

OFFICE OF THE  
FIRST SELECTMAN

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Lynne A. Vanderslice  
*First Selectwoman*

Lori A. Bufano  
*Second Selectwoman*

Joshua S. Cole  
*Selectman*

Deborah A. McFadden  
*Selectwoman*

Ross H. Tartell  
*Selectman*

TOWN HALL  
238 Danbury Road  
Wilton, CT 06897

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING**  
**Tuesday September 22, 2020**  
**Held Electronically**

**PRESENT:** First Selectwoman Lynne Vanderslice, Lori Bufano, Joshua Cole, Deborah McFadden, Ross Tartell (joined meeting at 7:08pm)

**GUESTS:** Director Social Services Sarah Heath, CFO Anne Kelly-Lenz

**A. Call to Order**

Ms. Vanderslice called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm

Ms. Vanderslice noted today and last few days have been difficult for Wilton residents, the Wilton High School community and our first responders. She noted it was a reminder of all the losses that have occurred this year, including the 42 Wilton residents who died from Covid-19. Ms. Vanderslice asked residents to keep those who have been lost, their families and friends and our first responders in their thoughts and their prayers, if they pray.

**B. Public Comment**

Ms. Bufano read an email received from Kevin Hickey expressing support for the social services department.

**C. Consent Agenda**

Motion moved by Mr. Cole seconded by Ms. Bufano and carried 3-0-1 to approve the Consent Agenda as follows with Ms. McFadden abstaining as she had not had the opportunity to review the Minutes.

- Minutes
  - Board of Selectmen Special Meeting Executive Session – September 8, 2020
  - Board of Selectmen Meeting – September 8, 2020
  - Board of Selectmen Special Meeting – September 16, 2020
  - Board of Selectmen Special Meeting Executive Session – September 16, 2020

**D. Discussion and/or Action**

**1. Social Services Overview and Update – Sarah Heath**

As a follow-up to the board's September 8<sup>th</sup> discussion of concerns about social services partners' ability to remain viable throughout the pandemic, Ms. Vanderslice thought it helpful for the board to have an understanding how the partners fit into the social services network. Ms. Vanderslice provided an overview of the network, which

includes multiple town departments and commissions, state agencies and nonprofits, within and outside Wilton (see attached). Ms. Heath provided an overview of her department's operations during COVID. She noted that forced changes have resulted in unintended favorable outcomes. For example, she noted with staff now manning the food pantry, that additional direct contact between staff and clients has allowed staff to highlight assistance available for other needs. She also reviewed the department's staffing in light of COVID and departures/retirements. Ms. Heath noted that a significant number of meetings are not being held during COVID, thus freeing up staff time for client services and with the Senior Center closed, that full-time staff member was available to assist in other areas within the department. She noted a former counselor would be rejoining the department as a youth services counselor. There is a plan to hire a second part-time counselor later in the year, when an increased need is expected. Ms. Heath addressed questions from the members, including a number from Mr. Tartell related to his expressed concerns as to whether the department had the resources needed to meet the needs of the community. Ms. Heath indicated that the department has the resources and is meeting the needs. Ms. Bufano thanked Ms. Heath and her staff for all that they've done during this crisis and for partnering with other organizations in town in order to reach the most people possible. Mr. Cole and Ms. McFadden echoed Ms. Bufano's comments.

2. Board Member Commission Assignments – Clarification and Updates

A discussion was held regarding Mr. Tartell's assignments to 1-request the Social Services Commission reach out to nonprofit partners to determine if they require assistance and, if so, determine what assistance can be recommended and 2-review the Town's senior and individuals with disabilities tax relief program and make any necessary recommendations. It was noted that that Commission should prioritize the non-profits and reach out to those deemed as priorities. Recommendations should be of a nonfinancial nature. It was noted that the previous committee that made recommendations for tax relief consisted of commission members and non-commission members. The Commission may want to form a subcommittee. Mr. Tartell indicated he would provide the BoS with any feedback and a project plan.

Ms. McFadden noted she met with the Energy Commission and will be attending their next meeting. Discussions were held on a couple of topics, including burying electric distribution wires.

Ms. Bufano continues to attend EDC meetings and noted the EDC is on track. A merchant guide is being developed. Member Toni Lee is investigating a small business assistance fund.

Mr. Cole noted he spoke with the Tree Committee chair about incentivizing residents to address problem trees on their property. He noted he will be attending their October meeting.

Updates on these matters will be a standing item on future agendas.

3. Determination of Energy Commission Membership Size

Ms. Vanderslice noted the Energy Commission previously voted to recommend downsizing their membership from 9 to 7 members. Ms. Vanderslice asked whether there is a willingness to take up the recommendation. Ms. Bufano, Mr. Cole, Mr. Tartell and Ms. McFadden agreed, with Ms. McFadden noting that in the future if there was a request to move back to 9, it should be considered. After review, motion

to set the size of the energy commission to 7 members moved by Ms. McFadden, seconded by Ms. Bufano and carried 5-0.

4. Sustainable CT – Deborah McFadden

Ms. McFadden noted she attended a webinar held by Sustainable CT. She noted the organization is in the process of making substantial changes based on feedback received from participants. Additional feedback is encouraged. Sustainable CT expects to issue new guidelines in January 2021. She spoke at the Energy Commission meeting. The members were not interested in leading a future Sustainable CT effort. Both Wilton Go Green and Debra Thompson-Van expressed interest in leading the effort, subject to town employee participation. Ms. McFadden suggested tabling until January 2021.

5. Amend Jim Blanchfield Employment Agreement to Reflect October 1<sup>st</sup> Promotion to Fire Chief

Ms. Vanderslice reminded the board that an employment agreement with Deputy Chief Jim Blanchfield had been executed earlier this year for the Fire Chief position. At the time, the date of end of Interim Chief Geoff Herald's engagement was not finalized. Interim Chief Herald's assignment ends on September 30, 2020. The employment agreement needs to be amended to reflect Jim Blanchfield assuming the position of Wilton Fire Chief on October 1, 2020. Motion made by Ms. McFadden to authorize the First Selectwoman to amend the agreement to reflect the October 1, 2020 date. Motion seconded by Mr. Cole and carried 5-0

6. Appointments/Reappointments

- Assistant Town Clerk – MaryEllen Demers

Ms. Vanderslice noted MaryEllen Demers has been hired for the assistant town clerk position replacing Kathy Cooper, who has been with the Town for 20+ years and is retiring. Motion moved by Ms. Bufano to appoint MaryEllen Demers to the Assistant Town Clerk position, seconded by Ms. McFadden and carried 5-0. Ms. McFadden and the board thanked Kathy Cooper for her years of service to the Town.

- Possible Appointments:  
Housing Committee – Item tabled

Historic District Commission

Motion moved by Ms. McFadden to appoint Alice Schroeder as an Alternate to the Historic District and Historic Properties Commission, seconded by Ms. Bufano and carried 5-0

Energy Commission

Motion moved by Ms. McFadden to appoint David Marks to the Energy Commission, seconded by Mr. Cole and carried 5-0.

Social Services Commission – Item tabled, as awaiting a recommendation from the commission on reducing the commission from 9 to 7.

WPCA

Ms. Vanderslice asked if any members of the board were willing to volunteer for the three longstanding vacancies. Mr. Cole and Bufano volunteered to serve. Mr. Tartell and Ms. McFadden declined at this time. Motion made by Mr. Tartell to nominate Ms. Bufano and Mr. Cole to the WPCA. Motion

seconded by McFadden and carried 5-0. Mr. Tartell suggested combining Water Commission with the WPCA. Ms. Vanderslice agreed.

Wilton Library Association

Motion moved by Ms. Bufano to reappoint Rob Sanders and Connie Dickerson to the Wilton Library Association, seconded by Mr. Tartell and carried 5-0.

E. Selectmen's Report

1. First Selectman

- Third VNM Opportunity

Ms. Vanderslice noted there is the possibility of Citrine constructing a third municipal VNM solar field in Middletown. Wilton has filed the necessary paperwork to hold a place in line.

- Absentee Ballot Application Reminders

Applications for absentee ballot can be mailed or dropped in the ballot box located in front of the Wilton Police Station. Under state statutes, ballots cannot be mailed to voters prior to October 2, 2020.

2. Selectmen

Ms. McFadden

Ms. McFadden noted that she attended the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the Prospect Theater, which is renovating the space vacated by BowTie Cinemas. The theater is planning Grand Opening for September 2021

Ms. Bufano

Ms. Bufano noted she has received inquiries from residents about the absentee ballot counting process. Ms. Vanderslice responded that the Registrars will be attending the October 5, 2020 BoS meeting.

Mr. Tartell

None.

Mr. Cole

None.

F. Public Comment

None

G. Adjournment

There being no further business, motion moved by Mr. Cole, seconded by Ms. McFadden to adjourn meeting at 8:58 pm. Motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted

Jacqueline Rochester

Taken from video

# Social Services in Wilton

Board of Selectmen Meeting  
September 22, 2020

## Social Services Department-Mission

The mission of the Wilton Department of Social Services is to help meet the social and psychological needs of Wilton residents of all ages.

This is accomplished by providing information and referrals to local, state and federal social service programs, financial assistance, short-term counseling, and programming.

The Senior Center, Wilton Youth Services and the Wilton Food Pantry are specialized areas within the department. Our offices are located in the Comstock Community Center. Our staff works closely with other town departments to provide assistance and support to Wilton residents of all ages.

Additionally, Wilton Social Services is part of the town's Emergency Management Team.

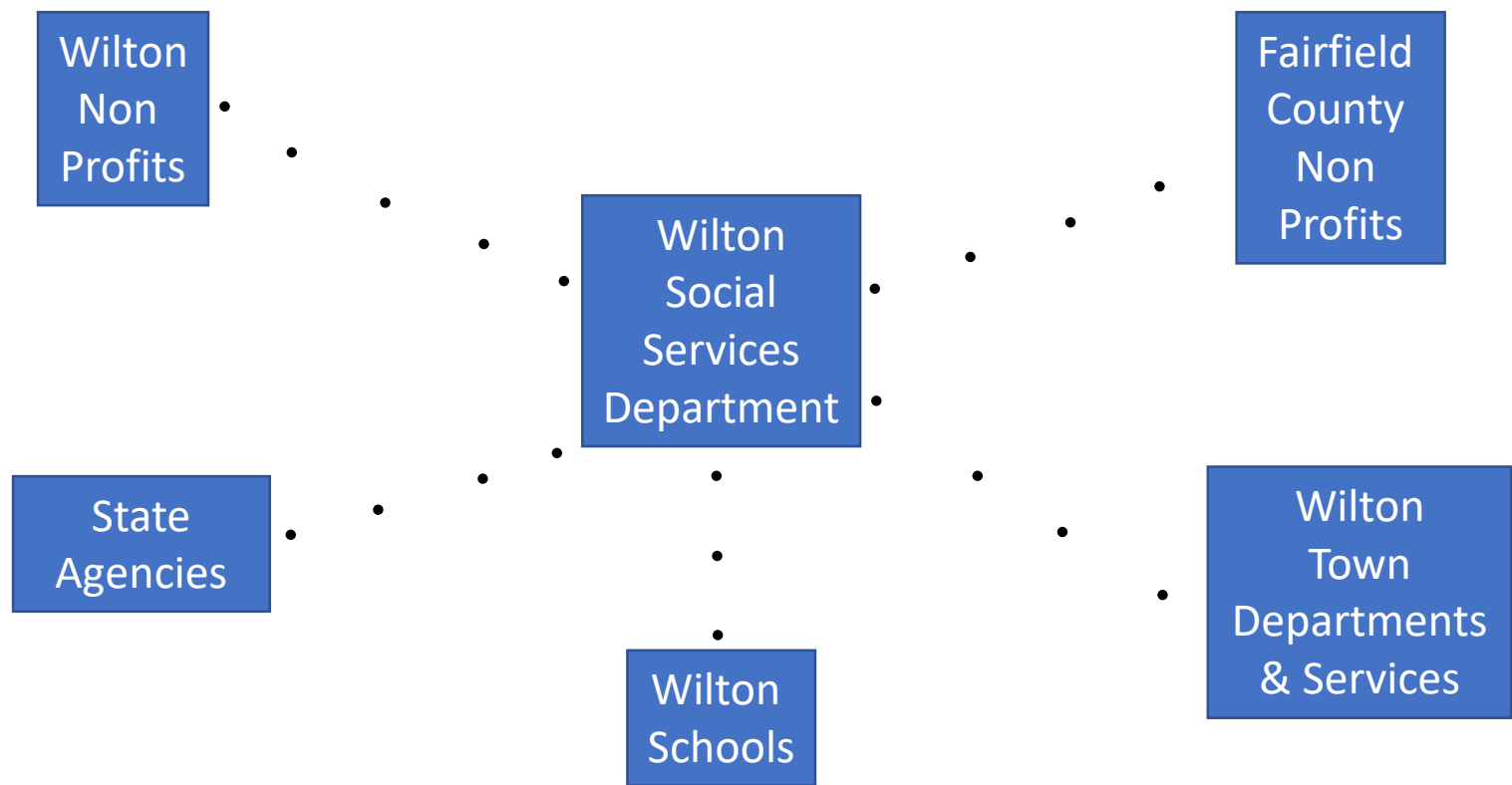
## What Social Services Means in Wilton

**When you think Social Services in Wilton, you might think of the Social Services Department**

But Social Services is much more than that. It is a **network of Wilton, Fairfield County and State non profit and government resources**

The **role of the Social Services Department is to facilitate access to those resources** help meet the social and psychological needs of Wilton residents of all ages.

# Social Services Network





# Town of Wilton

## Government Social Services Network

<u>Social Services Dept</u>	<u>Schools</u>	<u>P&amp;R</u>	<u>E.A/Conservation</u>	<u>Health</u>	<u>Grants/In Kind</u>	<u>Tax Relief</u>	<u>Social Services Commission</u>
Youth & Senior	Guidance Counselors	Programming	Trails	School Nurses	WLA	Senior-Town	Liaison & Outreach
Short-Term Counseling	Social Workers	Parks	Programming	Flu Clinic	Trackside	Senior-State	to non profits
and Referrals	Psychologists	Playing Fields		Public Helath Nursing	WVAC	Indiv with Disabilities	Eyes and Ears in the
Food Pantry		Dial-A-Ride		ALS-Paramedic Services	NRVT		community to
Senior Center					Witon Commons		identify needs
Programming					Ambler Farm		
Financial Assistance					AR Single Family Housing		
Resource Assistance							
Medical Transportation							

# Wilton Non Profit Social Services Network

EXAMPLES			
<u>Seniors</u>	<u>Youth</u>	<u>All or Other Ages</u>	<u>Housing</u>
Stay at Home	Wilton Youth Council	WLA	Odgen House
	Trackside	YMCA	Wilton Commons
	ABC of Wilton	Wilton Interfaith Council	
	Circle of Care	Community Assistance Fund	
		SWAG	

# State Government and Fairfield County Social Services Network

EXAMPLES				
<u>Housing</u>	<u>Counseling</u>	<u>Transporation</u>	<u>Other Services</u>	<u>State Funded</u>
2-1-1 Infoline	Kids in Crisis	Norwalk Transit	Person to Person	CEAP-energy assistance
Housing Authorities	Positive Directions	Cancer Care	Family and Children's Agency	Operation Fuel
Shelters	NAMI SoWest CT	American Cancer Soc	AARP-Tax Prep	SNAP
	The Hub			Access Health CT
	Family and Children's Agency			
	Mid Fairfield Child Guidance			
	Fairfield Counseling/LifeBridge			
	Norwalk Community Health Center			

# Wilton Social Services COVID-19 Service Delivery

**During the pandemic we needed to change the way we deliver services and use resources**

- **Food Pantry:**

- *Increased donation of gift cards*
  - Resulted in unplanned benefit of clients being able to use them for fresh and frozen items.
- *Social Services staff, rather than volunteers, are manning the food pantry*
  - Resulted in unplanned improvement in the service delivery
  - Increased client contact and increased confidentiality

- **Senior Counseling:**

- *Increased use of phone contact*
- *Some Zoom contact*
- *Very restricted and infrequent in-person contact*

- **Senior Activities:**

- *The indoor Senior Center remains closed due to the high risk population serviced*
- *Programs are now outdoors under the tent and online*
- *Weather will restrict outdoor offerings in the future*

## Wilton Social Services COVID-19 Service Delivery

**During the pandemic we needed to change the way we deliver services and use resources , cont.**

- **Short-term Youth Counseling and Referrals:**

- *Short-term counseling is now online*
- *Referral work is now online*
- *During COVID, utilizing outside agencies to supplement counseling hours due to the retirement of the Youth Services Director. A permanent replacement will be hired when in-person interviews can be held*
  - *Kids in Crisis is used by the Wilton Public Schools and neighboring towns for counseling*
  - *Allows for greater ability to flex up and down based on demand*

- **Family Programs:**

- Back to school and holidays gift programs are now in the form of gift certificates

## Counselors: How Did We Compare to Fairfield County Social Services Departments?

<u>Town</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Programming and Admin</u>	<u>Non Youth Counseling</u>	<u>Youth Counseling</u>	<u>Comments</u>
<b>Redding</b>	9k	*	1 FT, 1 per diem	0	Refers to counseling agencies
<b>Weston</b>	10k	*	1 PT	0	Refers to counseling agencies
<b>Wilton</b>	18k	2 FT, 1 PT	2 PT	1 PT**	Short-term counseling and referrals
<b>New Canaan</b>	20k	*	2 FT	1 PT	crisis counseling only (then refers out)
<b>Darien</b>	21k	*	2 FT	0	Refers to counseling agencies
<b>Ridgefield</b>	24k	*	1 FT	0	Refers to counseling agencies
<b>Westport</b>	28k	*	2 FT, 1 PT	0	Contracts with KIC*** for a FT counselor at SHS
<b>Fairfield</b>	62k	*	6 PT	0	Refers to counseling agencies
*only showing Wilton					
**Expectation of 1 FT or 2 PT as we get into 2021					
***KIC= Kids in Crisis <a href="https://www.kidsin crisis.org/get-help/teentalk/">https://www.kidsin crisis.org/get-help/teentalk/</a>					