

Needham Youth & Family Services

Notes from September 8, 2021, Board Meeting

Meeting Commenced at 5:30 pm, on the Needham Common

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

Director: Ms. Sara Shine

Motion to Approve June 9 Minutes made by David seconded by Arina. Minutes unanimously approved.

Ms. Shine presented the Selectman's vision statement for racial equality in the Town of Needham. The Board briefly discussed the document they had previously reviewed. Mr. Bookston made a motion to adopt the vision, equity and equality statement. Ms. Patkin seconded. The Board unanimously voted to approve the racial equality statement.

Budget/Staffing Updates

Ms. Shine talked about some staffing turnover and plans for filling empty positions. All Y&FS activities are being covered as some part time staff have increased their hours. In addition, Elizabeth Radley from Boston College will be the intern for the academic year.

Ms. Shine explained that the budget allows for 2 FT clinical staff in addition to 25 PT hours. Ms. Shine also explained that there is potential for division growth as a request is being made for a temporary (2 year) FT person to cover the pandemic related increase in mental health needs. In addition, Ms. Shine will help to manage the 10-hour Diversion Coordinator and HHS is looking at funds that were previously allocated to Riverside for home based work and exploring how to utilize these funds.

Community Focus/Needs

Ms. Shine noted that the COVID 19 pandemic has further increased mental health needs both in number and acuity. Requests from town groups for assistance has been increasing spring into summer so this will be a priority.

Ms. Shine is excited about developing supports for LGBTQIA+ - there is a particular need in the middle school. This outreach will continue to be important.

Board members discussed students perspective on being back in school and the information gathered is that students are happy to be back and feel safe with the protocols and masks. Members processed how students missed a year of leadership training (that was typically done by upper-classmen to younger-classmen) so there is pressure on the seniors to take over without the experience they might otherwise have.

Ms. Shine mentioned the continuing focus on mental health coming out of COVID

Next Mural Project

The next mural project will be in the tunnel between Pollard Middle School and DiFazio Field. The approval process is now going on with all the appropriate boards in town. She is still waiting on MBTA approval which has some jurisdiction in the area. More people will be involved in the initial design.

Updates on Programs, Services and Awards

Junior Police Academy was run by Adrienne Anderson for the last time this summer and was a huge success.

The Patrick and Patricia Forde Good Person Memorial Award is moving forward to meet the January 31, 2022, date. Ms. Shine and the Forde children are watching COVID numbers to see if it will be in person or on Zoom. Zoom has advantages as people from around the world joined last year.

Engaging Minds, the executive function workshop, will continue in November.

Volunteers around Needham spent all summer outdoors and was a huge success.

Youth Mental Health First Aid classes are still occurring regularly. Ms. Shine is exploring whether or not Y&FS can be a site to train Teen Mental Health First Aid (and peer to peer model).

New/Old Business

There is a long waitlist at this time but some cases have been closed as clinicians have left the division.

No other new or old business.

Motion to Adjourn

Mr. Bookston made a motion to adjourn at 6:02 seconded by Ms. Patkin.

Meeting unanimously Adjourned at 6:02 pm

Next meeting October 13 either on the Town Common or the Highland Room

Notes by Faith Crisley, Recording Secretary

Edited by Sara Shine, Director

