

Needham Youth & Family Services

Notes from May 11, 2022, Board Meeting

Meeting Commenced at 6:15 pm, in person at the Center at the Heights after the potluck dinner.

Board in Attendance: Susan Patkin, Karen Mullen, David Bookston, Julie Stevens

Staff in Attendance: Alyssa Cellucci, Administrative Assistant, Kelsey Nichols full time clinician, Hannah Stein full time clinician, Ellen Whirley full time clinician and Christine Weitzel part time clinician.

Director: Ms. Sara Shine

Minutes April 13, 2022. Mr. Bookston made a motion to approve the minutes; Ms. Mullen seconded. The April 13 minutes unanimously approved.

June Meeting Date Change Mr. Bookston made a motion to change the June meeting from June 7 to June 1 at 5:30 pm Ms. Patkin seconded. The June meeting is changed to June 1 at 5:30 pm. This is the last meeting before September and 2022-2023 meetings will be voted on at the June meeting.

Update on Programs, Services and Awards

Y&FS Staff discussed the programs and services they are focusing on:

Christine Weitzel spoke about seeing clients both in the office and in school. As a part time staff, she is seeing some high needs clients. In addition, she oversaw VIP this year and it was successful meeting on Tuesdays. The “Bigs” are all high school students; the “Littles” are third, fourth and fifth graders.

Ms. Weitzel is helping to organize a community presentation with Dr. Dr. Chris Willard. His presentation on “Mindful Resiliency in the “New Normal” April 27 was postponed due to pandemic related issues. It will be rescheduled to the fall.

Kesley Nichols who is the recent full-time clinician hire from part time has been helping to move many clients off the waitlist in addition to taking over cases from the intern who is graduating in May. Ms. Nichols is also co-leading groups in at one of the elementary schools for third, fourth and fifth graders.

Hannah Stein is working with a number of clients – she has extensive trauma training and is currently working on her EMDR certification. She is working with a lot of trauma in her caseload and is seeing a huge increase in depression. In addition, she has been working with peer tutor program since November 2021. She will be assessing the program this summer and making changes for the fall.

Ms. Nichols and Ms. Stein are working with the High School on a pilot drop in group at the High School. The purpose of this group would be to help students with stress, anxiety and depression in a format that they could easily access. Y&FS is working closely with the HS guidance staff to help make this group successful. This will also help with getting students to become aware of Y&FS.

Ellen Whirley is working with a number of clients individually both in the office and in schools. She is also working at High Rock school twice a week seeking a handful of clients. This partnership has helped to bridge the relationship between the school and Y&FS in addition to helping staff get a clearer understanding of the needs of the middle school students. MS. Whirley has also run a very successful 6th grade social skills/friendship group and plans to implement another one this summer.

A new volunteer program with seniors is planned to start this fall called SHOP Students Helping Older People. Staff are working with Aicha Kelley at the Senior Center - youth will be matched with seniors who need assistance with grocery shopping. The model is one that has been used in neighboring towns and has been very successful.

All staff are collaborating on Volunteers Around Needham – staff have 6 days planned including the Needham Community Farm, The Needham Community Council, Parks and Forestry, and Needham Fire.

All staff have been involved in multiple committees. All staff are involved in SPAN (the Substance Prevention Alliance of Needham). Ms. Nichols, Ms. Stein and Ms. Whirley are involved in the Domestic Violence Action Committee. Ms. Nichols and Ms. Weitzel are also going to be the community adult advisors on the Take Back the Night Club at the High School. Staff are attending the Community Crisis Intervention Team meetings and the Youth Resource Network that occur monthly.

Community Presentations on Mental Health are planned for summer and fall.

Family Fun Night is planned for 5:30-7 pm on June 29th. It will be in Powers Hall with crafts, pizza, and bingo.

Spring Wellness Day was a huge success – this was a program partnering with Park and Recreation and SPAN. This was a wellness event that offered on a half day at Pollard and over 100 students participated.

Y&FS continued to work with Tova Speter, a local expressive art therapist on wellness workshops for students. The next workshop is scheduled for May 23rd and is for High School students. The first event was a self care workshop for parents and was at capacity.

Ms. Shine noted she has amazing staff—both dedicated and passionate. The new team has collaborated well and is carrying on the mission of Y&FS.

Ms. Shine introduced Alyssa Cellucci who is the new administrative assistant. Ms. Cellucci has a degree in Social Work and comes to Needham from Baypath Humane Society. She

mentioned she is covering office, supply ordering and learning “my rec” to help with registrations. She is also managing public walk-ins which have been some residents in need of mental health support in addition to the employment listings.

New/Old Business

Ms. Shine noted she will update the Board on the replacement for Kevin Keane who is now a Selectboard member. One candidate has applied so far.

Mr. Bookston made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Patkin seconded the motion. Unanimous vote to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 6:45 pm

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