

Needham Youth & Family Services

Notes from October 14, 2020 Board Meeting

Meeting Commenced at 5:30 pm, via Zoom per Governor Charles Baker order of March 2020 during COVID Crisis

Board in Attendance: Susan Patkin, David Bookston, Julie Stevens, Kevin Keane, Josh Tuttelman, Karen Mullen, Adrienne Anderson (via phone)

Director: Ms. Sara Shine

Staff: Ms. Carolyn Tracey

Motion to Approve September 9 Minutes made by Josh seconded by Adrienne. Minutes unanimously approved.

Community Needs Discussion

Ms. Shine noted she is interested in getting the pulse of the community aside from the ongoing mental health needs.

- It was noted that everyone is doing surprisingly well at the high school. Only the first week was hard negotiating the labyrinth at the school with one way directional. People were happy to be back in school. There have been some incidents where students and staff have had to quarantine because of positive cases, but the school has been communicating well about these circumstances.
- Other Board members noted that the community at large is hopeful but skeptical that the schools can stay.
- Members discussed mental health needs of the community and that it may increase if schools have to change to fully remote.
- Ms. Tracey noted that the opening of school September into October is always stressful but that it has been heightened due to COVID. Adrienne noted that at Pollard mask breaks outside have helped kids as well as assigned lunch seating. Ms. Shine noted that the primary department focus is how to support people with a crisis need.
- Ms. Shine noted that Suicide Coalition will have its first meeting October 15 and will discuss how to work this year.
- She also noted that CCIT and YRN have regular meetings.
- Youth has created a donation fund for crisis families (for example a single mother whose stove broke and she could not afford to replace it). It will be available in November. The fund will have some donations from Beth Israel Needham as well as donations from the community. Ms. Tracey recommended a wish list it was also recommended tapping into Facebook Needham Buy Nothing to obtain some in-kind donations.

- Jog for Joy with the High Rock Church will be virtual this year with all High Rock churches so both Youth and national organizations will receive funding. A reminder the funding supports mental health first aid.
- Youth will be spearheading the Fence on the Rail Trail painting project to replace offensive graffiti. The project invites residents to paint sections of a mural designed by Megan Carleton, an expressive art therapist who works for Youth & Family Services. The mural, designed with input from youth in the community, will be painted along the 75-foot fence that borders the rail trail.
- Community Wide Training on Zoom continues
Ms. Shine has written two grants one for group programming where materials will then be dropped off at members homes. The second is to hire speakers around the topics of suicide prevention, substance use, Identifying mental health needs, and a workshop on racial inequities.
- The Engaging Minds (Executive function skills workshop) is October 27th.
- The Forde Good Person Award will be given virtually January 25th. The nomination form will be available at the end of September.
- Ray of Hope Award looking for nominations for 2021.
- **VIP** is also proceeding virtually for both bigs and littles. It will begin in early November.
- Ms. Tracey provided a programming overview. She noted that summer was remarkably busy with virtual volunteers' going well, setting up the donation fund and working with the Little Kids zoom groups (3-4 kids per group). Fall has brought an exponential interest in peer tutoring virtually-- as of October 14th 40 tutors will be working with elementary and middle school students. Each peer tutor is providing 1 hour a week. Ms. Tracey has met with all the pairs. Zoom scheduling allows for flexibility and the parents are especially appreciative during remote school weeks. Ms. Tracey noted that with the big kids are "zoomed out" and so it becomes how to reach them and how to provide services remotely where it is just not another Zoom meeting. Ms. Tracey is getting more inquiries about volunteering to meet the high school graduation requirement. It was suggested to plan a specific event with cameras off after the greeting so families/students can multi-task and the discussion could take place "off the grid". Ms. Shine noted that volunteers around Needham extending through fall will help with this need. They may have ideas on how to reach the older kids. Other suggestions included family meditation, yoga, and a family talent show. Ms. Tracey recommended kits with all supplies as in the summer. Everyone is on the same page then when Zoom begins and no one must try to get supplies on their own. Adrienne noted Zoom baking classes in the middle schools could be used as a model for department. Ms. Shine agreed with Ms. Tracey that Family Fun Makers could work late fall into winter with the dropped off kit from the grant.

Ms. Shine noted that virtual has allowed for more community consult connection services and they were able to clear the entire summer counseling wait list early in September.

Ms. Tracey noted that she has kept some of her clients who are now in college. Zoom provides scheduling flexibility and seamless movement from one client to another that does not exist with in-person counseling.

New/Old Business

Ms. Shine noted that the office is open each day, but only one person per day. If there are appointments, they are meeting outside with most meetings remote. The office days are quiet and very productive.

No other new business.

David made a motion to adjourn at 6:25 pm. seconded by Julie. Unanimous vote to adjourn.

Notes by Faith Crisley, Recording Secretary
Edited by Sara Shine, Director