



Town of Suffield

Social Services Commission

Thursday, January 11, 2024 - 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, Kathleen Bielonko, Nathan Prusi, and Andrea (Chace) Wessling

Commission Members Absent: Sharon Bruno

Department Heads Present: Kelly Giannuzzi – Youth Services
Danielle Annibalini – Community Aid
Peter LeClerc – Senior Center

Volunteer Opportunities –

Intergenerational Sock Hop (5/10/2024)

Youth – Pancake Breakfast and more

SCA – Friendly Visitor/Caller Program

1. Vice Chair Robin Zatony called the meeting to order at 8:32 am. Commission Members and Department Heads listed above introduced themselves.
2. The minutes from the December 14, 2023 regular meeting were discussed and due to their late delivery, **Kathleen Bielonko made a motion to table the review and acceptance of the minutes until the February 8, 2024 meeting. Ann Bauchiero seconded the motion. Motion carried.**
3. Public Comment – NONE
4. Department Reports
 - a. Suffield Youth Services – Kelly Giannuzzi – There have been 262 kids that have gone through 19 programs that have been offered. On May 10, 2024 there will be an intergenerational sock hop at the Senior Center. A challenge for Youth Services is parents being aware of programs so they can sign their children up for events. Communication is done through the school's virtual backpack program. Vice Chair Robin Zatony talked about having a half page ad on the Suffield Observer in March 2024. Kelly Giannuzzi will get the information to Robin ASAP. The Suffield Local Prevention Council met last night. They would like to have more people in town involved with the program. Their goal is to get people from all areas and walks of life to raise awareness and help the youth. There will be an assembly at the Middle School about vaping. There is an upcoming Pancake Breakfast where any outside support for the event would be appreciated. There are lots of volunteer opportunities to help with the Youth Services programs. They are trying to offer programs to different ages of children. There is a Junior Leadership Council in the Middle School and they have helped identify areas of need for students. Mental health is a huge issue. High levels of stress in high school for many reasons.

These minutes are not official until accepted at a subsequent meeting.

- b. Suffield Community Aid – Danielle Annibalini – Meals-on-Wheels currently have 23 households participating and continue to have 3 delivery routes per day, with volunteers delivering meals 5 days per week. The Renters Rebate Program ended on November 30 and will resume in April 2024. CT Energy Assistance Program (CEAP) has had since September 1, Beth has completed 173 applications with Suffield residents. Residents have expressed concerns about the decrease in benefit amounts. The Salvation Army Kettle Drive had good success throughout the month of December. SCA retains 90% of the funds to help support the backpack program. Friendly Visitor/Friendly Caller Program held volunteer training on Thursday, January 4 to 4 volunteers. They continue to recruit additional volunteers. Beth continues to attend meetings of the Juvenile Review Board as meetings are scheduled. The Holiday Basket program was in December. SCA was able to provide to 51 families and 44 seniors with an abundance of gifts and food. The Food Pantry is in great shape with full shelves and a surplus of many items for restocking. Usage of the pantry has been steady. Operation Fuel restarted on Monday, January 8 and will provide a one-time \$500 payment per calendar year for Suffield residents who meet the income level threshold. The Private Fuel bank has been accessed 10 times for Suffield residents in need. Interest and applications continue for the Housing Repair Assistance Program. They have received 12 applications. The Meghan Voisine Fund had the applications close on December 1. 8 applications were received and approved. Keep a lookout for Kindness Rocks at SHS and McAlister, a “Free Little Library” outside of McAlister, and an opportunity to purchase a one-of-a-kind ceramic bowl at the “Soup and Sing” event at McAlister in May 2024 to raise money for the fund. They are currently subsidizing lunches for 43 low-income seniors and individuals with disabilities and continues to pay for up to 2 lunches per week.
- c. Suffield Senior Center/Minibus – Peter LeClerc – the numbers for the Minibus were provided to the Commission. The Holiday Luncheon was very nice with the volunteers making it extra special with the decoration and musical entertainment. The spaghetti dinner with Santa was well attended. Peter is working on next year’s budget. They would like funds for a Minibus driver for five hour shifts at night for those seniors who do not want to drive after dark so they *could* attend the Intergenerational Sock Hop. Infrastructure upgrades to the building include LED lighting throughout the building and programmable thermostats. Most rooms have their own heating/cooling zone. The thermostats can be accessed remotely through an app and adjusted as needed.
- d. Comments from Suffield Housing Authority – Jason Joyce – Jason was unable to attend this month’s meeting but sent his information via email. They are moving forward with their grant and have a walk through on Thursday. They are going into the New Year looking good. The waiting list is still open and they have about twenty people on the list. Eight more applications are ready for the board to approve. A person moved in on 01/01/2024 and there are three more units that became available. The units will be ready 02/2024 and 03/2024.

5. Old Business
 - a. Affordable Housing Task Force Update – there is a meeting tonight and they are working on their presentation to the Board of Selectmen. The Suffield Forum and Planning & Zonings website posted the presentation for the South Main Street property which includes affordable housing. There are a lot of misconceptions on what affordable housing is and how it is driven by income levels. There was discussion on the areas in town that have affordable housing. Vice Chair Robin Zatory will see if she can share the rough Q&A with the Commission.
 - b. Food Insecurity Update – Vice Chair Robin Zatory will draft and then send a note to the church representatives for the many volunteer opportunities in town. This item can be removed from future agendas.
6. New Business - NONE
7. The next meeting for the Suffield Social Services Commission will be held Thursday, February 8, 2024 at 8:30 am at the Town Hall with a Zoom option available.
8. Kathy Bielonko made a motion to adjourn the regular meeting for the Suffield Social Services Commission regular meeting held Thursday, January 11, 2024 at 9:19 a.m. Ann Bauchiero seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Connie Irwin
Recording Secretary

- c: Town Clerk
Commission Members
Department Heads