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BLOOMFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

EDUCATION, WORKFORCE, YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, AND COMMUNITY SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE

There was a regular meeting of the above reference subcommittee held on Tuesday, September 8 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*: Councilors' Michael Oliver- Chair, Darrell Goodwin, Shamar Mahon (6:10pm), ***via Zoom:*** Deputy Mayor Cindi Lloyd, Councilor Elizabeth Waterhouse

Councilors' Absent: None

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

Others present: *In-Person*: Latonia Tabb, Clerk of Council, Mayor Anthony Harrington, Warren Plummer, Director of Information Technology; Angelica Thompson, Division Manager, Youth Services; Luz Cora-Small, Assistant Director Senior Services

Absent: Matthew Mace, 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

- **Discussion and Possible Action Regarding MakerspaceCT- Bloomfield Trades Program**

Councilor Oliver welcomed Mr. Mark Colbert, Chief Operating Officer, presented two proposed workforce development programs introducing 17- and 18-year-old students to careers in the skilled trades. He outlined a 10-week commercial construction program and a 30-hour continuing trades program covering construction fundamentals, safety, and introductory electrical, plumbing, and HVAC concepts. Mr. Colbert explained that the programs are designed to provide hands-on experience, OSHA 10 certification, and exposure to career pathways in the trades, while complementing—not replacing—formal trade school or apprenticeship training. He noted the proposed cohort sizes, estimated program costs, and flexible scheduling to accommodate students' school commitments before concluding his presentation and inviting questions.

Councilors expressed support for the proposed skilled trades program and discussed program costs, scheduling, transportation, and implementation. Questions were raised regarding program hours, flexibility for students with existing OSHA 10 certification, and a potential fall launch. The Committee also discussed coordinating transportation, accommodating students' school schedules, and ensuring the program is accessible to eligible Bloomfield youth.

Mr. Alvin D. Schwapp Jr., Town Manager, noted that, unlike previous work-study programs administered through the school district, the proposed trades program is a Town initiative. He emphasized that any consideration of scheduling the program during the school day would require coordination and collaboration with the Board of Education and the school district.

There was further discussion regarding the program dynamics and interest from other municipalities for this program due to their interest in Bloomfield.

It was moved by Deputy Mayor Lloyd, seconded by Councilor Waterhouse and voted unanimously to move the Makerspace Program, Commercial Construction Dive Accommodating 10 to 14 students, up to full council for approval.

REPORT FROM TOWN STAFF

SENIOR SERVICES

Mrs. Luz Cora-Small, Assistant Director of Senior Services, provided an update on recent and upcoming Senior Services programs and activities. She reported successful recent outings and events, including the Hartford Jazz Festival, Chronic Disease Prevention Fair, Martha's Vineyard and Block Island trips, and a YMCA senior outing. She also announced the upcoming 19th Annual Senior Expo, a new floor Pilates class beginning September 22, and the fall happy hour, which has more than 75 participants registered.

Mrs. Cora-Small also outlined upcoming senior trips, including a Connecticut Day trip open to residents aged 55 and older and additional trips open to all Bloomfield residents. She highlighted the monthly Tacky Tech program, which is supported by a grant and assists seniors with navigating technology.

Mrs. Cora-Small further reported on ongoing health and support services, including monthly workshops with the West Hartford-Bloomfield Health District, Tuesday health and wellness screenings, and the monthly caregiver support group. She noted that the next caregiver support meeting is scheduled for October 7 and concluded by inviting questions from the Committee and the public.

SOCIAL AND YOUTH SERVICES

Ms. Angelica Thompson, Division Manager, Youth Services provided updates on Social Services programs, reporting that the Energy Assistance Program began accepting applications September 1, residents can call CRT to schedule an appointment at 860-560-5800. Applications are also available in our office for mail-in. She reported that approximately 300 renter's rebate applications have been completed and 300 farmers market cards, valued at $40 each, have been issued to eligible older adults.

Ms. Thompson also reported that the department is selecting an Assistant Director and coordinating with the Town Manager's Office, Human Resources, and Operations and Communications on transition planning and SOPs ahead of the Director and Assistant Director's

retirements on September 30. Councilor Oliver expressed appreciation for the department's efforts in distributing the farmers' market cards.

Ms. Thompson reported that the Summer Youth Employment Program concluded with 36 youth participating, including 16 in career-readiness programming and 20 placed with Town departments and local businesses across 10 worksites. She also reported the hiring of a part-time Foster Care Activities Specialist, completion of grant reporting, and preparations for the upcoming grant year and youth programming.

Ms. Thompson outlined four after-school programs running through December: Project V30, Some Beans, Tribe Young Men, and a newly expanded Life Skills Group. She noted that the programs are free to Bloomfield residents and focus on leadership, communication, employability, and life skills. The Committee discussed the importance of developing youth soft skills and potential collaboration with Makerspace CT. Ms. Thompson also confirmed that mental health funding remains available and that the department is working to restart youth counseling services and provide mental health workshops for youth and families.

PARKS, RECREATION, & LEISURE SERVICES

Councilor Oliver reported in the absence of Mr. Matthew Mace, Assistant Director Parks, Recreation & Leisure Services, and provided updates on recent departmental activities, noting that the Planning and Zoning Commission unanimously approved the Rockwell Park renovation site plan at 46 and 91 Rockwell Avenue, including Phase 1 and the Master Plan, with a positive referral to the Town Council.

The report highlighted the successful eight-week summer camp, community partnerships, free books for more than 80 campers, swim scholarships, National Night Out, and six youth interns through the Capital Workforce Summer Program. Parks and Recreation also reported 109 adult, 342 youth, and 44 senior swim memberships, 222 swim lesson participants, and 1,328 daily swimmer admissions. A new pool pump was installed, with an emergency shutoff switch scheduled for fall 2026.

Special events included the Juneteenth 5K, drive-in movies, summer concert series, and West Indian Celebration. Upcoming programs include the Bloomfield Food Truck Festival on September 19, Trunk or Treat in October, and fall indoor programming beginning October 1, including youth and adult recreation activities.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Erin Barringer, 28 Kenmore, Rd., expressed support for Makerspace CT and its efforts to provide Bloomfield students with exposure to education, technology, and career opportunities referencing the Bloomfield Bots robotics program, stating that she had spoken with the Superintendent and understood that the program aligned with the school curriculum. Mrs. Barringer also expressed support for the proposed commercial construction program and encouraged continued opportunities for students to explore different career pathways. Mrs.

Barringer noted that she is working on another initiative and has discussed potential involvement with Makerspace CT.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Councilor Goodwin, seconded by Deputy Mayor Lloyd and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 6:25 p.m.