



Meeting Minutes for Advisory Board Meeting – October 28, 2019

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

I. **Call to Order:** The meeting convened at the Islington Community Center and was called to order at 7:09 p.m.

II. **Acceptance of Meeting Minutes:** David made a motion and Diana M. seconded to accept the 9/23/19 minutes. All were in favor of approving the minutes.

III. Director's Report:

Please join us in welcoming Breann (McGee) Whitelaw as our Interim Youth Services Counselor! Breann will be with us throughout the maternity leave of our Clinical Coordinator, Sarah Baroud, who is expected to have her baby in just a couple days on Wednesday, October 30th! Breann was one of our Graduate Interns in the 2018-2019 academic year, and we are so pleased that she is able to return to us in this new role.

Clinical Services

*There are currently **45 counseling clients** on the WY&FS caseload, 38 individual clients; 1 family client; 6 parent consultations. (*This total is compared to 32 at our last meeting in September and compared to 46 in October of 2018 and 41 in October of 2017.*)

*There have been **5 new intakes** for counseling services so far in October (*compare to 9 intakes in October 2018 and 6 in October 2017*). There are currently 3 individuals or families on our waitlist for counseling services, compared to 10 at our last meeting in September. 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.

*Three groups are currently running, a Tuesday **Girls Group** for 4th/5th graders, Wednesday and Thursday **Structured Play Groups** for Kindergarten/1st graders and 2nd/3rd graders respectively, with a total of 17 participants.

Program Updates

*The annual **Holiday Giving** program has begun, with marketing efforts aimed at recruiting any Westwood families with children 0-18 years old who are in need of support for holiday gifts. The deadline for registration is next Monday, November 4th, and then the process of matching donors and recipients will begin.

*Our **Graduate Intern**, Hope Dragelin, has been with us since early September. At this stage of the year she has a number of clients that she is seeing each week, she has outlined her learning goals for the year and plans are underway for her Faculty Advisor from the BC School of Social Work to visit our offices and meet with Hope and her clinical supervisor for the first of two on-site evaluations.

***Bullying Prevention Theater (BPT)** rehearsals have been taking place since September 26th and roles have been assigned for the 35 high school volunteer Mentors participating in the program.

*The first **Friday Nights @ Thurston** event of the year took place on October 18th. There were ~160 Thurston students in attendance. The high school volunteer Mentors did a fantastic job of keeping things running smoothly and ensuring that everyone had a good time! We were also happy to have DJ Addie, herself a WHS student, playing great music and engaging the middle school students along with the Mentors!

*Interviews have closed for the **Friends Network** program and orientation will be held this Wednesday, 10/30, for the high school volunteers in the program (“Big Friends”). The 27 pairs of “Big Friends” and “Little Friends” will begin meeting in the first week of November across two weekly evening sessions held at the Council on Aging.

***Teen Scene @ the Library** has also begun, with 14 volunteer Mentors serving on Early Release Wednesdays and Fridays working in coordination with the new Teen Librarian to help engage the large numbers of Thurston students that go to the Main Library on those afternoons.

Community Connections

*On October 4th, WY&FS was happy to host a meeting of the state-wide **Youth Commission Director’s Group** at the Main Library. Directors from fourteen different towns were in attendance, from places like Falmouth and Sandwich, Holliston and Westborough, Northborough and Bedford.

*Regular weekly meetings continue for the **Wentworth Hall Redevelopment Project**. Each Thursday, WY&FS joins other stakeholders at these meetings to learn about and discuss ongoing aspects of the project.

*On Friday, October 25th, WY&FS attended a community meeting with parents from the MMO Preschool and other town departments to discuss ideas and plans for the coordination of “Pop-Up Library” space in the ICC Sanctuary during the time that the old Wentworth Hall/Branch Library space is undergoing renovation. The current plan is that the temporary **Pop-Up Library will open next Tuesday, November 5th**, running its programs and services outside of the hours that MMO preschool is in session.

*As the lead agency for the Town’s contract with the William James College **INTERFACE Referral Service**, WY&FS worked with participating school and town departments in October to secure funding for this year’s contract (Nov 1, 2019-October 31, 2020). This is the fifth year that the town has offered the mental health referral service to residents.

*WY&FS is happy to once again serve as a drop-off site for the town-wide drive by the Westwood Young Women’s Club for **Dignity Matters**, a local non-profit that aims to support girls and women living in poverty by gathering and distributing undergarments and feminine hygiene products. Should you wish to donate, there is a bin in the waiting room under the Community Board and you can stop by anytime that our office is open to drop off donations.

V. New Business:

Wentworth Hall - Islington Community Center Update: Danielle shared information regarding plans for a “Pop Up Library” in the ICC Sanctuary space. Danielle is attending weekly status update meetings with the Wentworth Hall architect, project manager and staff from the town’s Community Economic Development department, the library and recreation department. Blasting for the new building took place last week. Danielle mentioned bids have gone out to move Wentworth Hall (aka branch library) across the street to its new location.

Board members asked questions regarding recent news of the MMO Preschool closing. Danielle shared there will be a joint letter from the town, developer and MMO regarding more information on this. Danielle suggested the Westwood Early Childhood Council office as a resource for families that may be looking for a new preschool for next school year.

Holiday Giving Program: Mary Ellen explained how the program works for Westwood families in need. Jan Midiri spoke of a similar program they run for the children served by the state’s Department of Children and Families. Gifts for that program are also dropped off at the ICC.

Nomination Procedure & Bylaw Review Danielle stated that the board will take time in FY20 to review and update the bylaws. She asked members to let her or Mary Ellen know if they are interested in joining the nomination review sub-committee.

Community Liaisons:

Westwood Cares: Danielle reported the group will be hosting a parent talk on November 18th 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. The group received a generous financial grant from Beth Israel Deaconess –Needham Hospital, which will fully cover the speaking fees for the event.

Westwood Police Department: Brad stated that Joe Vinci was promoted to patrol lieutenant. A new sergeant is being interviewed from amongst officers. Brad will be attending an anti -vaping legislation meeting put on by the district attorney. Danielle and Brad reported to the board about a group called “Audit America”, who have a YouTube Channel and have known to go into public buildings nationwide asking questions of staff members and officials on the premise of protecting Americans first amendment rights. They film these officials and try to “catch” them violating first amendment rights and then broadcast these encounters on their channel. Westwood has not yet had any instances involving this group but Police Chief Silva will be hosting a meeting for employees clarifying how to respond to these requests if they occur.

Comprehensive Plan: Jan reported that in November the group will be submitting their report to the Planning and Select Boards. A presentation of the Westwood Comprehensive Plan will be made at the spring town meeting.

Food Pantry: Trish shared that the Martha Jones and Temple Beth David recently held successful drives. This month the library is accepting donations in lieu of overdue fines. The boy scouts will be hosting their annual town drive the week of November 17th. 70 households are currently served by the pantry. Mary-Carol asked what residents need to do to qualify to use the pantry. Trish explained they need to show proof of residency and receive a confirmation letter from the Food Pantry board. There are no “proof of income” requirements. Danielle asked what percentage of clients are seniors. Trish responded that 75% of the clients are seniors.

Westwood High School: Sophia mentioned a coat drive at WHS and that the prom committee is looking for additional fundraisers to offset costs for the event. The Homecoming Dance is back this year and will be held on November 22nd. There was discussion regarding the All Night Grad Party on whether it will happen and if so will it possibly be held at off site location. Board members expressed how important the event is and the hope that the party continues.

Westwood Elementary Schools: Diana encouraged board members to spread the word and attend the Elementary Schools Building Projects listening meeting on November 4th. This is one of two meetings where the public can learn more about the project and voice their feedback and suggestions on priorities for the project.

VI. Adjournment - The meeting was called to adjournment at 8:24 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Mary Ellen LaRose