Regular Meeting Minutes of September 22, 2026
Blake Room, Somers Public Library
2 Vision Blvd, Somers, CT

Members and Staff in Attendance: Sam Galloway, Margot Martello, Bob Schmidt, Gail Tishler, Tim Keeney, Gerard Joyal, Kassie Mashiak, Brian Wissinger, Kim Littig, Jeremy Shepard, Monica Newcity, Jen Griger, and Matthew Cox

Call to Order: Matthew Cox called the meeting to order at 10:35 a.m.

Welcome and Introductions: Matthew welcomed the group assembled and led introductions around the table.

Announcements: Matthew reported that following Arianna Flagg's resignation in August, Jen Griger had been appointed by the Board of Selectmen to the position of Prevention Coordinator and that formal approval had been received from the funder, the CDC Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP). He also reported that formal approval had been received from the CDC/ONDCP for Year 5 funding of the Drug Free Communities grant in the amount of $125,000. Planning has begun to secure DFC funding for years 6 through 10, including revisiting and updating Coalition Involvement Agreements from sector members.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Bob Schmidt moved to approve the minutes of the April 28 meeting. Joanne Nichting seconded the motion. There was no discussion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Sector Reports

Schools

Margot reported that the school year began on September 1 and was off to a good start. Jen and Matthew attended orientation for incoming sixth-grade students and new students in grades seven and eight to meet parents, introduce them to SHINE, and distribute Operation Parent handbooks.

Margot noted that the district's new policy prohibiting student use of cell phones and other connected devices throughout the school day was going well. Feedback from students, parents, and teachers suggested that the break from screen time was having a positive effect on mental health and could support continued academic growth.

Margot highlighted an upcoming student assembly led by John Halligan, whose teenage son died by suicide after experiencing bullying online and at school. Students would attend one of two presentations of "Ryan's Story," followed by classroom breakout discussions.

She also discussed concerns about the growing popularity of e-bikes. Many young riders do not wear helmets, ride in prohibited areas such as sports fields and parks, and may lack adequate safety training. Kim Littig mentioned a recent crash on Hall Hill Road in which a teen riding an e-bike was struck by a vehicle. Monica emphasized the importance of safety training and shared that she and her husband spent several days teaching their daughter about road safety, speed

limits, and mandatory helmet use before allowing her to ride around town. Jen offered to work with the Somers Police and Fire Departments to host another training session this fall.

Dr. Galloway reported that the Connecticut Department of Education had invited Somers Schools to present on the community's strong academic achievements. Topics would include Somers' Chromebook Curfew, which makes Chromebooks inaccessible to students from 11:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.; the new disability-friendly media center; and new and continuing after-school clubs and activities that support academic performance, including Math Club.

Law Enforcement

Kim Littig reported that Matthew Burzdak, Resident State Trooper, had been promoted to sergeant with the Connecticut State Police in Hartford. She thanked him for his service over the past several months and introduced Jeremy Shepard as Somers' new Resident State Trooper.

Kim reported that the Fourth Annual National Night Out, held on August 4, was very successful. Multiple police units participated, offering equipment tours, K-9 demonstrations, and opportunities for community engagement. More than 400 community members attended for an evening of food, activities, games, and information about local resources. Jen added that more than 30 local businesses and organizations supported the event.

Kim also noted that plans were underway for a National Drug Take Back event on October 24, in partnership with the Somers Fire Department and SHINE.

Youth Services

Jen reported that, in recognition of National Suicide Prevention Month, several activities and resources were being offered, including information campaigns, connections to support services, and suicide awareness training led by Amplify. She also reported that topics for upcoming editions of the monthly Parent Corner e-newsletter had been finalized. Topics would align with school events and observances, local youth data, and Operation Parent handbooks and online resources. Kassie Mashiak volunteered to coordinate promotion of 988 resources, yard signs, and related materials.

Jen reported that, in collaboration with Change the Script CT, SHINE, and the Somers Public Library, a self-service Narcan distribution cabinet had been installed in the library vestibule.

Adjournment

With no further business or announcements, Bob Schmidt moved to adjourn the meeting. Joanne Nichting seconded the motion, and the meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew Cox

Minutes are not official until approved at a subsequent meeting.