Minutes not yet approved.
Approval and any edits to be made in succeeding minutes.

BLOOMFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

EDUCATION, WORKFORCE, YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, AND COMMUNITY SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE

There was a regular meeting of the above reference subcommittee held on Tuesday, February 10, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in a hybrid meeting format via Zoom webinar virtual platform. The in-person location was Council Chambers, Bloomfield Town Hall, 800 Bloomfield Avenue, Bloomfield, CT.

Councilors' Present: *In-Person*: Michael Oliver; ***via Zoom:*** Deputy Mayor Cindi Lloyd; Councilor Elizabeth Waterhouse; Councilor Shamar Mahon (6:02 p.m.); and Councilor Darrell Goodwin (6:21 p.m.).

Councilors' Absent: None

Zoom Attendees: Alvin D. Schwapp Jr., Town Manager

Others present: *In-Person*: Latonia Tabb, Clerk of Council; Warren Plummer, Director of Information Technology; Camilla Hillian, Director Social and Youth Services; Yvette Huyghue-Pannell, Director Senior Services; Dave Melesko, Director Parks, Recreation & Leisure Services.

Guest(s): David Weinholtz, Development Officer, MakerspaceCT

Councilor Oliver called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

NEW BUSINESS

Councilor Oliver welcomed Mr. David Weinholtz as he reported on the upcoming Bloomfield Bots program, a hands-on, project-based robotics initiative launching this spring. The program allows students to build, program, and troubleshoot robots, developing mechanical, electronics, and problem-solving skills while gaining confidence through ownership of their projects. He highlighted that Bloomfield is creating three workforce-aligned skill pathways—Bots, Make Enable, and Trades—that start in middle school, extend through high school, and prepare students for careers, apprenticeships, and continuing education, connecting classroom learning directly to workforce needs.

REPORT FROM TOWN STAFF

SENIOR SERVICES

Mrs. Huyghue-Pannell, Director Senior Services was pleased to report on a wide range of community and senior services programs including that the department is managing challenges related to extreme temperatures by coordinating warming and cooling locations with Parks and Recreation and

providing resources through 2-1-1. She highlighted ongoing programs, including University of St. Joseph nursing student partnerships, AARP tax assistance, monthly health presentations with the West Hartford Bloomfield Health District, and tech support classes through *Your Community Cares*. Additionally, seniors have participated in social and cultural events such as pre-Valentine's gatherings, museum trips, a UConn women's basketball game, and a Black History Month intergenerational open mic, while budget submissions for the department have been completed.

SOCIAL AND YOUTH SERVICES

Mrs. Hillian, Director Social and Youth Services, reported that her department continues to assist residents with heating and utility needs through programs like Community Renewal Team, Generation Power, and Town Crisis Funds, noting increased demand due to recent cold weather and snow. She highlighted ongoing services including rental assistance, the food bank shopping program, and preparations for the upcoming renter's rebate program. On the youth services side, February programs focus on Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month, after-school and robotics programs, new short-term counseling services through Reset Restart, the Summer 2026 Youth Employment Program, and planning for the second annual Youth Summit on April 25th.

Councilor Oliver inquired about the STEM robotics program, asking whether equipment is available on-site or if participants go elsewhere. Mrs. Hillian explained that the program is conducted in-house weekly on Thursdays, led by staff with entry-level robotics experience, and involves students building and operating a robotic vehicle. She noted it also provides a training opportunity for MSW students under Dr. Renisha Nichols' clinical supervision, making it a mutually beneficial program for youth and interns.

Councilor Mahon thanked staff for their reports and asked whether usage of the Town's warming centers is tracked and if additional support is needed. Mrs. Huyghue-Pannell responded and explained that departments coordinate closely and do track participation, noting that when the building is open without activities, attendance is typically fewer than five individuals, but participation increases significantly when full activities are available, often filling the parking lot. She clarified that most attendees primarily seek socialization rather than emergency warming, with individuals needing assistance referred to Social Services or 211, noting ongoing budget limitations for expanded operations.

Deputy Mayor Lloyd thanked presenters and asked about the target age group for the MakerspaceCT robotics program, noting an existing Town program serving grades 6–12. Mr. Weinholtz explained that the Makerspace initiative is designed to begin at the middle school level, with the ability to expand to high school students. He also emphasized opportunities for collaboration to complement existing programs and increase student engagement in hands-on learning.

Mrs. Hillian noted that the new free youth counseling services are funded through an allocation approved by the Town Council in the previous fiscal year. She expressed appreciation to the Town Council, stating the funds are being put to good use and that the department is excited to provide this opportunity for the community.

PARKS, RECREATION, & LEISURE SERVICES

Mr. Melesko, Director Parks, Recreation & Leisure Services, provided an update on the that the Rockwell Park project is progressing on schedule, with ongoing coordination among planning, engineering, and greenway partners, and permitting expected to begin in March. He also highlighted facility upgrades at 330 Park Avenue, including the near completion of a new game room and flooring improvements, along with continued planning for community programs, events, and summer staffing. Additionally, the department submitted its operating and capital budgets, including proposed items such as a dog park feasibility study, trail upgrades, and enhanced townwide initiatives.

Councilor Oliver asked about emergency procedures at the facility, and Mr. Melesko clarified that they differ from warming center operations and instead focus on evacuation protocols, assigned staff roles, and designated exterior staging areas. He explained that emergency exits and routes are posted throughout the building, and attendance is tracked for youth programs to help account for participants during an emergency. Mr. Melesko also acknowledged that while attendance is taken, exit tracking could be improved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Councilor Goodwin, seconded by Deputy Mayor Lloyd and voted unanimously to approve January 13, 2026, meeting minutes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Laura Pallandre, 6 Nutmeg Lane, wants to learn more about the committee's work and discuss potential collaborative opportunities related to her farm. She shared ideas for a bread-making class and an intergenerational agricultural program that would teach youth how to do business and farming skills, with the long-term goal of creating structured work-based learning opportunities on her farm.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Deputy Mayor Lloyd, seconded by Councilor Waterhouse and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 6:47 p.m.