



Somers Youth Services Advisory Board Minutes
May 14, 2025
Meeting Minutes

In attendance: Matthew Cox, Jen Griger, Arianna Flagg, Ed DePeau, Renata Bowers, Colleen Meier, Gerard Joyal

Guests: Alex Murdoch

Call to Order: Matthew Cox called the meeting to order at 4:05pm

Approval of Minutes of September 11, 2024

Ed moved and Colleen seconded a motion to approve the minutes as presented. The motion carried.

Advisory Board Membership – Matthew introduced the topic of challenges our group has experienced with lack of attendance resulting in cancelled meetings.

- There has been a struggle to keep a full board and quorum attendance at SYS meetings.
- Alex Murdoch and his brother, Kevin (Worthington Winery), Adam (Bumpa Built) and Vicki Clark, a small business owner in Somers, have expressed interest.
- Matthew mentioned that opportunities are many and that the town also seeks additional Somers residents to serve on the SHINE Coalition.
- Currently, we have two at-large vacancies, and we also need someone under the age of 21 to fill one position
- The group reviewed a draft of the SYS Board Job Description
- Discussion around ideas for better incorporating elementary/middle school students and families
 - Possibly a revisit of the 3-POP program held at MBA for 3 years in a row, welcoming 6th-graders and their families to a community-building event the week before school starts
 - Involve PTO
 - Parent representatives from each school

Program Updates and Next Steps

- Youth Service Bureau: Jen reported that our YSB grant for fy 2026 was just accepted! Big focus of the work now is on building relationships and trust with parents/families. Encouraging parents to feel confident in their role, providing information and resources to parents.

- Teen Center: Going really well. Parents are happy with the program. Kickball game with kids and parents on June 2nd. The model engages youth to propose, plan, and lead daily activities. For example, Mondays are Teen Cuisine (led by kids), Tuesdays are “Survival Skills” (life skills), Wednesdays are game masters. Looking to recruit volunteers next year. Currently, daily attendance is around 25 youth, and we have served about 80 unduplicated youth since October.
- Truancy Support and Prevention: Jen reported that there are so many underlying issues: housing insecurities, unhealthy relationships, layers of trauma. But our approach is gaining traction, and we have noted successes as parents and youth travel along their “learning journey,” acquiring information, learning new skills, etc.
- JRB: Majority of what comes through is from Stafford, rarely from Somers.
- Prevention: Arianna reported that on May 20th there’s a part 2 to “Screenagers” at 5:30pm at SHS. Discussion of new cell phone policy in the schools for 2025-26. National Night Out is Tuesday, August 5, 5-7:30pm.

New Business

- New member recruitment (see notes above)
- Meeting schedule: Do we want to keep meetings at 4:00pm four times a year? Sept, Nov, March, May. All agreed to maintain the current schedule moving forward.

Matthew agreed to keep everyone informed as things develop over the summer and/or opportunities to get involved. Our next meeting is on September 10, 4pm in the Kibbe Fuller program classroom.

Meeting was called to adjourn by Matthew at 5:11pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Renata Bowers, Secretary