

**Town of Somers
Advisory Committee for Seniors
MEETING MINUTES
May 13, 1pm to 2pm**

Present: Pat Bachetti, Ailene Henry, John Kelleher, Maureen Parsell, Annette Ramsdell, Donna Richardson, Eileen Fedorowich, Joan Sizer, and Matthew Cox

Absent: Tina Toohey, Marilyn Gaskill

Guest: Gloria Coles

Call to Order at 1:02 p.m. by chairperson Matthew Cox, who also welcomed today's returning guest, Gloria Coles.

Approval of minutes of April 8, 2025: Eileen moved, and Ailene seconded the motion to approve the April 8 meeting minutes. After discussion, the motion carried.

New Business:

Senior Center Update: Donna presented the attached report. Highlights included:

- Interior painting of the Senior Center will begin soon, and events and activities will be adjusted/moved to temporary locations as needed.
- The Mothers' Day Celebration was well attended and was a complete success.
- The Community Survey on Mental Health and Well Being was released recently, with a deadline of May 23rd for responses. Paper copies of the survey are available at the Senior Center and Donna will deliver them to the consultant in charge of the project.
- Our new part-time program coordinator is Darlene McCray, please stop by to welcome her.
- The Summer BBQ and Fathers' Day Celebration will be held on June 13th at the Somers Knights of Columbus.
- This is the 35th anniversary of the construction of the Senior Center. Some kind of special celebration is in the works for later in the summer. Joan offered to help as she served on the 25th anniversary committee.

Social and Senior Services Update: Annette presented the attached report. Highlights included:

- The census of Meals on Wheels clients continues to decline, which is a trend noted statewide. Outreach and promotional activities have included calls, visits, and flyers at medical offices, through the town website, social media, and the US Post Office.
- Annette recently completed her CHOICES certification training and passed the examination on the first try. After several weeks of shadowing another CHOICES certified counselor she will be able to begin Medicare counseling solo.
- Significant time, effort, and resources continue to be invested in case management for families and seniors in crisis or for whom trauma earlier in life has created challenges in the present. Some difficulties manifest in unnecessary 911 calls, the reasons for which cannot be substantiated by police. Annette has implemented weekly check-in calls or visits to these seniors, which seems to calm fears.
- The Farmers' Market nutrition assistance program for seniors will launch on May 23rd and cards (with values of \$40) will be accepted starting June 1.

Proposed Cuts to the Older Americans' Act Funding:

Matthew reported that the currently proposed federal budget proposes massive cuts to, or elimination of, programs that serve seniors, such as Meals on Wheels, SHIP (Senior Health Insurance Assistance Program, known in CT as CHOICES), QMB (financial assistance for very low-income seniors with Medicare premiums, copays, etc.), SNAP, Adult Protective Services, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program, LIHEAP (heating assistance), etc. Gloria offered to contact Congressman Courtney's office to ask for a speaker to come brief the community at the Senior Center. Others were supportive of the idea to draft a "sign-on" letter for members of this group to sign and send to our Congressional leaders. Ailene and Pat offered to draft and coordinate such a letter. Donna and Matthew offered to help with logistics. Matthew agreed to assemble a list of proposed cuts to share with Ailene and Pat.

Donna noted that the next edition of the Senior Center Newsletter would be coming out soon and she asked that all submissions be sent to her and Pam by the end of this week.

Adjournment: Phyllis moved, and Ailene seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:55 pm. There was no discussion, and the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Matthew Cox, Chair

Next meeting: June 10, 1:00 p.m. in the PROGRAM CLASSROOM at KIBBE FULLER (temporary location).