

Needham Youth & Family Services

Notes from February 10, 2021 Board Meeting

Meeting Commenced at 5:32 pm, via Zoom per Governor Charles Baker order of March 2020 during COVID Crisis

Board in Attendance: Susan Patkin, David Bookston, Julie Stevens, Josh Tuttelman, Karen Mullen, Kevin Keane, Arina Collins, Karen Mullen

Director: Ms. Sara Shine

Motion to Approve January 13 Minutes made by David seconded by Josh. Minutes unanimously approved.

Community Updates

Ms. Shine noted that for the past year the focus remains on mental health needs and racial inequality work.

The Board and Ms. Shine discussed tension in the community around larger gatherings and differences of opinions on allowing youth to get together.

Ms. Shine noted that she is partnering with the Needham Community Council on a March 9th presentation with Dr. Robert Brooks on mental and physical health/parenting during the COVID-19 crisis. The workshop is designed to assist parents with gauging teenagers' responses. Socially teenagers really cannot hang out physically with friends and making good choices is a large issue.

Hometown Weekly has done a long article on the fence mural. The original mural may be extended. Additional murals are planned with Megan Carleton for 2021-2022. Several organizations are requesting a mural. Susan mentioned this could be a good opportunity for the Project Van programming.

Youth and Family Services Goals for 2021-2022

Ms. Shine presented a draft of the Department's goals which were discussed. A final version will be circulated with more concrete and measurable elements prior to March or April meeting.

Youth & Family Services Draft Board Goals:

- Clinical Work

- Eliminate all barriers to treatment and continuously assessing potential barriers (e.g.: transportation, cost, language capacity)
- Increase access to clinical services given the increased current needs of the community
- Availability of clinical staff to respond to families in crisis in need of additional support
- Larger Community Needs
 - Review policies and procedures to ensure racial equality
 - Make efforts to increase visibility to ensure that the community is aware of Youth & Family Services
 - Providing Support during any Community Crisis (suggested by Susan)
- Collaboration
 - Meet regularly with community partners for collaboration
 - Join or chair committees to address issues around vaping (broadened to drug use in general; suggested by Kevin), racial equality, residents in need, and mental health
 - Kevin asked about the job listing—Ms. Shine mentioned this is really community collaboration assisting seniors with yardwork/snow shoveling and is folded under this area.
 - Continuously assessing the needs of the community (suggested by Carolyn)
- Professional Development and Training
 - Ensure that all staff are professionally trained to manage crisis situations
 - Trainings
 - Clinical consultations

A brief Board discussion occurred on how to incorporate how the programming support achieving the goals.

Carolyn Tracey Presented an Update on Services

Week of February 1st she finished an 8-week elementary art therapy groups with intern Rohan Roberts-Goldman. More people should be able to participate as in the pre-COVID world it took 8 hours; now it is a 4-hour virtual training with 2 hours of homework ahead of the training. A great success so will be repeated in the spring.

Kelsey and Rohan have been working with a high school and a middle school group of girls weekly which is going well.

The Support Group for Cyber Wellness meets once a month. Research shows that peer-to-peer modeling works best so Carolyn wants to advertise it more. So far two have taken place.

Ms. Shine mentioned that the Youth Action Team is co-sponsoring with SPAN/BEI, Needham a parents February 11 meeting on the same topic.

SPAN is also working with Vice Principal Megan Bonomolo and Jeremy Greenwood at Pollard with the Youth Action Team on curriculum planning during an extended homeroom in the spring. This is the space for peer-to-peer messaging on wellness takes place and

provides relaxation techniques. As Carolyn mentioned relaxation and strategies in a broad sense is important to reach this audience. Examples include walks, walking the family dog, more sleep and various creative outlets. Scavenger hunts and interactive exercises are also in the plan.

Carolyn gave a shout out to Josh who is one of the peer tutors. The remote option has been embraced by the tutors and most of the younger students have stated frequently that this break in their school week has really helped them both academically and mentally.

VIP has also done well in the virtual environment.

March Unplugged Calendar is in process. For the summer Carolyn and the team are thinking about making volunteers around Needham an independent project and continue small groups to expand opportunities to more young people.

Ms. Shine also mentioned that SALSA is expanding a Chap. 84 for nicotine prevention into the middle school modeled on what has been successful at the high school. The program will be up and running in fall 2021.

Update Programs, Services, Awards

The Patrick and Patricia Forde Good Person Memorial Award was given virtually January 25th at 5:30 pm. The winner was Hillary Hanson Bruel. Having it virtually provided an international audience and was hugely successful. Ms. Shine mentioned that hosting on Zoom or another platform will probably remain in place in addition to a live event after the pandemic to not lose the audience and the momentum.

Ms. Shine and Carolyn mentioned that some virtual therapy is also likely to continue as the stigma of coming into the office/anxiety disorders in the basement of Town Hall prevents some young people from being willing to seek help and the virtual option reaches this audience.

Youth Mental First Aid program will roll out more programs February-May 2021. More people should be able to participate as in the pre-COVID world it took 8 hours; now it is a 4-hour virtual training with 2 hours of homework ahead of the training.

Ms. Shine mentioned that Broadmeadow PTC president is hosting Wednesday afternoon wellness workshops. Y&FS is presenting February 22nd.

Planning for the interns in general for 2021-2022 is starting to take shape. A part-time clinical person should be on board within the next two weeks. Ms. Shine mentioned she hopes to be back in person at least partially which assists with the intern work.

Karen Presentation on Park & Recreation Board

Karen mentioned that the Park & Recreation is interested in an even closer partnership especially after the success of the mural on the rail trail. Library obtained a grant which will fund a story walk along the rail trail. They also want input on the study/review of all playgrounds with the hope to include mini murals in all the playgrounds. Ms. Shine

mentioned that material discussion will need to take place/some kind of sealant, so the murals do not deteriorate.

New/Old Business

Adrienne will likely remain on the Board for one or two more months, but the Police have hired her replacement/the new SRO.

Kevin made a motion to adjourn at 6:10 pm, seconded by Josh. Unanimous vote to adjourn.

Next meeting: March 10

Notes by Faith Crisley, Recording Secretary

Edited By: Sara Shine, Director