

# **SOUTH WINDSOR BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE (SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL)**

**MINUTES  
SPRENKEL ROOM**

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**REGULAR MEETING  
July 12, 2018**

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## **1. Call Meeting to Order**

Chairperson Matthew Galligan called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

## **2. Roll Call**

### **Members Present**

Matthew Galligan, Chairperson/Town Manager  
Vanessa Perry, Assistant Town Manager/Director of Human Resources  
Raymond Favreau, Director of Parks and Recreation  
Shelby Kosa, Recreation Supervisor/Director of 4<sup>th</sup> R Program  
Tiffany Caouette, Principal of Pleasant Valley Elementary School (Superintendent's Designee)  
Anthony Leone, Resident/Parent  
Karen Lydecker, Resident/Parent  
Beth Esstman, Board of Education  
Craig Zimmerman, Board of Education  
Audrey Delnicki, Town Council  
Andrew Paterna, Town Council

### **Members Absent**

### **Guests Present**

Rabbi Jeffrey Glickman, Town Councilor  
Janice Snyder, Town Councilor  
Dr. M. Saud Anwar, Mayor  
Dr. Kate Carter, Superintendent of Schools  
Mary Justine Hockenberry, Town Councilor  
Matthew Riley, Town Councilor  
Two Residents

## **3. Approval of Minutes**

Approval of minutes was postponed to a future meeting, due to clerical errors that need correction.

## **4. New Business**

### ***Discussion – Review Information from the Avery Street Church, Temple Beth Hillel Synagogue, and YMCA Proposal***

Mr. Galligan and Mr. Favreau held a meeting on June 28<sup>th</sup> with Reverend Poolman of the Avery Street Church, Rabbi Glickman of the Temple Beth Hillel Synagogue, and Tina Gladden of the YMCA. The YMCA has proposed that child care programs begin at the Synagogue. Once the Avery Street Church facilities are ready, a second care site would be opened there. The families on the 4<sup>th</sup> R waiting lists would be notified of the alternative programs. They would not be required to come off of the waiting list.

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The possibility of subcontracting outside programs to run in the schools was discussed. Mr. Galligan and Mr. Favreau have determined that the Superintendent of Schools and the Board of Education would need to be involved with the decision. Dr. Kate Carter said that having multiple programs and program managers within the schools would require a substantial amount of resources and time. Mr. Galligan said that he and Ms. Vanessa Perry had discussed the possibility of hiring extra staff to contract these programs, and determined that this could take a year or more to accomplish. It was also mentioned that contracted programs require a quota to run. If children drop out of the program, it becomes a loss to keep running the program below quota.

Mr. Galligan mentioned the legal issues that are occurring at the Mother Goose daycare facility. The daycare must be bought out or close down by September 28<sup>th</sup>. This situation could add to the childcare needs of the Town.

Councilor Paterna expressed concern that the Avery Street Church and Temple Beth Hillel Synagogue programs will not be ready by September. He estimated that a January target date was more realistic. He then offered alternative ideas. The Recreation Department could add students to the 4<sup>th</sup> R program at each school and hire extra staff. The YMCA could be subcontracted to run programs in Pleasant Valley and Philip R. Smith. The Town could consider hiring an administrator for this on a short-term basis, until the Church and Synagogue programs are ready. Councilor Paterna said that two companies, Mach 1 Music and the Martial Art Academy, have expressed interest in subcontracting with the Town. Mach 1 Music offered to run a music and arts enrichment program at Orchard Hill for 25 students, which would require one classroom. The Martial Arts Academy is located in Manchester, and has pick-up services available to students in Town. However, parents would have to come and get their children after the program. These programs could be offered to parents as a child care option until the Church and the Synagogue programs are ready.

Mr. Galligan asked if the YMCA is required to go through the State licensing requirements if they are subcontracted by the Town. Ms. Kosa said that if the Town is dictating the hours of YMCA staff in a contract, it is considered employment. The after-school programs that are currently run in the schools, for example, are eligible for subcontracting because they have pre-set hours that are not dictated by the Town. Councilor Paterna asked if the YMCA could operate in the same way, but be under the Recreation Department in order to skip the licensing process. Mr. Favreau said that this would have to be investigated further.

Ms. Perry asked if the YMCA would be able to use school classrooms for their programs. Dr. Carter said that classroom use is not an option for a five-day after school program. The space that would be available for use is the space being used by the 4<sup>th</sup> R program – gyms, cafeterias, and art/music rooms or libraries. Ms. Kosa said that the 4<sup>th</sup> R program has maxed out this available space. Mr. Favreau pointed out that there is still a staffing issue to consider. Dr. Carter suggested that school paraprofessionals could be brought in to fill the staffing gaps. She said that the sign-in and sign-out data from the 4<sup>th</sup> R program needs to be examined to determine how much staffing is needed per time of day.

Ms. Lydecker asked if professional daycares could be considered as an option. Mr. Galligan said that he is negotiating with an outside company who may be interested in building a new

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facility in Evergreen Walk. There is also an Ellington childcare business called Educational Playcare that has approached him to discuss bussing children to their facility. Ms. Lydecker said that companies that provide daycare in schools should also be looked into.

Rabbi Glickman said that houses of worship are allowed to run a two-hour after-school program without licensure provided that three criteria are met: the program must be consistent with the mission of the house of worship, homework cannot be an activity, and food cannot be provided. This is the failsafe option for the Synagogue if they cannot obtain licensure by September. The program would be run jointly with the YMCA as an ecumenical religious school, to remain in accordance with the house of worship exception requirements. Rabbi Glickman said that there would be no intention to convert children. A committee member expressed concern that a religious program would exclude a large percentage of the Town's population. Rabbi Glickman was asked if there would be a religious education aspect to the program. He said that while a religious education aspect is required in order to run the program under the house of worship exception, the programs would be designed to be nonspecific. The YMCA would staff the program, and would still assume responsibility for bussing.

Dr. Carter mentioned that she spoke to the president of the National After-School Association, who has 30 years of experience in this field, and is the chair of the Licensing Committee for childcare facilities. Dr. Carter said that this expert could be helpful in navigating the licensing process and providing input on the space needs of the 4<sup>th</sup> R program. Dr. Carter has invited her to attend a future meeting of the Committee.

Dr. Anwar suggested that planning for the long-term solution can wait, as there is an immediate need for a short-term solution. The Synagogue program is one option, but if that program is not going to be ready for the short-term, then the option of running subcontracted programs in classrooms may have to be considered.

Ms. Lydecker mentioned that half-day Wednesdays could be an issue if the house of worship exception program is used in the Synagogue. The half-day release times would be outside the two-hour window of the program.

Ms. Perry asked how many of the children that were on the 4<sup>th</sup> R waitlist for last year are the same children on the waitlist for the upcoming year. Ms. Kosa will find the information. Ms. Perry said that the parents on the waitlist must have had another option already. There may not be as many children in need of care as the waitlist indicates. The waitlist may have a number of parents that would just prefer the 4<sup>th</sup> R program, but do not actually need it.

It was suggested that increasing the wages of 4<sup>th</sup> R employees could invite more people to apply for jobs with the program. Ms. Kosa said that starting wages were already increased this year by two dollars over minimum wage for entry-level positions, and by four dollars beyond that for the program director positions. Mr. Favreau said that paraprofessionals assigned to one-on-one care are paid the rate that they would receive at the schools.

Dr. Carter suggested having a career fair at the high school solely for the 4<sup>th</sup> R program. Students interested in childcare careers would be encouraged to apply, and might also be able to earn school credit by working for the program.

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Councilor Hockenberry asked if the old Wapping School and Orchard Hill School could be considered for program space. It was determined that Orchard Hill will be used by Philip R Smith in the fall, so it is not available. Wapping is available, but transportation would be an issue. Mr. Favreau said that the high school athletic department uses the Wapping gym from 2:30 to 5:30, and that would have to be rearranged. Staffing would also be an issue.

A member from the public said that the number of families on the waitlist who are still interested in the program should be calculated. This would give some idea of how many people will actually need the short-term solution. Ms. Kosa said that she will follow up on this.

The use of classroom space was discussed further. Running before and after school care programs in classrooms five days a week would be a significant displacement for teachers who may need the use of their classrooms before or after school. It was suggested that the program could rotate activities so that classrooms are not used every day. Schools could also run a short academic after-school program to cover the children who only need brief care.

The Committee discussed the possibility of having separate programs within the 4<sup>th</sup> R. There are some families who only use the 4<sup>th</sup> R program for childcare on professional development days and snow days. If a separate program was created for this need, it could free up room in 4<sup>th</sup> R for the families who need before and after-school care every day.

Mr. Galligan said that waiting lists are a reality of life. There are more houses being built in Town, which is going to increase demand for childcare as families move in. Parents who were on the waitlist in previous years must have found other solutions. Ms. Lydecker said that the options available in previous years may not be available this year. Mr. Galligan said that oversaturating the Town programs is a liability. Ms. Lydecker said that the 4<sup>th</sup> R program does not necessarily need to be expanded, but rather that the private sector should be considered. Mr. Galligan said that the private sector is being considered, but it takes time to negotiate new development in Town.

Mr. Galligan expressed concern that the Town would be liable if an incident occurred at a daycare program sponsored by the Town. It was suggested that the YMCA could take over the programs, thus freeing the Town from liability. Ms. Kosa felt that this was unfair to the staff of the 4<sup>th</sup> R program, as they have worked hard to make the program a success. Mr. Galligan said that even if the YMCA is brought in to run Town programs, the liability could still fall on the Town. Dr. Carter added that if programs are running in school buildings, the Board of Education becomes liable as well. Councilor Paterna asked about the difference between the Recreation Department's liabilities versus the liability that the Town would have if the YMCA was brought in. Mr. Favreau said that the Recreation Department recruits, selects, and trains their staff. If there was a third party, the quality of staff would not be assured. Dr. Carter asked if there was a way for the Recreation Department to be responsible for vetting staff for the YMCA programs. This will be investigated.

Ms. Perry asked for more information about the Educational Playcare company mentioned previously by Mr. Galligan. Mr. Favreau said that he was told that they can take up to 50 children immediately, but they are still looking into contracting a bus service.

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A member from the public suggested setting up an online survey to send to the families signed up for 4<sup>th</sup> R, to assess what they are looking for in childcare.

The possibility of hiring paraprofessionals as 4<sup>th</sup> R staff was discussed in greater detail. The schools have part-time and full-time paraprofessionals who could be offered the opportunity. If the 19 empty staff positions in the 4<sup>th</sup> R program are filled, any extra staff could be used to temporarily expand 4<sup>th</sup> R until the Church and Synagogue programs are up and running.

Ms. Kosa mentioned that since last meeting, a few slots have opened in the 4<sup>th</sup> R program and families on the waitlist have been offered them. This has slightly reduced the waitlist. The 4<sup>th</sup> R program has monthly enrollment, so available slots vary each month. Ms. Kosa also informed the Committee that the cap for 4<sup>th</sup> R morning enrollment is 40 children, which is lower than the afternoon cap of 60 children. This is due to the difficulty of staffing morning shifts.

Ms. Caouette offered the use of the Pleasant Valley music room to the 4<sup>th</sup> R program to increase available space.

Councilor Paterna asked if the Synagogue and Church programs will be offering both before and after school care. Mr. Favreau said that originally only after school care was discussed, but he will confirm with the groups. Mr. Galligan said that Reverend Poolman is interested in offering both before and after school care.

## ***Discussion – Recommendations for the Committee’s Final Report to the Town Council***

The next meeting will be scheduled once the Superintendent contacts the after-school care expert she would like to have in attendance. Mr. Leone requested that the principals of the other schools also be in attendance in order to give their input on available space in their schools. It was pointed out that the Recreation Department, Town Manager, and Assistant Town Manager had met with the Board of Education regarding this topic. The principals attending that meeting had said that the space provided to 4<sup>th</sup> R was all that they had available at this time.

Mr. Galligan will prepare a report for the Town Council meeting on July 17<sup>th</sup>. The Committee needs more time to come up with a final solution, but there are options that can be discussed. The ideas mentioned in this meeting and in previous meetings will be considered in the report.

## **5. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Samara Haddock  
Recording Secretary