

Needham Youth & Family Services

Notes from March 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, Josh Tuttelman, Karen Mullen, Kevin Keane, Arina Collin, Adrienne Anderson. Adrienne introduced the new SRO Nicole McMahon

Director: Ms. Sara Shine

Motion to Approve February 10 Minutes made by Adrienne, seconded by Josh. Minutes unanimously approved.

Community Issues and Updates

Ms. Shine introduced Nicole as the new school resource officer (SRO) beginning in April. Ms. Shine mentioned the strong relationship Youth maintains with the school system and the police department and welcomed Nicole in continuing the work. Ms. Shine also mentioned she will Zoom with Nicole separately to bring her up to speed on the programming.

There was a discussion around how students at the High School were doing and how people were handling the possibility of going back to school full time. There was an additional conversation about seasonal depression and how this has really impacted students but the hope is that with the nicer weather, mood will improve. Despite this, it seems like there are people who are really struggling with their mental health as the pandemic goes on.

Ms. Shine mentioned she has fielded a lot of crisis phone calls. She has hired a counselor who will be split with the diversion area in the Police department (5 hours Youth, 10 hours in the police department) and she has another part time counselor position open with final applications having just arrived with the hope for an April hire date.

Youth and Family Services Goals for 2021-2022

Ms. Shine presented a final version of the goals incorporating suggestions from the February meeting as well as staff input. Measurable elements have been added. Josh made a motion to accept the goals as drafted. Susan seconded the motion. The goals passed unanimously for 2021-2022. Ms. Shine noted that next year after the pandemic is over needs and goals will likely look different.

Youth & Family Services Board Goals 2021-2022

- **Clinical Work**
 - Eliminate all barriers to treatment and continuously assessing potential barriers on a quarterly basis (e.g.: transportation, cost, language capacity)
 - Given the acute needs of the community, increase access to clinical services by increasing therapeutic services and crisis calls by 25%
 - Ensure the availability of clinical staff to respond to families in crisis in need of additional support as evidence by responding to these situations with 24 hours.
 - Increase the accessibility of Y&FS treatment by providing language capacity. All forms will be translated into multiple languages by the end of this year.
- **Larger Community Needs**
 - Review policies and procedures to ensure racial equality. All policies and procedures will be reviewed this year and ongoing, as necessary.
 - Make efforts to increase visibility to ensure that the community is aware of Youth & Family Services. This goal will be achieved by attending at least 3 community gatherings monthly and having a presence during larger events.
 - Y&FS will host broader community events to raise awareness in areas of mental and social health. This will occur at least 3 times per year.
 - Provide crisis support to the larger community at times of need. This goal will be achieved as necessary and will involve staff supporting community partners and residents.
 - Y&FS will provide enrichment programs to the community. At least 4 enrichment programs will be provided every quarter.
- **Collaboration** – the following activities will occur on a regular basis with at least 3 meetings per week
 - Y&FS staff will meet regularly with community partners for collaboration
 - Join or chair committees to address issues around substance use, racial equality, residents in need, and mental health
- **Professional Development**
 - Ensure that all staff are properly trained to manage crisis situations
 - Staff will attend at least 3 trainings per year
 - Clinical consultations will occur on an ongoing basis, at least monthly.

Update on Programs

The Parenting in Crisis program on March 9 was well attended and recorded. The department is searching for a convenient time to offer a second session.

The SPAN March 9th meeting to discuss marijuana use during the pandemic was also successful. This one was in Needham; the next will be in Natick as the department's regional partner.

The Needham Unplugged Calendar is out.

The wellness/art therapy program in collaboration with the Broadmeadow PTC went extremely well. A drop-in group has formed for kindergarten through second grade. The department is examining expanding the program to older grades.

Volunteers around Needham is planning a hybrid summer program with two days in person and incorporating individual activities. The Forestry and Park and Recreation departments are on board, also the Community Farm. (Volunteers around Needham now includes February and April vacations as well as the summer during normal years.)

New/Old Business

Ms. Shine met with the Children's Hospital site planning committee to discuss programming. Within the contract there is money to support youth and family within the town. This was a brainstorming session and Ms. Shine requested more input from the Board at their April meeting. The clinic's current plan is to be health/wellness directed. Ms. Shine would like to see a mental health and substance use prevention component at the Needham site as Youth has used Boston's resources in the past.

Josh made a motion to adjourn at 6:03 pm, seconded by Susan. Unanimous vote to adjourn.

Next meeting: April 14

Notes by Faith Crisley, Recording Secretary

Edited by Sara Shine, Director