

**Youth Services Advisory Board**  
**DRAFT Minutes from 9/13/23**

In attendance: Joe Radziewicz, Colleen Meier, Cadence Bidwell, Craig Jones, Ed DePeau, Matthew Cox

Matthew called the meeting to order at 4:36 pm.

Financial Report: Matthew reported that the Drug Free Communities program was approved for second year funding in the amount of \$125,000. Coupled with approximately \$40,000 in carryover funds from the prior fiscal year (a result of delays in hiring, staff transitions, and other changes), the program is in a good place to implement time-limited and meaningful program enhancements, such as the opportunity to purchase parent handbooks for all school families, consultants to assist with branding and marketing, etc. He also reported that funding from the Department of Children and Families was approved for approximately \$30,000.

Program Updates: In the absence of the Youth Services Social Worker, Matthew reported that the summer Youth Adventure Program and Girls on the Run (GOTR) Camp ran over the summer. Girls on the Run was well attended and was well received. Opportunities to enhance the Adventure Program experience have been identified and Youth Services seeks input from families, youth, and other local partners.

A new Storytelling program included 18 local youth who learned about important life skills such as teamwork, planning, negotiation, and critical thinking as they created, experienced, and navigated an imaginary village, creating a story line over multiple sessions.

Youth Services played a key role in Somers' First Annual National Night Out event, which partnered with many town departments, healthcare, and volunteer organizations. Youth Services coordinated youth activities and shared information.

Therapy services continued through the summer months, with both counselors holding full caseloads.

The Juvenile Review Board continued throughout the summer, but with a low census of youth and families, as expected.

Matthew reported that he recently became aware of a foundation grant last year that was never implemented, with the deadline for program implementation quickly approaching. He will work with other town departments to consider next steps and will report back at the next meeting.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 5:29 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew Cox, for Renata Bowers