



Meeting Minutes for Advisory Board Meeting – September 23, 2019

Attendance: Sophia Hebert, Diana Bezdedeanu, Brad Pindel, Jan Midiri, John Loughnane, Mary Ellen LaRose, Danielle Sutton, David Russell, Mary-Carol Waters, Josh Minsky, Sahara Hayes, Ethan Blonder, Christy Harrison, Diana Martucci, Trish Tucke

I. **Call to Order:** The meeting convened at the Islington Community Center and was called to order at 7:10 p.m.

II. Introductions of new board members and Group Ice breaker

II. **Acceptance of Meeting Minutes:** David made a motion to accept the 6/10/19 minutes. All were in favor of approving the minutes.

III. Director's Report:

Welcome to our new Board members and thanks to everyone for their service this year on the Y&FS Advisory Board! We're looking forward to working with you to support the healthy development of Westwood's young people and their families.

"Transition" is the word in Fiscal Year 20, with many changes among our staff and with our physical office spaces.

At the end of July we said goodbye to Nina Banozic, our Youth Services Counselor of nearly four years, as she moved back to her hometown in Michigan to be closer to family.

In August we welcomed Emily Greco, our former Graduate Intern, into the Youth Services Counselor role, and we feel so lucky to have her!

Our Clinical Coordinator, Sarah Baroud, is due to have her second child at the beginning of November, so we are wrapping up the process of hiring an Interim Youth Services Counselor to provide coverage from early October through early March. This five-month coverage is typical of our department as it allows for the appropriate transition of clinical cases and programs between clinicians in the month before and the month after the 12-week maternity leave. As always, thanks go to our Town Administrator, Finance Director, and HR Director for their continued support of our staffing coverage needs.

Over the summer our satellite office space within WHS moved for the first time since the high school was built! We are now in Room A106, next to the WHS Social Worker, and our former Youth Services Counselor, Joanna Bengel. Meetings took place over the summer, and will now continue on a weekly basis, for all of the stakeholders in the Wentworth Hall redevelopment project. The new Wentworth Hall building is expected to become the new home of the Y&FS department in the fall of 2020!

Clinical Services

*There are currently **32 counseling clients** on the WY&FS caseload, 25 individual clients; 1 family client; 6 parent consultations. (*This total is compared to 53 at our last meeting in June of 2019 and compared to 48 in September of 2018 and 39 in September of 2017, with the lower number of clients a result of transition between clinicians.*)

*There were **12 new intakes** for counseling services in July and August (compare to 8 intakes over the same months in 2018). There are currently 10 individuals or families on our waitlist for counseling services, compared to 3 at our last meeting in June. Whenever there is a waitlist, we share the William James INTERFACE Referral Service information as another option and also offer a one-time meeting with a Y&FS clinician so that families might have some initial resources while waiting. As always, referrals are triaged so that those residents in most immediate need are prioritized.

*Although some groups have filled, there are still openings for **Structured Play Groups** and **Girls Groups** beginning this fall and going through the school year.

Program Updates

*Y&FS is happy to welcome this year's participant in our **Graduate Internship Program, Hope Dragelin** of the Boston College School of Social Work. Hope is in her first year, or "foundation year", of her MSW program and will be with us for 16 hours per week from September through June.

*The two sessions (one for 1st-3rd grade students and one for 4th-6th grade students) of our six-week **Creative Craft Club** took place over July and August. This was the third year of this free program that gives young residents the opportunity to make great crafts around themes such as mindfulness, goal setting and personal strengths.

*All WHS students received notice of the **Mentor programs** for the 2019-2020 academic year at the beginning of September. Information tables outside the WHS Cafeteria and 1:1 interviews with students have been taking place over the last two weeks. We are happy to once again be offering a large selection of volunteer opportunities across five different programs: **Body Safety Theater; Bullying Prevention Theater; Friends Network; Teen Scene @ the Library; Friday Nights @ Thurston**. These programs are a great way for high school-aged residents to connect with and mentor younger residents in the community!

Community Connections

*Y&FS staff is participating in the following local groups, boards and committees this fiscal year:

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| -Community Chest | -Community Crisis Intervention Team |
| -Deerfield Site Council | -Early Childhood Council |
| -Executive Function Group | -Human Services Function Group |
| -MMA Human Services Council | -Municipal Facilities Task Force |
| -Regional Internship Collaborative | -Regional Youth Commission Meetings |
| -Roy London Humanitarian Award Committee | |
| -Westwood Cares | -WHS Child Study Team |
| -WHS Legislative Council | -WHS Site Council |

V. New Business:

Wentworth Hall - Islington Community Center Update: Danielle shared information regarding plans for a "Pop Up Library" in the ICC Sanctuary space. Plans for Wentworth Hall were made available for board members to view.

Nomination Procedure & Bylaw Review Danielle stated that the board will take time in FY20 to review and update the bylaws. Included in this will be adding a formal process for future nominations to board positions. She asked that board members take time to review the bylaws and note any additional items that need to be edited or added. At the October meeting, the board will take input from members and then form a sub-committee to work on incorporating edits and additions. This sub-committee will then present a revised bylaw document for review and eventual vote at a future meeting.

Community Liaisons:

Westwood Cares: Danielle discussed the group's plans for the upcoming school year. The group will be hosting a parent talk with John Mattleman, the former director of Needham Youth Services on the "Secret Life of Teens." The talk will focus what teens/tweens are really thinking and how to best support them. Participants will leave with new ways of understanding and engaging with teens/tweens. A date for this fall talk will be announced soon.

Westwood Police Department: Brad stated that two new officers were hired. Leo Tobin and Paul Toland, both long serving staff members retired. Brad discussed recently completed bus evacuation and lockdown drills held at the schools. Danielle noted a sign language training the WPD held for its staff which will enable officers to better communicate with residents, who may use sign language.

Comprehensive Plan: Jan reported that the committee met over the summer to review their assigned sections of the report. Danielle shared with the group WY&FS's submission to the report. This fall the group will be fine tuning each section of the report and will then submit a final version to the Planning Board. Jan mentioned a presentation of the Westwood Comprehensive Plan will be made at the spring town meeting.

Early Childhood Council: Danielle passed out copies of the recently published Westwood Early Childhood Council Resource Guide. The guide includes an updated listing of day care and preschool providers, enrichment activities, etc.

Danielle also mentioned that ECC is accepting applications for the Kathy Scales Memorial Scholarship Fund. This scholarship fund was set up to provide preschool tuition assistance to families in need.

Food Pantry: Trish shared that the pantry shelves are pretty bare. The boy scouts will be hosting their annual town wide drive on November 23rd. 67 families are currently using the pantry. 75% of those assisted by the pantry are senior citizens. Diana B. suggested having a box at Town Hall for donations.

VI. Adjournment - The meeting was called to adjournment.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Mary Ellen LaRose