



Meeting Minutes for Advisory Board Meeting – May 20, 2019

Attendance: Samantha Nelson, Diana Bezdedeanu, Brad Pindel, John McKinnon, Jan Midiri, John Loughnane, Mary Ellen LaRose, Danielle Sutton, Nora Sinno, David Russell, Mary-Carol Waters, Trish Tucke, Christy Harrison

I. Call to Order: The meeting convened at the Islington Community Center and was called to order at 7:02 pm. The board introduced themselves to Christy Harrison and Mary-Carol Waters, two residents that have expressed interest in joining the advisory board for the 2019-2020 school year.

II. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes: David made a motion to accept the 4/22/19 minutes, Jan seconded. All were in favor of approving the minutes.

III. Director's Report:

Lots of news for Y&FS and for the Town of Westwood since our last meeting! The Y&FS department has two big announcements: Sarah Baroud, our Clinical Coordinator, is expecting! Sarah, her husband, John, and her little guy, Nate, are looking forward to welcoming their newest family member in November.

Nina Banožić, our Youth Services Counselor, has given notice that she will be resigning from her position at the start of August and will be moving back to her home state of Michigan to be closer to family. We are so glad to have had Nina with us for these past four years and we wish her all the best in the next chapter of her life and career!

The news from the Town is that Mike Jaillet, Town Administrator in Westwood for over 30 years, will be retiring in July. Mike has always been a strong advocate for the Y&FS department and for the human services needs of the community. We will miss Mike and his tireless support and guidance. At the same time, we look forward to introducing the next Town Administrator to the great work of the Y&FS department.

Another big change in the Select board's Office is that Mike's longtime Executive Assistant, Christine McCarthy, will be moving to a position at the State House at the end of May. Christine goes above and beyond in her position and we are all dependent on her for everything from our phone service to the management of Board positions, so she will be sorely missed!

Clinical Services

*There are currently **55 counseling clients** on the WY&FS caseload, 47 individual clients; 3 family clients; 5 parent consultations.

*There have been **5 new intakes** for counseling services in May. The waitlist has moved from seven to four individuals on it since our last meeting. Whenever there is a waitlist, we share the William James INTERFACE Referral Service information as another option. As always, referrals are triaged so that those residents in most immediate need are prioritized.

*The last Structured Play Group of the year will wrap up this Wednesday and planning has already begun for next fall's groups!

Program Updates

***Body Safety Theater** performances took place at the five elementary schools on Monday, May 6th and Friday, May 10th. Nina wrapped up all of the post-performance visits to the third grade classrooms last week, and a new student survey was piloted with the classes at the Deerfield. The final step of the program will be to send out surveys to all parents of third grade students.

*Our **Graduate Interns** have completed their spring semester courses and are getting closer to their end dates with Y&FS. Both Emily and Breann have been wonderful to work with this year. Emily will end her field placement with us on June 20th, and Breann will be with us through the end of July.

*Sarah and Nina, with help from Graduate Intern, Breann, will be conducting the third year of their summer program, **Creative Craft Club**. Registration is already open and spots are filling for this free program that gives elementary aged residents the opportunity to make great crafts around themes such as mindfulness, goal setting and personal strengths.

*The recipients for the **Joan Courtney Murray Mentor Scholarship** have been chosen for the Class of 2019 and will be formally presented at the WHS Graduation Ceremony on June 2nd.

Community Connections

*A resident who is a parent of a child with special needs was in touch regarding an idea for a **new Mentor program** that would pair high school-aged (or possibly older) volunteers with younger residents attending Recreation camp who are in need of a 1:1 support person to be able to more fully engage in camp activities. First steps will be to share this concept with Recreation to see if they would be interested and to explore how it is implemented in other locations, like the camp in Hingham that inspired this resident.

*The department is also considering if/how to best go about a community showing of the documentary, *Angst*, which looks at the issue of anxiety and its impact on young people. Two different residents have been in contact to say that they have seen the movie in other communities and would like to see a showing in Westwood. Next steps are to arrange for a viewing, then determine if it's best shown through a community group like Westwood Cares or through a town department like Y&FS.

IV. Old Business

Islington/Wentworth Hall Concept Plans: Danielle shared that the department continues to be involved in the planning process for the new Wentworth Hall. Danielle answered a question regarding Early Childhood Council (ECC) sharing space in the new building. WY&FS feels hopeful that if all goes as planned ECC will have a designated space in the building.

Recognize A Youth Award – Mary Ellen shared a press release on the R.A.Y. Award recipients that was submitted to local newspapers and for the town newsletter. Westwood High School seniors, Philip Bligh and Kayla Dolley, along with junior Elizabeth Bunker are the recipients of the 2019 R.A.Y. Award. The award ceremony will take place on Tuesday, May 21st at the Main Library.

V. New Business:

New Board Member Process – Mary Ellen mentioned that Diana Martucci has confirmed that she would like to join the Advisory Board. Christy Harrison and Mary-Carol Waters have also expressed interest and will confirm if they are still interested after this meeting. Mary Ellen explained that once we have confirmed interest from candidates they will be asked to submit a short statement of interest and a resume to WY&FS. This information will then be shared with the Town Administrator's office. Danielle will talk with the town administrator to see if he would like to briefly meet with the candidates. Once this process is complete the candidates will be invited to join the board for a term of three years. Mary Ellen stated that the interview panel also looks forward to welcoming student board members, Sophia Herbert, Joshua Minsky, Sahara Hayes and Ethan Blonder to the board when it reconvenes in September. They have been invited to join us at the June meeting.

Community Liaisons:

Westwood Cares: John Loughnane gave an overview of the organization and stated that the goal of the group is to provide fact based information on substance abuse and related topics. Danielle mentioned the board is seeking interested high school students to join the board and provide input.

Food Pantry: Trish shared the pantry is running low on inventory. A board member created a flyer that was recently shared in the Westwood District Bulletin. A Westwood lacrosse parent saw the flyer and quickly organized a food drive that brought in eight car loads of food.

Comprehensive Plan: Jan provided an update on the committee's work. A town wide visioning session was held with over 120 residents attending. Abby McCabe, the town planner presented and then consultants facilitated a group discussion with residents on a variety of topics including what the residents see as important to preserve in town for

years to come, what items/locations should be priorities, where improvements are needed and what do they envision for the town's future. Jan also shared a brief overview of the results from the recent online survey. Common themes included a desire for new restaurants, more open space use, a new skating rink, discussion around merging/making improvements to elementary schools, making sure elderly residents' needs are taken into account and affordable housing. The committee will take all this feedback into account and will develop a timeline and plan to be presented at Town meeting in the fall of 2019.

Westwood Police Department: Brad shared police cars are being repainted black. An entrance exam was held for the police academy and the hope is two-four candidates will be chosen from this list. He also stated that hateful graffiti continues to be an issue in the middle and high school. The department continues to investigate.

Early Childhood Council: Danielle shared the council recently held their "Portraits in the Park" fundraiser. She also mentioned ECC has partnered with surrounding towns for a number of parent/child activities this year.

Elementary Schools: Danielle mentioned that WY&FS staff and mentors have recently completed performances and pre/post visits with all third grade classrooms in town. She also thanked Emily Greco, one of the department's graduate interns for her work creating a BST student evaluation of the program. Deerfield piloted the evaluation with their 3rd grade students. WY&FS will review the results and determine if the evaluation should be administered to all 3rd graders in 2020.

Thurston Middle School: Christy shared that TMS piloted having all three grades take MCAS on the same day to minimize disruptions. Initial feedback was positive and the change seemed to work well. The DC trip is coming up in early June for 8th grade students.

Westwood High School: Student board members discussed that prom was a success and students were receptive to the new location at Lake Pearl in Wrentham. The last school day for seniors is May 21st. Seniors are looking forward to Senior Week, graduation and the All Night Graduation Party. Junior board members shared their placements for J-Term and discussed other offerings.

VI. Adjournment - The meeting was called to adjournment at 8:10 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Mary Ellen LaRose