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TOWN OF SUFFIELD

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
SUFFIELD SOCIAL SERVICES COMMISSION
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2026 - 8:30 AM
SUFFIELD COMMUNITY AID - 450 SOUTH STREET, SUFFIELD

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Robin Zatony, Vice Chair Nathan Prusi
Ann Bauchiero, Mark Blackaby, Sharon Bruno

MEMBERS ABSENT: Laura Eisenhaure

DEPARTMENT HEADS PRESENT: Joanne Moriarty - Youth Services
Bethany Sullivan - Senior Services
Mary Curtin - Suffield Community Aid
Jason Joyce - Suffield Housing Authority

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1. Chairman Zatony called the meeting to order at 8:34 am. Introductions of all present followed. Chairman Zatony confirmed Commission Members and Department Heads listed above were present.

2. Minutes from the February 6, 2026, April 10, 2026 and June 5, 2026 meetings were reviewed as follows.

February 6, 2026 - There were no corrections or additions. Sharon Bruno motioned to accept the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Nate Prusi and approved by all.

April 10, 2026 - There were no corrections or additions. Sharon Bruno motioned to accept the minutes as presented.The motion was seconded by Nate Prusi and approved by all.

June 5, 2026 - Mary Curtin requested a change stating that the Suffield Community Aid report had been incorrectly placed within the Youth Services Report. The Suffield Community Aid complete report is entered into these minutes as noted below.

“The mail carrier food drive resulted in receiving a good amount of food but less than in years past. SCA is working on our first strategic plan which will include a community survey, volunteer survey, volunteer focus groups and participant and community partner interviews.

Parkinson's group is on break for the summer, but Caregiver group will continue to meet. Lauren

Marino is available for help with state program redeterminations, and Beth Sheridan is helping residents enroll in Rental Rebate, Camper-ships and Farmer Market gift cards. There continues to be increased stress on residents related to affordability."

Nate Prusi motioned to accept the minutes as amended. Sharon Bruno seconded the motion. The motioned passed with one abstention by Mark Blackaby.

3. There were no public comments.

4. Updates by Department Heads were presented as follows

Jason Joyce - Suffield Housing Authority

Jason reported there were a number of events held for the housing residents. These included an ice cream social and pizza party. The Rotary Club will distribute tickets to the residents for their chicken dinners. Cookouts are planned on Mondays this fall.

Jac applied for a Coming Together Grant and $20,000.00 was awarded to the Housing Authority. The Authority will be able to purchase a tent for the cookouts, a projector and screen, a popcorn machine, 9 metal picnic tables and carts to assist with moving. Cash donations had been received which will be used to purchase meat for the residents.

The Authority has been working with the Senior Center for another Halloween event this year. Trick or Treaters would be able to visit residents in the Community who had signed up to participate. The children would have a 1/2 hour for a trick or treat visit.

Planning has started for the annual Christmas Party for the residents.

Two units were available on September 1st and there are two people scheduled to move in. There are currently 78 people on the housing waiting list. The list is closed for now at a three year wait.

Jason reported there has been a large increase in people using the Food Pantry. Store gift cards have been distributed to assist some residents. Additional donations of gift cards would be helpful. Stores preferred include Suffield Village Market, Walmart, Big Y and Aldi.

There was some discussion regarding the task force to increase housing. Current members of the Task Force include Colin Moll, Bill Hawkins and Mark Messenger.

Mary Curtin - Suffield Community Aid

Mary reported 86 backpacks had been distributed this year to 51 families. This was a slight decrease from last year.

A strategic plan is currently being developed. It has been helpful to receive feedback from residents, participants, and community partners regarding our current programs and services. The Board will be meeting with a pro bono consultant in November to discuss the next steps.

All programs are up in usage including pantry visits and basket distributions. SCA will be collecting food on Election Day at the Middle School. Suffield Community Aid will also have a table this weekend at Suffield on the Green to promote the programs available to our residents.

Bethany Sullivan - Senior Center

Bethany presented her report on programs and events at the Senior Center. The complete report is noted below.

Ongoing Programs at Suffield Senior Center

- Mini Bus- Beginning in October, we are moving our Mini Bus to a new ride scheduling software. With this new software, you must give Marzena your ride information by 8:00 AM the day before. This means that if you need a ride on October 1st at 2:00 PM, you must have called Marzena at (860) 668-3844 before 8:00 AM on September 30th. Please be patient as we implement this new system.
- Blood Pressure Screenings
  Second and Fourth Wednesday of each month.
  11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
  Sponsored by Suffield Community Aid
- Foot Care
  Fourth Wednesday of each month 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
  Please call to schedule an appointment with the nurse. $45.
- Haircuts by Rosemarie
  Last Monday of the month, 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
  By appointment only. Call (413) 478-1890 to schedule with Rosemarie. Must come with clean, washed hair. Cash only. Women's $15; Men's $10.
- Ask the Social Worker - Last Wednesday of each month 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
- Ask the Attorney - First Thursday of each month 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
- Ask the Realtor - Second Tuesday of each month 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m..
- Medicare CHOICES Counseling - First Tuesday of each month 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
- Veteran's Assistance - Wednesdays at 3:30 p.m.
  Fritz King can be reached at (860) 758-0418 or via email at veterans@suffieldct.gov

- AARP Safe Driver Courses
  Upcoming Classes: March 25, May 20, July 22, September 9, November 18
  9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. $20 AARP Member; $25 Non-Member Payment by cash or check to the Instructor. By cash or check on the day of the class.

- Monitor My Health, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization will be bringing Diabetes Education to Suffield. They have funding through NCAAA to offer this group-based Diabetes Education Program at no cost ($0) to older adults aged 60+ with diabetes or pre-diabetes. The program is valued at approximately $500 per participant.

  This is an evidence-based program licensed by the American Diabetes Association that has been very successful during the past three years in partnership many organizations across CT (including the Enfield Senior Center).

  Program Overview:
  9 weekly group sessions (1 hour each) led by a Certified Diabetes Educator
  2 individual (1:1) sessions with the educator for personalized support

  Program Benefits:
  Supports older adults in maintaining independence
  Improves health outcomes (A1c, blood pressure, energy levels)
  Demonstrates strong impact:
  34% reduction in hospitalization rates
  96% participant satisfaction
  93% report increased confidence in managing diabetes
  87% show improved knowledge based on pre/post assessments

  This 9 week program will be held on Fridays from 10:00-11:00 a.m. starting July 10. You must register as spaces are limited.

- Attendance Raffle You may have noticed the new sign letting you know that every day you swipe your card to sign in, you are entered into a raffle. The more days you swipe, the more chances you have to win the raffle chosen at the end of each month. We will draw our first winner at the end of September and that member will win a prize! So be sure to swipe your card every day to increase your chances!

- Stateline Medicare Workshops Tuesday, Oct 20th & 27th and Nov 3rd 10:00—11:30 a.m. Stateline Senior Services is providing information on Medicare options during open enrollment. Free class, no registration required. Note: The open enrollment period for Medicare Part D prescription drug plans and Medicare Advantage plans is October 15

through December 7.

Flu Shot Clinic

Wednesday, September 30th 9:00a.m.-12:00p.m. - Sponsored by Suffield Community Aid

- UR Community Cares has received a grant from the Suffield Community Fund at the Greater Hartford Gives Foundation for free tech help appointments and free tech workshops here at Suffield Senior Center. UR Community Cares is the first licensed Senior Planet program in Connecticut. They follow AARP's trusted technology education curriculum and will be here the 2nd Tuesday of every month for 8 months starting in November. From 8:30 - 10:00 a.m., there will be one-on-one tech help appointments available that you can sign up for with Bethany. Then from 10:00-11:30 a.m. there will be a tech help workshop open to all. The schedule of topics is as follows:

  November 10th - Smartphones at a Glance December 8th - Is that AI?
  January 12th - MyChart February 9th - Understanding Fraud & Scams
  March 9th - Google Maps April 13th - Protecting Your Personal Info Online
  May 11th - Banking & Finance Apps at a Glance June 8th - Passwords, Passkeys

There was some discussion whether there would be a COVID vaccine clinic. Bethany responded that it would depend on participation numbers. It would not be held along with the Flu Shot Clinic as it appears many would not want to receive both vaccines on the same day.

Joanne Moriarty - Youth Services and Local Prevention Council

Joanne reported the following to the Commission.

The Suffield Sidekicks Teen Helping Seniors - Youth Services received a $5,000 grant from Suffield Greater Together Foundation to fund the program for another year. Applications continue at a steady pace from seniors and teens. We should not expect grant approval for July 2027 - June 2028.

Fall Youth Services Program - We are partnering with the ACES High Robotics group at Suffield High School to continue offering STEM programs at the Youth Center. Program details can be found on our Facebook page as well as Suffield Parents Facebook page.

We have made some changes at the Youth Center in an effort to make it easier for students to attend. School bus transportation is now available from both Suffield Middle School and the High School. We have also eliminated pre-registration, only an annual registration will be required.
Participants have more freedom to choose when to attend. Youth Center open dates are posted on the Youth Services Facebook page.

Youth Services collaborated with the Governor's Prevention Partnership to launch a substance abuse prevention campaign which is now in Phase 2. Phase 1 had included the distribution of Deterra medication disposable pouches. There was also an informational sleeve providing strategies to prevent opioid use, how to have honest conversations about opioid misuse and where to get support. Phase 2 includes the distribution of customized medication lock bags. Both the disposable pouches and medication lock bags will be available this weekend at Suffield on the Green. This project was funded with the allocation of Suffield's Opioid Settlement Funds.

The Suffield Family Connections Newsletter has expanded to cover two months so the first edition this year is for September and October. The newsletter is distributed electronically to students in the school district and posted on social media. Paper copies are available in local childcare facilities. A thank you to Ann Bauchiero for her continued collaboration on this project.

A reminder that all Suffield Youth Services programs are posted on the Youth Services Facebook page. Registration is through SuffieldRec.com.

There was some discussion regarding a "Welcome to Suffield" packet which had been available a number of years ago. Apparently this had been a program staffed with all volunteers. Over the years, volunteers were not able to continue and no one took over the program. This would be a program to restart if there is interest. Will put on the November agenda.

5. There was discussion regarding the December 12, 2026 Concert and Sing-A-Long at Suffield Alight. This program had provided donations to the Senior Center Kitchen in the past. A question was raised whether the mini-bus service would be required this year. A decision regarding the use of the buses would be made at a later date.

6. A question was raised if there had been any progress in augmenting senior rides with a volunteer task force. Mary responded that is currently on hold as possible insurance issues are explored.

7. There was discussion regarding the Commission Members attendance at meetings. The last two meetings, April and June, did not have a quorum and therefore were just informational. No voting could take place. Currently our Commission is under the Board of Selectman consideration for being dissolved. Task Forces would be created as needed. Robin advised the group that the next meeting had been scheduled for the morning of November 6th. There was discussion regarding changing the meetings to evenings which might be more convenient. It was decided that the next meeting would be scheduled for Thursday, November 5th at 5:00 pm.

The agenda indicated that there was currently one vacancy on the Commission with four terms expiring November 2026 and two terms expiring November 2028.

There was discussion regarding the value of the Commission and how to define its purpose. The Commission's value needs to be presented as some of its responsibilities have changed over the years. Further thought should be given to this and perhaps discussed at the next meeting.

8. Next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 5, 2026, 5:00 p.m. at the SCA Conference Room, 450 South Street (Zoom option available).

Robin adjourned the meeting at 9:37 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Ohurley
Recording Secretary