

Somers Youth Services Advisory Board Minutes-DRAFT

March 13, 2023 @ 8:30am

Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Matthew Cox at 8:32am

Members Present: Matthew Cox, Craig Jones, Aiden Matthews, Colleen Meier, Renata Bowers, Ed DePeau, Arianna Flagg

Absent: Joe Radziewicz, Cadence Bidwell, Brian Langan

FINANCIAL/FUNDING: Funding is stable. Drug Free Communities grant was renewed again for this year. Application due today for the third year of funding, for through Sept. 2025. Youth Service Bureau Funding – small cut (8%), provides \$29,000 a year.

PROGRAM UPDATES:

***Update on Disaster Recovery.** Somers has collected more than \$300,000 in the wake of the house fire on June 2. About \$70,000 has been spent in providing support to the families affected. We've hired a retired probate judge to help make decisions about how to spend the remaining funds. Family members all are safely housed and cared for. Talking with the Hartford Fund to see if they might be able to help facilitate any similar event in the future.

***Update on Youth Services.** Girls on the Run – we're not doing it this year in Somers, but 5K is on May 11, 2025 and Genevieve Koropatkin will be honored at that event. Truancy referrals from Somers schools has been low. JRB: We're still part of it, but Aiden now is only handling the processing for Somers, not all three towns. Counseling: Aiden has about 5 cases right now; she'll be leaving on maternity leave and has provided for their care in her absence. Erin - part-time counselor - has accepted a full-time position, so we now are looking at our options for covering her time. Paused Summer programming while Aiden is away. Other programming will continue.

***Update on Youth Leadership Council.** The Council is meeting every other Thursday, 6-7pm; that might shift as Aiden is on maternity leave. New interest in the group by other youth; new member has just joined, a Junior at High School. Members will be participating in the screening event planned to highlight the Screenagers film on March 20th at the high school. We are planning National Prevention Week activities at SHS in May. Suggested to consider SADD and SSS and/or other groups in the future.

***Drug-Free Communities.** Arianna has been attending a Coalition Academy, to learn more in order to inform her leadership, learning more about Strategic Prevention Framework. Gaining understanding about the 7 Strategies and all that's involved in building successful programming. Working with the Somers Comes Together group to help members have a greater opportunity to provide input and action on initiatives. Looking at the best initiatives on which to dedicate funding dollars.

Group discussed ways to engage students and families in our community in relevant discussions/presentations/activities related to the effects of drugs/alcohol/screens.

*Speakers sharing stories to help create greater awareness of what poor choices do to your body, life

*Offering community-building programs/activities, helping youth feel safe, seen, heard and loved.

*Offering positive, engaging and uplifting programs, such as a Bike Rodeo.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:37 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Renata Bowers