



Somers Youth Service Bureau Advisory Board Minutes
September 10, 2025
Meeting Minutes

In attendance: Matthew Cox, Jen Griger, Arianna Flagg, Ed DePeau, Renata Bowers, Colleen Meier, Girard Joyal, Alex Murdoch, Kelley Garrison, Vicki Clark, Nathan Poirier

Absent: Ed DePeau

Guests: none

Call to Order: Matthew Cox called the meeting to order at 4:38pm

Colleen moved, and Gerard seconded a motion to approve the minutes of May 14, 2024, as presented. There was no discussion and the motion was approved.

Program Updates and Next Steps

Youth Service Bureau

- Teen Center. Now in the Blake Center at Somers Public Library. Re-opened on Sept. 2 to approximately 70 students. Calm and orderly. Looking for folks to help lead a craft/activity once in a while. Ellen D'Angelis at the library is helping with the program and is being received well. Jen applied for a \$10,000 grant with the Somers Greater Together Fund at the Hartford Foundation. The local funding committee recommended \$7000 to apply toward equipment, supplies and other items for Teen Center. Looking to introduce and encourage business sponsorships: money, in-kind, time. 40-45 kids come each day, approximately 30 kids do the prepared activity, others visit, play games, and do homework. The Teen Center is active from 2:30-5:00 each day. Register through Somers.RecDesk.com
- Beans & Babies. Every Tuesday, 9-10am at Kibbe Fuller Gymnasium. Free play time for toddlers, coffee time for parents, and sharing resources. Registration is managed through Somers.RecDesk.com
- Safe Sitter Program. This runs periodically, typically during break weeks to train youth to be successful babysitters.
- Back-to-School Program. Each child received a \$50 shoe voucher from DSW (courtesy of the Salvation Army), \$100 Target gift card and a free haircut with funds from community donors.

Though school is in session, families continue to reach out for assistance. We served approximately 25 families.

- Holiday Program. Around Thanksgiving, we will begin soliciting toy donations and gift cards for teens through the Stuff-a-Cruiser project in partnership with Somers Police. Family sign-ups will begin in November and families can visit the Holiday Toy Shop the second week of December.
- 20 Minute Project, a new and ongoing activity for families, is based on research that emphasizes the value of spending 20 minutes daily dedicated to conversation, play, flexible together time between parents and youth. The activity encourages parents to spend 20 minutes with their children, device-free, daily. Youth services will share suggestions/ideas on Facebook/Social Media Campaign that will run on Saturday mornings.
- Truancy. Already one student who is truant and has been referred for support. This year, with Jen on staff from the start of the year, we're able to begin this program right at the start of the school year.
- Youth Diversion Team (formerly Juvenile Review Board). We're not funded for this program, so we partner with Stafford and Ellington. Most cases involve youth vaping on school grounds.

Prevention

- Arianna was recently certified to facilitate a new program called Healthy Futures, developed by the Stanford REACH Lab, that engages youth one-on-one for coaching and education around substance use. We hope to pilot the program through the YDT in the Fall. She will meet with school leaders soon to discuss the program as a possible alternative or complement to existing consequences for use of substances on school grounds.
- Movies in the Park. One movie in June, one in July. August cancelled due to weather. Hosted behind the Senior Center. Family films. Low attendance. Goal for next year to build in attractions for before the movie, to gain greater attendance.
- QPR Institute. Jen and Arianna have been trained to facilitate the Question-Persuade-Refer Suicide Prevention program. Offering training for QPR Gatekeepers, folks in the community who can also help. Training on Tuesday, Sept. 30, 6-7:30pm. There will be more trainings in the future. Open to train folks in organizations, schools, clubs, and businesses.
- Drug Take-Back Day. October 25th from 10-1 at the Fire Department.

New Business/Announcements

- Discussion regarding a “Somers Hub” URL where ALL town-sponsored events, information can be posted, as a one-stop-place for finding out what’s happening in town.

Meeting was called to adjourn by Matthew at 5:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Renata Bowers, Secretary