



# Town of Suffield

## Social Services Commission

Thursday, June 8, 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, Ann Bauchiero, Kathy Bielonko, Sharon Bruno, Nathan Prusi, and Andrea (Chace) Wessling

**Department Heads Present:** Colin Moll – First Selectman  
Danielle Annibalini – Community Aid  
Peter LeClerc – Community Services  
Jason Joyce – Suffield Housing Authority

1. Chair Marcia DuFore called the meeting to order at 8:37 am. Commission Members and Department Heads listed above introduced themselves. The Commission welcomed Kelly Giannuzzi, the new Youth Services Director.
2. The minutes from the May 11, 2023 regular meeting were reviewed. Danielle Annibalini requested a correction to section 4 part b, the shout out should be for Beth, not Deb. Nathan Prusi made a motion to accept the minutes as corrected. Vice Chair Zatony seconded the motion. Motion carried.
3. Public Comment – The Commission welcomed Dr, Liz D’Amico for public comment. Dr. D’Amico is a doctoral-level clinical social worker with over 30 years of experience providing psychotherapy and related services to individuals of all ages. She indicated that about two-thirds of her practice is 60 years old or older and along with senior friends/family members she has about 100 seniors that have provided feedback about our senior center over the years.  
The feedback ranges from technology challenges, lack of greeting/assistance especially for new visitors, diversity below even that of the town, the need for staff with specialized training, an unwelcoming, low energy environment and “cliques” (saving seats, preferential sign-up treatment). Some suggestions: a survey with open-ended questions vs. Y/N and no room for comments; suggestion boxes at public places in town; visiting 5-6 centers in other towns, spending time at the facility and with their directors to understand programming, budgets, funding per capita. She will send the written notes to Chair DuFore.
4. Department Reports -Department Reports are only reviewed every other month. No department reports this month.
5. Old Business
  - a. Affordable Housing Task Force – Vice Chair Zatony reported that at their last meeting they discussed how the financial community views affordable housing and how it gets funded. They would like a survey that asks what Suffield’s affordable housing needs are to be mailed to all residents similar to the Assessor’s recent mailing. She needs to check with Lisa Trase to find out the cost. Affordable housing is not going smoothly at the State level with legislative delays.

- b. Food security – the subcommittee will meet next week then break over summer. They will be at the Suffield summer fair on Friday night to take collections for the Crossroads food pantry. They will also be at the Suffield farmers market every other week to hand out flyers listing where people can go for food. They can use additional help.
- c. Senior Services Fair – was held last week and was well received. There was a diverse group of over 40 vendors, sponsors, prizes and transportation provided. Possible improvements for next year may be a shorter duration and some type of food included. The Commission would like to know how many attended.

6. New Business:

- a. Senior Center Survey and ideas for engaging members of the senior community  
Peter LeClerc provided the survey results, reviewed the purpose and methods used to conduct it, and his plans to grow more organically before conducting another survey. Usage is up about 20%, including from other towns and they have been offering different programs. They are leveraging the Parks & Recs family database to promote the center and hold more intergenerational events. They are spread thin in terms of staff, but have more willing volunteers than they can utilize at the moment.

The Commission would like to know actual numbers – of Suffield’s 5,500 seniors how many are members, active/inactive, members from other towns, etc. Chair Marcia DuFore suggested a work group over the summer gather information about other senior centers, learn about their programming, budgets, staffing. They could inquire into programs across library and SCA to address gaps/overlap. Sharon Bruno, Nathan Prusi, Vice Chair Zatory will join the focus group. Danielle Annibalini will ask Pat Beeman if she’d like to join. Chair DuFore can host and will send out date options.

Danielle Annibalini noted that SCA is bringing back the friendly visitor/phone call program with the help of a new intern.

- b. Youth Services initial plans – Kelly Giannuzzi is planning to host a lot of intergenerational programs such as a plant night and ice cream social. She will have family programs for mental health and wellness, a chores program for yard work
7. The next meeting for the Suffield Social Services Commission will be held Thursday, September 14, 2023 at 8:30 am at the Town Hall with a Zoom option available. There will be no meetings in July or August, however any summer updates can be sent via email.
8. Nate Prusi made a motion to adjourn the regular meeting for the Suffield Social Services Commission at 9:36 a.m. Vice Chair Zatory seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Kris Kelliher  
Recording Secretary

- c: Town Clerk  
Commission Members  
Department Heads