post on the town website. There is not enough money in the budget for a printed resource guide to send to all residents, but individual resource listings will be printable from the website.

Matthew and Samantha described the process of putting together the town budget for next year.

There was a discussion about recent town budget cuts and how our committee can make Selectmen, CFO and Board of Finance aware of how these cuts have negatively affected our Seniors. Matthew and Samantha suggested personal stories or testimonials about how cuts have personally affected people. We talked about inviting the First Selectman to a future meeting and have an agenda and clear talking points about the needs of Seniors. Other suggestions were emails or personal visits to Selectmen or attending town meetings and providing public comment. Eileen read a letter she received from the First Selectman in response to her letter to him in support of Donna Richardson.

Matthew distributed a draft job description for members of the Advisory Committee. We will discuss this at our next meeting.

Adjournment: With no further business, Phyllis moved, and Eileen seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:29 p.m. There was no discussion and the motion carried.

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

Somers Senior Advisory Meeting
Tuesday, October 13, 2026, at 1:00 PM
Human Services Report

Program Metrics September 1, 2026, to September 30, 2026

Service	**2026**	**2025**
Overall	56	82
New Clients	6	20
Energy Assistance	29	29
Farmers' Market Cards	0	4
Renters' Rebate	8	4
Emergency Financial Asst	4	6
Town Emergency Fund Spent YTD	$15,452	$8,676
Senior/Disabled Case Management	17	15
Individual/Family Case Management	8	15
Meals on Wheels	9	6

September was a very busy month with more than 40 community members getting help with applications for energy and other programs. 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. Clients report being chronically behind in their rent, mortgages, utilities, as well as vehicle payments and insurances. The town has invested $15,452 in emergency financial assistance since July 1st.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew Cox

Senior Advisory Meeting – Tuesday, October 13th, 2026, at 1:00pm

Senior Center Updates

- Continuing to work through adjusted schedule – reduction in hours has caused a compression in current activities and left little to no room to introduce new activities and programs
- Mahjong: Pam Johnson will start teaching starting on Nov. 5th at 9am!

Programs/Activities

- Tuesday 10/13 – Tap Classes with Laurie resume
- Wednesday 10/14 – All American Living Meatloaf Lunch with Entertainment by Raya
- Thursday 10/15 – Footcare (by Appointment Only)
- Tuesday 10/20 – 1pm Book Club's October Book is The Secret Book of Flora Lea
- Wednesday 10/21 – Footcare (by Appointment Only)
- Tuesday 10/27 – Blood Pressure Screenings
- Tuesday 10/27 – Parkway Birthday Lunch-working on new birthday song!
- Wednesday 10/28 – Halloween Luncheon & Magic Show with Deanna Congo
- Tuesday & Wednesday 11/3 & 11/4 – Spa Services
- Wednesday 11/4 – Painting w/Sandy-New fee $20 starting in January 2027
- Thursday 11/5 – Alzheimer's & Dementia Presentation/Apple Cider & Donuts
- Monday 11/9 – Veterans day breakfast w/The Ivy
- Monday 11/9 – Chair Massages by Casey (by Appointment Only)
- Tuesday, 11/10 – Ice Cream Social & w/Evergreen to highlight world kindness week- "Be Cool & Sweet to One Another"!
- Tuesday 11/17 – Healthy Cooking with Chef Niki

Trips

- Tuesday 10/13 – Friendship Tours Turkey Train Winnipesaukee Railroad (Full)
- Thursday 10/15 – Lunch Bunch / Lakeview Restaurant in Coventry (Waitlist)
- Thursday 12/10 – Friendship Tours Salem Cross Inn (Full)
- Tuesday 12/8 – Lunch Bunch-Carriage House at Storrowton w/Jimmy Mazz

Save the Date

- Saturday 10/24 – Scarecrow Festival, Four Town Fairgrounds "Hocus Pocus theme"
- Saturday 12/5 – Holiday Festival
- Wednesday 12/9 – Holiday Breakfast w/Santa
- Thursday 12/31 – New Year's Eve Party at Joannas

Budget Submissions Due 12/18

Statistics (7/1/26 to 9/30/26)

- Member Check Ins: 2,807
- Active Members: 277 (61.4% Residents, 38.6% Non-Residents)
- Average Daily Attendance: 43
- Dial A Ride
    - Passengers: 57

- Passenger Rides: 704
- Total Bus Hours: 450
- Total Miles: 4329.30

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Richardson
Senior Center Supervisor