

Needham Youth & Family Services

Notes from April 14, 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, David Bookston

Director: Ms. Sara Shine

Staff: Carolyn Tracey

Motion to Approve March 10 Minutes made by Mr. Bookston, seconded by Mr. Tuttleman. Minutes unanimously approved.

Community Focus

Ms. Shine noted the community mental health needs have grown exponentially during COVID. Fifteen young people now on wait list. A new part time counselor Nicole Chester has started which will help and there will be a second part time counselor beginning the week of April 21st.

Ms. Shine noted that in person work has started at some schools and outside. This is especially helpful with younger students as play therapy is challenging on Zoom.

Ms. Tracey noted that the anxiety around returning to school is remarkably similar to a typical beginning of school year. Ms. Tracey noted it is mostly middle and high school age young people who are struggling. Members discussed the various ways that students are struggling and how there is more anxiety and depression with acuity at a different level. It was also noted that some students are excited to go back to school and the fact that the COVID numbers are better and more people are getting vaccinated (including some HS students) are decreasing some people's anxiety. Ms. Shine noted that child psychiatry is very difficult to access as there are so few of them practicing. This is problematic when there is an increased need for medications. There was a discussion around whether Y&FS had enough staffing to manage the current need, Ms. Shine explained that we are assessing this and will request additional staffing if needed.

The Board processed through other factors impacting the community and how Y&FS can influence racial equality.

Update Programs/Awards/Services

Ms. Tracey noted there are 20 people so far signed up for the April vacation staycation clean-up programing. The independent work will help with community service requirement.

Volunteers around Needham for the summer is showing early positive interest. Independent work will continue to be part of the focus. Volunteer sights include the Needham Community Farm, assisting in the Park and Forestry department under Ed Olsen and the Health Department including perhaps partnering with the COA under Aicha Kelley, the activities director and maybe a car wash project.

Senior Peer Tutors applications will be available soon as well as the acknowledgement of good work by this year's seniors.

VIP is wrapping up for spring with a great deal of interest for fall 2021.

Youth Mental Health First Aid classes have had two so far. The class is 2 hours at home and then four or five hours on Zoom. Teachers may get involved in future trainings.

CCIT and YRN (Youth Resource Network) are proceeding smoothly.

Another mural project is in the works. The location has involved some controversy. The rail trail or the housing authority are both suggestions.

New/Old Business

Ms. Shine has met with the Children's Hospital group opening a site in the industrial center. They will be meeting with the Health Board this week. Another meeting is happening April 14th. Discussion points include:

Wrap around services around mental health family advocacy, home based resources, transportation to and from the site, specific needs such as substance, trauma and loss counselors, cultural considerations such as language barriers, trainings for community providers in some of these specialty areas, suicide prevention work and families long term needs after COVID. This includes adults with lung damage from the disease/changes within households in the community.

Members asked about the current crisis intervention programming with Riverside. Ms. Shine noted they provide acute crisis care but there is a community need for in between/medium ground services which Children's may be able to address. Ms. Shine will update the Board on the plan at the May meeting.

Motion to Adjourn

Mr. Bookston made a motion to adjourn at 6:02 pm, seconded by Mr. Tuttleman.,

Meeting Adjourned at 6:03 pm

Next Meeting May 12

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