



Meeting Minutes for September 23, 2025
10:30 to 11:30 a.m.
Blake Room at Somers Public Library

Members and Staff in Attendance: Michael Szafir, Bob Schmidt, Kassie Mashiak, Tim Keeney, Sam Galloway, Margot Martello, Maureen Parsell, Kim Littig, Joanne Nichting, Gerard Joyal, Arianna Flagg, Jen Griger, and Matthew Cox

Matthew Cox called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: Bob moved to approve the minutes for the meeting on May 27, Kassie seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion carried.

Matthew reported that on June 24th, **shine's** consultants from B. Weyland Smith presented results from the *Youth Voices Count Survey*. About 89% of Somers students in grades 7–12 participated, consistent with past years. Findings showed continued declines in 30-day substance use (alcohol and marijuana), strong parental and peer disapproval, and youth citing health concerns, fear of disappointing others, and consequences as reasons not to use. Preliminary results from the *Community Behavioral Health Needs Assessment* echoed these trends and highlighted community concerns about mental health, stigma, excessive screen time, and interest in peer support opportunities.

Tim asked about existing peer programs; Margot noted that Dr. Dietter is developing a peer mediation program, and plans are underway to hire a peer leader coach.

The group discussed stigma as a barrier to accessing support. Margot mentioned Ellington's successful "Stop the Stigma" campaign, and Arianna confirmed stigma reduction is a theme for fall initiatives.

The group also discussed improving parent engagement – particularly for working parents, single parents, and those juggling multiple priorities – with suggestions such as on-demand educational videos for busy families.

Margot shared that new school policies limiting personal device use have been well received—discipline referrals dropped from 180 last year to zero so far.

Jen and Joanne reported increased participation at the Teen Center, now averaging 35 youth daily following its move to the Blake Room.

Adjournment: With no further business or announcements, Joanne moved, and Margot seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:25 am.

Respectfully submitted,
Matthew Cox