



Town of Suffield

Social Services Commission

Thursday, April 13, 2023 - 8:30 AM Meeting Minutes

Held at Suffield Town Hall/Hybrid Teleconference

Call recording available on Town website under Social Services Commission (SSC)

Commission Members Present: Marcia DuFore-Chair, Robin Zatony-Vice Chair, Kathy Bielonko, Sharon Bruno, and Andrea (Chace) Wessling

Department Heads Present: Colin Moll – 1st Selectman
Danielle Annibalini – Community Aid
Jason Joyce – Suffield Housing Authority
Debra Krut – Suffield Housing Authority

Guests: Melvin Chafetz – Juvenile Review Board

1. Chair Marcia DuFore called the meeting to order at 8:31 am. Commission Members, Department Heads, and Guests listed above introduced themselves.
2. The minutes from the March 9, 2023 regular meeting were reviewed. Vice Chair Robin Zatony made a motion to amend the minutes to clarify that she will provide food availability flyers for the Senior Fair. Sharon Bruno seconded the motion. Motion carried.
3. Public Comment – Melvin Chafetz from the Juvenile Review Board gave a brief history behind the founding of Youth Services. Twenty-five years ago there was a need in the McAllister Middle School for the youth. The 2nd Baptist Church put in a youth center. There was huge interest of 200+ children. That sparked the search for a director for Youth Services. It is a critical point for the Juvenile Review Board.
4. Department Reports – No reports this month.
5. Old Business
 - a. Affordable Housing Task Force Update – There is a meeting tonight and they are working on a needs survey.
 - b. Food Security – There will be a meeting with Laura Laflamme and Danielle Annibalini (Community Aid) about community gardens on April 19, 2023. Vice Chair Robin Zatony stated that the food pantry is in good shape and food at the church is limited due to needing 40 of each item to provide items to help those in need. There is a need for a specific list of items needed.
 - c. Senior Services Fair – There is no update being provided at this meeting.
6. New Business – Youth Services Needs – They are having difficulty finding a fully qualified candidate for the position. There is \$100,000 divided over four years to help increase programs. There is also federal money (grant) that could help with staffing. There was discussion about the feasibility of hiring a second Youth Services member of staff. That would require either federal aid or a grant. There are surrounding towns with two or more individuals running their youth services. Vice Chair Robin Zatony asked if the \$25,000 for this year could be used to hire a contractor for the summer. There are

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incentives needed for truant students. The court system has pushed most youth legal issues back to the town's Juvenile Review Boards. Will check with school resources to see if there is someone who may be interested in helping during the summer. There is a psychologist in the area who may also have some contacts who may be interested in helping as well. Chair Marcia DuFore will send the First Selectman the feedback she has received from others. Vice Chair Robin Zatony made a motion to recommend that the ARPA funding be used this summer contracting someone to provide youth services. Sharon Bruno seconded the motion. Motion carried.

7. Town Clean-up Day will be on April 29, 2023 from 9 am to noon. Anyone interested in helping should register on the town's website. The next meeting for the Suffield Social Services Commission will be held Thursday, May 11, 2023 at 8:30 am at the Town Hall with a Zoom option available.
8. Vice Chair Robin Zatony made a motion to adjourn the regular meeting for the Suffield Social Services Commission at 9:32 a.m. Kathy Bielonko seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Connie Irwin
Recording Secretary

c: Town Clerk
Commission Members
Department Heads