

Needham Youth & Family Services

Notes from June 10, 2020 Board Meeting

Meeting Commenced at 3 pm, via Zoom per Governor Charles Baker order of March 2020 during COVID Crisis

Board in Attendance: Julie Stevens, Kevin Keane, Karen Mullen, Josh Tuttelman, Annie Stein, Adrienne Anderson,

Staff: Carolyn Tracey, Kristin Scoble

Director: Ms. Sara Shine

Motion to Approve May 13, 2010 Minutes made by Josh seconded by Julie. Minutes unanimously approved

A big thank you to graduating senior Annie Stein as this is her last meeting on the Board. Welcome to Arina Collin a rising junior who was introduced to fill Annie's spot. Carolyn Tracey introduced Shannon the new summer intern, a senior at Roger Williams University.

Motion made to approve the following meeting dates by Julie, Adrienne seconded. The motion carried and the dates were approved. The meetings for 2020-2021 are: September 9, October 14, November 18, December 9, January 13, February 10, March 10 (CATH pot luck), April 14, May 12 and June 9. Time will be 5:30-7 pm if meetings return to in person.

Discussion of Community Needs and Crisis Response

Board discussed with Ms. Shine that clinical has been much needed during COVID-19 and has increased substantially. Because programming is virtual it has been possible to increase the clinical especially around feelings of anxiety, isolation and depression. Some youth are happy to be opening and some remain anxious.

The clinicians have been collaborating with the school counselors but that will end in about a week. Some increased needs will be met with Ben Aronson whose camp is not opening this summer.

A general discussion ensued on the Black Lives Matter movement. The students noted that March into April discussion revolved around mental health issues; late May into June the topic is Black Lives Matter especially on all social media.

Ms. Shine noted there is mixed feedback on the single parent support group as many parents are exhausted from multiple Zoom meetings. For the summer it will move to a general virtual parental support group.

She also noted that substance use task force continues virtually especially around the vaping issue. Vaping may be less without the social peer issues but may rebound for those who are anxious as spaces open.

Clinical and Programming

Carolyn Tracey presented an overview. Many youth have been removed from the wait list. The staff also helped seniors who needed substance use counseling sessions to meet graduation requirements. She feels that the anxiety and depression has trickled down as students recognize privilege in the face of the Black Lives Matter movement. The April and May online calendars with ideas during lockdown remain popular and June's involved input from COA, the Library and Park & Recreation.

She also noted the Peer Tutoring has finished for the year and almost everyone is returning with the exception of graduates which is positive.

The VAN (Volunteer program) is seeking ideas for summer 2020. Students will be reporting into Carolyn or Shannon virtually and will use photographs to document the community service work.

Some ideas include separate advertising for families of elementary versus middle school, virtual meet ups, and a puppy reading to young kids which can't be done at the usual library location but may be a virtual experience.

It was noted that elementary school kids get frustrated with zoom more quickly and that has to be noted when planning programs. This might bring in parents who are looking for activities for elementary school kids that the volunteers can work with.

The Board agreed to email Carolyn with more social distancing ideas and programmatic volunteer options.

Adrienne Anderson said that she will miss the Junior Police Academy program this summer. She mentioned that the Pollard principal is doing a baking program (Baking with Bibbo) as she has had 50-60 students every week on Zoom. Adrienne conducted a 2 hour a fourth amendment class.

We discussed the mental health of teenagers and ensuring that none of them are being overlooked. We discussed higher need populations and how to ensure they are getting the needed services. Carolyn mentioned that it would be good to connect with older students who may be able to check in with the middle school students. Social distancing guidelines keep changing and need to be taken into account. It was also discussed that there are a number of seniors who also need assistance and staff are working cross departments to help with various populations.

We discussed the Volunteers Around Needham program more in depth and how it was going to be run virtually with some staff support. We talked about youth sending videos to be posted, cleaning various areas around Needham and running some activity groups with younger youth virtually. Josh and Annie both know high school students who would love to make videos for their volunteer work. It also accommodates high school students with busy schedules. Carolyn asked if any high school students could put together a video showing all

the activities from the summer—it would be wonderful advertising for future Youth and Family programs.

Update on Programs, Services and Awards

Ms. Shine noted that Needham Housing Authority and Park & Rec has partnered with us to create **activity bags**. Some will be sold as a fundraiser but others will be provided to low income residents. They contain items for activities and some mental health information to help keep everyone busy over this unusual summer. Activity bags will be available week of June 15 or June 22. The plan is to have bags available each month of the summer-- June, July and August.

Youth Mental Health First Aid will be available virtually – we are waiting on a training to be able to teach it virtually.

Resource List—the new website is available with all the information is on COVID-19 page and the Public Health main page. Kristin has been keeping them updated and Shannon will assist over the summer. A wide-ranging list includes what to do if you lose your health insurance, if you are food insecure and a wide range of helpful topics.

A phone number will be added end of June for families who do not have internet access.

Kristin mentioned that all town departments require appointments to enter the building. Ms. Shine noted she is keeping the department mostly virtual. Ms. Shine noted it is going pretty well overall but there are some challenges as well.

Community Survey is out, and Ms. Shine will report to the Board in the early fall.

Adrienne asked for items for low income college students who are independent. She needs bedspreads, sheets and dorm room set up. Adrienne has reached out to the churches but would like more sources. Carolyn mentioned Hope and Comfort (hygiene items) as well as reaching out to the Needham Community Council.

The Board discussed Children's Hospital satellite campus that is going in next to Trip Advisor in the business district. Town meeting changed zoning to accommodate them. In lieu of taxes as a nonprofit they will be giving \$200,000.00 to the town and want to focus on Youth and Family Services. It is unclear if the money will be earmarked or go to the general fund but it something the Board should be aware of to advocate for at least some of the money coming to Youth and Family Services.

**A motion to adjourn at 4:02 pm was made by Adrienne, seconded by Annie.
Unanimous decision to adjourn at 4:02 pm**

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