

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

**DRAFT MINUTES  
SPRENKEL ROOM**

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**REGULAR MEETING  
August 26, 2019**

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

The meeting was called to order at approximately 5:30 pm.

## **2. Roll Call**

### **Members Present**

Tiffany Caouette, Principal of Pleasant Valley Elementary School/Superintendent's Designee  
Audrey Delnicki, Town Council  
Raymond Favreau, Director of Parks and Recreation  
Shelby Kosa, Recreation Supervisor/Director of 4<sup>th</sup> R Program  
Anthony Leone, Resident/Parent  
Cesar Lopez, Town Council (sitting for Karen Lydecker, Town Council)  
Michael Maniscalco, Chairperson/Town Manager  
Jason Meade, Resident/Parent  
Vanessa Perry, Assistant Town Manager/Director of Human Resources

### **Members Absent**

### **Guests Present**

Janice Snyder, Town Council  
Robin Bucki, Site Manager for YWCA South Windsor Early Learning Center

## **3. Approval of Minutes – July 17, 2019**

Ms. Perry made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 17, 2019 meeting. Ms. Caouette seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously, with Mr. Meade abstaining.

## **4. New Business**

### ***General Discussion and Updates***

Chairman Maniscalco reminded the Committee that their task cannot be accomplished if they continue to rehash events of the past. He asked the Committee to work on identifying solutions. Mr. Maniscalco said that he had asked both Mr. Favreau and Ms. Kosa to go over what childcare options are currently available. He asked the Committee to receive that information and think on it, and then at the next meeting solutions can be discussed.

Ms. Kosa provided information about daycares in South Windsor. She distributed a chart (**Exhibit A**) with information about open spots and whether transportation is provided. This only encompasses daycare centers, not in-home operations, and is current as of 8/23/19. Mr. Maniscalco added that the daycare center planned at Evergreen Walk was approved by the Planning & Zoning Commission, and there is forward movement for the Educational Playcare center as well. They have appealed the original denial by the PZC.

When asked, Ms. Kosa said that she has not compared the daycare numbers to the waitlist numbers, as no new waitlist members have been added, and a few slots have been filled. Mr.

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Favreau said that the 4<sup>th</sup> R waitlist is theoretical, as many people on the waitlist are only there out of preference. They have most likely found other care solutions in the meantime.

Next Ms. Kosa provided the Committee with a chart of alternative programming (**Exhibit B**), indicating total cost and cost per participant. She gathered information based on the contracted programs that the Recreation Department uses. These are preliminary numbers based on prices for a program run during typical after-school hours. They are not indicative of whether those prices would be different for an exclusively after-school program. Ms. Kosa explained that contracted programs are run and staffed by outside companies. Mr. Meade asked why they would need to hire a contracted program instead of just expanding 4<sup>th</sup> R. Ms. Kosa indicated that it was due to difficulty with finding appropriate staff for 4<sup>th</sup> R. The contracted programs provide their own staff and their own materials.

Mr. Favreau said that these contracted programs would be held at Wapping, not at the schools, in order to avoid space issues. Transportation would be provided by the Town, so the program would have to absorb the cost of purchasing vans and paying drivers. The cost would also potentially include a new staff member to oversee contracting these programs, as well as background checks for programs, and the price of the programs themselves. Mr. Meade asked how the cost compares to 4<sup>th</sup> R. Ms. Kosa said that 4<sup>th</sup> R costs average out to about \$275 per month, while this new program may cost \$328 per week. It was estimated that about half of the cost would be going towards transportation. Mr. Favreau said that Recreation did reach out to Dattco and Post Road Stages, and were told that buses could not be contracted out for the timeframe of after-school care. Their rates are also higher than the cost of hiring a driver.

Mr. Meade asked Ms. Bucki what the YWCA's rates are for their childcare center in Town. Mr. Bucki said that their fee for in-district is \$102/week, and out of district is \$110/week. Ms. Bucki added that many teachers in contracted services are working there in order to allow time to be home with their children, so they may not be amenable to an after-school program. Mr. Favreau said that each program has a different enrollment minimum, so he is concerned about program reliability. Many programs also do not offer snow day operation. Mr. Leone said that perhaps the programs would be willing to offer more flexibility for a regular after-school program.

Mr. Meade asked if the cost of this program could instead be incorporated into 4<sup>th</sup> R to give the councilors raises and add more staff. Ms. Kosa said that councilors already make two dollars above minimum wage in order to be competitive. Mr. Maniscalco added that the staffing issue is not just about money, it is also about ensuring that quality staff is hired. Ms. Bucki said that she has similar experiences with staffing at the YWCA. It is challenging to find staff that can work appropriately with children and pass background checks.

Mr. Leone asked Mr. Maniscalco was able to clarify the Superintendent's stance on available space in schools for after-school programs. Mr. Maniscalco said that he has looked back at the meeting minutes, and was able to confirm that the Superintendent did say that there was no available space. He then listened to the audio recording of the meeting, and sent the statement to the Superintendent to see where she stands on the issue today. She said that her concern about using classrooms in schools is that children in the regular 4<sup>th</sup> R program would be taking part in recreation activities, but the children in the alternate program would be continuing to sit in a classroom after being in one all day for school. Mr. Maniscalco said that no matter what

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solution is chosen, a second class of student is essentially being created, whether it is better or worse. The Committee discussed having different activities rotating in the school space so that children are not always in classrooms. Mr. Favreau said that 4<sup>th</sup> R works around the school schedule, so certain spaces are not always available. There was discussion of what activities would or would not be feasible in classrooms. Mr. Maniscalco said that he would contact the Superintendent to get her opinion on the matter.

Councilor Snyder said that Reverend Poolman of the Avery Street Church has contacted the Council. He has asked to work with someone to get a child care program up and running. The space is complete and they are ready to serve 20-25 students in the PRS district. Councilor Snyder asked if the YWCA would be able to run a program there. Ms. Bucki said that it could be discussed. Mr. Meade asked what happened with the YMCA program that was in the works. Councilor Snyder said that they are still wary after what happened with the Temple Beth Hillel program. She feels that it may now be helpful to have someone on the Town side come in and get things moving. She said that this would be a task for an elected official or the Town Manager, not the Recreation Department. This should not be a Town-run program, as it is a privately-owned space.

Ms. Kosa went over the last option on the chart of alternate programs: Right At School. This program is similar to a contracted program, but is specifically designed for after-school care. They are willing to look into running a program in classrooms, but the contact did have the same concern as the Superintendent about creating a second class of students. The contact did not indicate what the company charges, but that it is priced to market.

Mr. Meade asked if there was anything that could be done to help with the waitlist before January. Mr. Favreau said again that the waitlist may not actually be as big as it seems, most parents must have some care solution in place of 4<sup>th</sup> R. The program is desirable, so people want to be on the waitlist for it and may not indicate whether they actually need the spot. Councilor Snyder added that the Council has not recently been contacted by the public on the matter.

Mr. Favreau asked what the next step will be. Mr. Maniscalco suggested that the Committee think on the information given at the meeting, and discuss solutions at the next meeting. He has two items to work on: to find out what programs can and cannot be done in classrooms, and connect Pastor Poolman with the YWCA to discuss a program.

## **5. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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Samara Haddock  
Recording Secretary