

December 1, 2021

Dear First Selectman,

I am writing to let you know of my disappointment in how we were treated at the Waterford Community Center tonight. It started with what I thought was a misunderstanding and quickly escalated to me being threatened to get arrested.

On Monday night I took my son to the community center to meet up with some friends and play basketball. At 7:35pm an employee, Ms. Bolling, came into the gym and told the boys to wrap it up. At 7:40 she came back in and requested the boys give her the ball and leave. At 7:45 we all left after ensuring every ball was put back and there was not a single piece of garbage (mask, water bottle etc.) left behind.

On Tuesday, I called the director, Mr. Flaherty, as the hours of the community center state its open until 8pm and I was confused why we were being asked to leave almost 30 minutes before closing. He initially stated there was no money in the budget to allow the employees to stay past 8PM. I explained my confusion about the closing time and wasn't sure why more budget money would be needed as I simply wanted to use the facility until the hours posted, 8PM. He agreed asking us to wrap up at 7:35 was early and we agreed we would be out of there by 7:55.

Tonight at 7:40 Ms. Bolling came in and told the boys to wrap it up. I told her we'd be out the door by 7:55. Then the custodian came in and summoned me to the phone to talk to Mr. Flaherty. Mr. Flaherty told me to leave immediately or I would be arrested. I reminded him we spoke on the phone and we would be out by 7:55. Mr. Flaherty became verbally aggressive on the phone and stated I was not listening to staff and he was going to call the cops and have me arrested if I didn't leave immediately. I was also told by Ms. Bolling that I was "unbelievable" for calling the first selectman to address why I was being threatened by Mr. Flaherty and to clarify why I am unable to use the community center until the hours posted 8PM.

In addition, tonight I dropped my son at 5:15. At 5:30 he said Mr. Flaherty told all the boys since there was not an adult they would have to leave or he was going to call the police. From 2:30-5:30 age 14 can be there without an adult but after 5:30 there needs to be an adult. His friend's dad got there a few minutes late at 5:36. I don't think kicking the kids out with no adult or calling the police are good options.

When I called Mr. Flaherty on Tuesday I also asked him why there was this rule of 18 after 5:30. If age 14-17 can be there alone until 5:30 why can't they be there until 8PM? What happens in those 2.5 hours that requires an adult during that time but not prior? My son is 16 years old and can drive himself there yet he needs me to be there to supervise him playing basketball. Brian wasn't able to answer my question but said he'd ask the committee if they'd consider changing to the age to 16.

I'm a life-long resident of Waterford. I currently coach both boys and girls basketball teams for the town of Waterford. I've enjoyed my years in Waterford and chose to raise my family here. We enjoy using the facilities at the Community Center. Tonight made me realize the town today is not the town I've known. I have NEVER been threatened to be arrested. The fact that I was threatened by a town employee on town property is actually quite disturbing. I am still confused on what he was threatening to arrest me for, for using the facility during posted operating hours?

2021 DEC -2 AM 10:39

RECEIVED FOR RECORD
WATERFORD, CT

I'm writing as I'd like to be able to continue to use the community center during operating hours (8am-8pm see what is posted on the town website below) without fear of being arrested or berated. I'd also like to ask that the policy requiring an adult after 5:30PM be revisited. The town should be thrilled the facilities are being used. Kids need a safe place to play, we should be rejoicing they want to use it. It's healthy physically and emotionally.

I was unable to find Kenny Hall's email but if you could please share this email with him I'd be most appreciated.

I look forward to hearing from you or Kenny.

Sincerely,

Michele Mosher DiBuono

Contact Info

Hours of Operation:

R&P Office:

Monday - Friday: 8am -

4pm Community Center: Monday -

Friday: 8am - 8pm Saturday: 8am

- 12 Noon Rental of Dining Room

available Saturday afternoon and

Sunday. Multi-purpose rooms are

available for community use and

rental. Contact us for availability.