

Needham Youth & Family Services

Notes from June 9, 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, Karen Mullen, Kevin Keane, Nicole McMahon, David Bookston, Julie Stevens, Jill Mullaney (new junior replacing Josh Tuttleman who is graduating)

Director: Ms. Sara Shine

Staff: Kristin Scoble, Admin. Asst; Christine Weitzel new part-time clinician

Motion to Approve May 12 Minutes made by Kevin, seconded by David. Minutes unanimously approved.

Ms. Shine Discussed Some Housekeeping- all public meetings will be in person in September. The proposal is to host them in the basement conference room 6 feet apart or in Powers Hall if available.

Meeting Schedule for 2021-2022. Proposed dates are second Wednesday same as this year except for June where June 7th was agreed as an alternative to a personal commitment for Ms. Shine. The complete list of dates is September 8, October 13, November 10, December 8, January 12, February 9, March 9, April 13 and May 11 and June 7th. David made a motion to approve the meeting dates as outlined above. Julie seconded the motion. The 2021-2022 meeting schedule was unanimously approved.

Community Focus

Ms. Shine mentioned the continuing focus on mental health coming out of COVID. She is not sure with COVID that cases will decrease this summer which is why she is happy to have Ms. Weitzel and another part-time clinician on board. Ms. Shine noted that there are more social activities at the school as the year finishes and it was noted there seemed to be less crisis and anxiety is being handled since masks are not required in recess. The few kids who have repeat crisis situations and hospitalizations are those that were in crisis pre-COVID, but overall numbers have not increased. It was noted that this year the school is doing final projects not final exams and in some ways that is more work and may cause more stress. It was noted that adjusting to the "new normal" is difficult, but anxiety will get better as we readjust to a new normal is the hope.

Next Mural Project

The next mural project will be in the tunnel between Pollard Middle School and DiFazio Field. The approval process is now going on with all the appropriate boards in town. More people

will be involved in the initial design. On the first mural project the Department of Public Works will add an anti-graffiti coating over the summer.

Updates on Programs, Services and Awards

Ms. Shine noted that there is a demand for fall programming that is both in person and on Zoom. **Volunteers Around Needham**, for example, will be in person 6 days but include a component of individual work. **Peer Tutor** will have remote as well as in person pairs.

Volunteers around Needham will be outside for most of summer 2021.

Junior Police Academy This program filled quickly, and everyone has come off the waiting list as of 6/9. Adrienne Anderson is in charge with 30 students.

Ms. Shine noted that Ms. Weitzel has a specialty in group structure will be working with the social groups discussed below. The groups will potentially continue in the fall.

The social group is for grades 6, 7 and 8 and a parent group that meets in the summers. All groups will be hosted on Zoom. A new session is planned for parents of LGBTQTI students. Drop-in groups will also include anxiety and depression. A final session will be a parent question and answer program.

There has been a special outreach to the Housing authority students by Keith Ford, an assistant principal at the high school. Denise Garlick is involved, and the goal is to provide both more educational as well as mental health services for the young people who live here.

Ms. Shine noted that the employment/jobs list have been reactivated as they dwindled during COVID. Ms. Scoble has been spear heading the lists. She noted there are 20 students wanting to babysit, but lawn care is the most requested service and only 6 youth are on the lists so far. There are also a few students who can do odd jobs.

Ms. Shine will also be working over the summer on school workshop curriculum updates as there are different goals/themes for grades 6, 7, 8 and 9. These programs will include an emphasis on high school students helping middle school students by discussing the importance of mental health. Middle school students believe high school peers much more than staff, so they are valuable partners in the effort.

New/Old Business

Board Members discussed school activities - mentioned the prom was great. The parents completely transformed the high school cafeteria. There were food trucks outside. It was a bit different this year as many students actually stayed at prom as opposed to focusing on after parties. Many students walked home, or their parents dropped off and picked them up, so it really felt like a cohesive and fun class celebration.

It was noted that seniors have a vaccination rate of 95% which made everyone comfortable, and it was fine from a policing point of view.

Motion to Adjourn

David made a motion to adjourn at 6:10 pm, seconded by Julie.

Meeting unanimously Adjourned at 6:10 pm

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

