



Town of Suffield

Social Services Commission

Thursday, September 12, 2024 - 8:30 AM Meeting Minutes
Held at Suffield Town Hall/Hybrid Teleconference

Recording of the meeting is available on Town website under Social Services Commission

Commission Members Present: Chair Robin Zatony, Ann Bauchiero, Kathleen Bielonko, Sharon Bruno, Nathan Prusi, and Andrea (Chace) Wessling

Commission Members Absent: None

Department Heads Present: Peter LeClerc - Parks & Rec.
Kelly Giannuzzi – Youth Services
Mary Curtin – Suffield Community Aid
Jason Joyce – Suffield Housing Authority

1. Chair Zatony called the meeting to order at 8:34 am. Commission Members and Department Heads listed above introduced themselves.
2. The minutes from the May 9, 2024 meeting were reviewed. **Ms. Bielonko made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Ms. Bruno seconded. All in favor; motion passed 6:0.**
The minutes from the June 13, 2024 meeting were reviewed. **Mr. Prusi made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Ms. Bruno seconded. All in favor; motion passed 6:0.**
3. Public Comment – None
4. Department Reports:
 - a. Peter LeClerc – Parks & Rec., Juvenile Review Board, Senior Services- The Senior Center was very busy during the summer. There is a new ice machine coming. The multi-purpose room has been carpeted. Bethany Sullivan is a new full-time assistant and has already created bonds with seniors and other departments. There are no new cases during the summer for the Juvenile Review Board. The Board is looking for a new member.
 - b. Kelly Giannuzzi – Youth & Family Services – Youth/Family Services was very busy during the summer. They are working to have more family community events. A teen lounge has been constructed where kids will be able to go. Their parents can be confident about where the teens are spending their time. There is an event on Monday, September 30 in the Suffield Senior Center 6-8 pm on Media Awareness. An email has been sent to the School Secretary to share with parents through the students. The Senior pen pal program will be starting soon, connecting our Youth and Seniors.
 - c. Mary Curtin - Suffield Community Aid – Ms. Curtin came to SCA in May 2024. SCA had a busy summer. The Annual Report will be presented September 25, 2024 from 8-9 pm. Most services have been used steadily. Sherry Burger will be talking with those interested in Choices for Medicare. There is a 13% increase in Meals on Wheels. The friendly visitor program has started. There were less fuel subsidies paid due to a milder than expected winter. Scholarships increased from \$1,000 to \$1,500 and two more scholarships have been added. The backpack program started with one new child. There was an abundance of donations. Patricia Beeman will be retiring in December 2024. Her position will be posted late September/early October.

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

4. Department Reports: (CONTINUED)
 - d. Jason Joyce - Suffield Housing Authority – SHA was very busy and they are currently in the middle of using their grant. Landscaping and sidewalks have been added, as well as a parking lot. They have a few gift cards left and would like to have more prior to the impending holidays.
5. Social Services – Related Concerns and Joys from other Departments
 - a. Kathy Bielonko – Library, Dunkin Donuts – There is a new Library Director, Amy Vesella who starts on September 23. There are no issues with needing SSC help at Dunkin Donuts.
 - b. Ann Bauchiero – Police – Ms. Bauchiero will catch up with the police department next week.
 - c. Sharon Bruno – Religious Organizations – no update at the time of the meeting.
 - d. Nathan Prusi – Fire, Planning & Zoning, Suffield Observer – Planning and Zoning had a member resign. Lester Smith, Suffield’s Town Historian and a staff member of the Suffield Observer passed away.
 - e. Andrea (Chace) Wessling – Facebook – There has been discussion on the St. Joseph’s Church property. The gentleman who purchased the property proposed apartments which was voted down and therefore did not accept his plan.
 - f. Unassigned – Finance, Schools, Rotary, Veterans, etc.
6. Town-wide Survey – Sharon Bruno update on meeting the First Selectman Moll – the meeting is scheduled for September 19, 2024.
 - a. Discuss value of survey and whether we want to invest in one in 2025 – One survey was done through Planning & Zoning and the other through Youth Services. Ms. Giannuzzi stated that she is doing a survey for 6-12 grades, specifically for the youth, and the survey will be completed through a consulting company.
7. Old Business
 - a. Affordable Housing Task Force – The final presentation was made. Four of the five Selectmen were open to the proposals.
 - b. **Election of Vice Chair – Chair Zatory made a motion to nominate Nathan Prusi as Vice Chair for the Social Services Commission. Ms. Bielonko seconded. Mr. Prusi stated that he was willing to accept the nomination. All in favor; motion passed 6:0.**
8. New Business – Chair Zatory would like the Social Services Commission to be more active in the community and, in the future, reduce the Commission’s meetings to quarterly.
 - a. Next steps for Affordable Housing – Nathan Prusi
 - b. Resources available to Seniors Panel (9/10) – Chair Robin Zatory – Thirteen people attended the event regarding financial help. It would be good to have more panels to help our Seniors with things that keep them up at night.
 - c. Gauge degree of interest in a subgroup working on pursuing impact of technology on Youth. (*The Anxious Generation* book)
 - d. Gauge degree of interest in a subgroup working on compiling a book celebrating Suffield through older citizens. (Share book as example) – Create a book sponsored by local businesses to celebrate Suffield/s older citizens.
 - e. Gauge degree of interest in <http://chooselovemovement.org> and/or addressing needs of young families with kids Birth to 5 years old.

8. New Business (CONTINUED):

Chair Zatony would like all Commission members to let her know their interest either via phone call, email, text, or at the next meeting. Chair Zatony would like each Commission member to have their own subgroup to lead in an area they are passionate about.

9. The next meeting for the Social Services Commission is Thursday, October 10, 2024 at the Suffield Senior Center, 145 Bridge St. at 8:30 am with Zoom option available.

10. **Ms. Bielonko made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Prusi seconded. All in favor and the meeting adjourned at 9:33 am.**

Respectfully submitted,

Connie Irwin
Recording Secretary

c: Town Clerk
Commission Members
Department Heads