

# **Needham Youth & Family Services**

## **Notes from January 13, 2021 Board Meeting**

**Meeting Commenced at 5:30 pm, via Zoom per Governor Charles Baker order of March 2020 during COVID Crisis**

**Board in Attendance:** Susan Patkin, David Bookston, Julie Stevens, Josh Tuttelman, Karen Mullen, Adrienne Anderson, Arina Collins, Karen Mullen

**Director:** Ms. Sara Shine

**Motion to Approve December 9 Minutes made by David seconded by Josh. Minutes unanimously approved.**

### **Clinical Services**

Discussion of High School Reaction to Storming of Capital on January 6. Members noted very sober and wide-ranging discussions in the high school. We discussed that it was a great teaching opportunity to talk about discussion, argument, and disagreement across passionate beliefs and with respect.

Ms. Shine noted that for the mental health profession with its focus on impartiality—how to talk across the divide and separating violence from politics also informs the counseling process.

She noted that Zoom continues to provide an opportunity for more sessions and part-time counselor position was posted this week. Ms. Shine also noted that the complex hybrid schedules mean the department is not working in the schools now but that will hopefully change in the spring.

Ms. Shine also noted that there is a real need to find places to talk about both the situation and the programs in place to discuss how social media works.

### **Update Programs, Services, Awards**

**The Patrick and Patricia Forde Good Person Memorial Award** will be given virtually January 25<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm. The winner is Hillary Hanson Bruel. Denise Garlick will be in attendance.

The board discussed ideas about the runner up and attracting more applicants in 2022. Most nominees do not know they are nominated. The Board decided that since some applicants in the past have won the Forde in future years a better approach would be to have a series of articles in the newspaper highlighting different volunteers both to encourage community volunteerism *and* encourage more applicants in the future. Ms. Shine will speak with the Hometown Weekly on writing a series as well as the cable channel conducting a news story on either applicants or other volunteers.

## Ray of Hope Award

The winter newsletter will promote and encourage applicants.

The first Youth Mental Health First Aid training for a local nonprofit went well. Later in the winter more virtual training will be available. More people should be able to participate as in the pre-COVID world it took 8 hours; now it is a 4-hour virtual training with 2 hours of homework ahead of the training. Members inquired about the curriculum. Ms. Shine noted that it allows the participants to gauge what is normal adolescent development versus actual mental health difficulties and challenges. It is designed to assist the average adult to become the one caring person that a suffering young person may encounter. **Peer-to-Peer** is almost ready to expand their program to college age students.

**SPAN** is concentrating its substance abuse efforts in its webinars on marijuana. Vaping has decreased during the pandemic. SPAN is partnering with Natick on a couple of events. Needham is hosting a pediatrician from UMass to discuss marijuana's effect on brain development. Then Natick will host an event that includes a panel discussion – the panelists will include the principal of a North Shore Recovery High School for young users with a different message/protocol and hopefully a student in recovery along with a parent. One of the Board members inquired if it was the school featured on the reality program “16 and Recovering” and Ms. Shine noted that it is the same school.

**BID will co-sponsor an early February parent workshop at Pollard on the use of technology** especially during this time when technology keeps us connected but also needs to be “turned off”.

**Needham Unplugged** was the first virtual event in March 2020. Emphasizing activities that do not involve the computer and the phone. Will remain the theme. It will continue this year partnering with the YMCA and the Park and Recreation Department. Members noted it would help to have an emphasis on familial/your bubble get-togethers here.

Ms. Shine noted that the COVID silver lining is that working remotely has allowed the department to develop collaborations across nonprofits, other town departments and the larger community in ways that was not available prior to the pandemic. **Alliance for Safety and Wellness** for example is continuing to expand. **YRN, CCIT and the Vaping Task Force** all benefit as well.

## Community Focus

Ms. Shine noted that racial inequities and programs and policies to address these issues continue to be a focus.

Also, the pandemic is not going away quickly, and depression, unemployment and loss issues will remain especially with the new variant.

Ms. Shine noted that the Commission on the Park and Recreation wants a member of the Youth Board to join for a few of their meetings. Karen Mullen was appointed for this position and will report back to Ms. Shine and the Board.

## New/Old Business

Adrienne will likely remain on the Board for a few more months as the Police have not found her replacement yet.

**David made a motion to adjourn at 6:15 pm, seconded by Josh. Unanimous vote to adjourn.**

**Next meeting: February 10.** Notes by Faith Crisley, Recording Secretary  
Edited by Sara Shine, Director