

Needham Youth & Family Services

Notes from October 9th, 2024 Board Meeting

Meeting commenced at 5:31pm, in person in the Highland Room of Needham Town Hall.

Board in Attendance: Julie Stevens, Susan Patkin, Karen Mullen, Joe Brienze, Massiel Gallardo, Natalia Ly

Director: Sara Shine, LICSW

Staff: Alyssa Cellucci, Grace Burnham, Kristina Kozak, MSW, BCBA; Tony Serio, LCSW; Hannah Stein, LICSW; Christine Weitzel, LCSW; Ellen Whirley, LCSW

Ms. Stevens made a motion to commence the meeting.

Minutes from September 11th, 2024: Mr. Brienze made a motion to approve the September 11th minutes. Ms. Mullen seconded. The September 11th minutes unanimously approved by voice vote.

NEW AND OLD BUSINESS

Board members and new staff members made introductions. Staff discussed various programming they are working on as well as their caseloads and the general needs they are seeing in their clients and in the community.

Ms. Stein discussed SHOP, Peer Tutor for the 2024-2025 Academic Year, and the Family Playgroups from the spring and summer.

Ms. Weitzel discussed the VIP Program for 2024-2025 Academic Year, along with her work with the Mindful Community speaker series and collaboration with some private schools in the area.

Ms. Whirley discussed the various social groups at the elementary and high school levels.

Ms. Burnham discussed her onboarding to the department and connecting with new clients.

Ms. Kozak discussed her onboarding to the department and the outreach collaboration between the Needham Free Public Library, the Needham Community Council, and the Needham Housing Authority among others.

Mr. Serio discussed his onboarding to the department and his outreach efforts alongside Ms. Kozak, as well as his undertaking of the Youth Diversion Program and the opportunities for advanced training in different therapeutic modalities.

A board discussion commenced on the FY26 Schedule of Fees. Ms. Shine discussed the cost of tutee registration for the Peer Tutor Program to remain at \$55.00. Ms. Patkin made a motion to approve the FY26 Schedule of Fees. Mr. Brienze seconded. The motion approved unanimously by voice vote.

Ms. Shine discussed broader budget updates for the department for trainings and programmatic services, as well as the process of updating the department's mission statement which staff are working on.

An initial discussion commenced regarding the open YFS Board Member position. Ms. Stevens and Ms. Shine, along with the other board members and Town officials, will continue to seek candidates for the position.

CLINICAL SERVICES

Youth & Family Services provides individual and family therapy for residents and have significantly increased our capacity for this. While we typically focus on youth and their families, we are aware that there are many people in the community who need extra support. We have been able to offer crisis/urgent supportive services to all residents and have been able to help in these crisis situations.

- There are 67 active clients.
- We currently have 9 on our waitlist.
- We have provided 7 Parent/Community consultations.
- We have had 6 emergency consults this month.

- Fall Programming –
 - **Parent Support Group/Coffee Talk** – Y&FS has continued to host a drop-in group for parents and caregivers to be able to get support from a clinician and peers. Four more dates have been added to the fall schedule which will center around specific topics: “Back to School Butterflies”, “Children Love Language”, “Healthy Living”, and “Chat ‘n Chill”. Groups will be held in the morning on the third Wednesday of each month from September to December. So far we have had 4 families participate.
 - **Volunteers Around Needham, NewBridge on the Charles** – Volunteers Around Needham provides an opportunity for students in grades 7-12 to participate in single-day service projects in the community. Staff have been closely working with NewBridge on the Charles in Dedham, a senior living facility, to help high school students connect with the volunteer program and earn hours towards their graduation requirement, while making meaningful intergenerational connections. Staff have helped to offer multiple sessions for students to get connected to this organization. On September 25th, staff hosted a kickoff orientation which allowed students to tour the campus, meet the residents and participate in a group art activity. We had 3 students participate

and have reported back that they have interest in pursuing volunteer roles with NewBridge going forward.

- **6th Grade Workshop** – On September 18th, staff hosted a 3-hour workshop for 6th graders to focus on building confidence and social skills as they rise to middle school through interactive games and team-building activities. Students learned communication skills through name games and wrote a letter to their future selves which staff will mail to them at the end of the school year. We had 4 participants for the first session and staff have another workshop planned for October 26th.
- **Social Skills Groups** – Staff are in the midst of the current series of social skills groups for youth in elementary school, offering “Giggles, Games, and Friendships” (GGF) for grades 2-3 and “Candid Conversations” (CC) for grades 4-5 throughout the months of September to December. Both of these groups will work on social skills, affect management, and coping strategies while building on peer connection. The September series of GGF was filled to capacity with 8 participants and registration is now open for the next sessions.
- **Community Connections Office Hours** – Mr. Serio and Ms. Kozak have established office hours to strategically place themselves in the community to offer on-the-spot case management, referrals, and check-ins with community members. Additionally, both staff will administer surveys to persons served in order to track and assess the needs of the community on an ongoing basis.
- In the month of September, at Needham Free Public Library:
 - On Tuesdays from 12pm - 4pm and Wednesdays from 10am – 2pm, 8 patrons made contact with Community Connections staff. Referrals were made for social skills groups, information was provided through the resource guide, and counseling referrals were made.
- In the month of September at the Needham Community Council:
 - A Community Connections table was set up on Sept. 11, Sept. 14, and Sept. 25. During this time: 9 patrons made contact with Community Connections staff. Referrals were made for social skills groups, and information was provided through the resource guide. Through conversations with patrons, a new program that connects patrons with job listings is being established. The tentative date for the onset of this program is November 1st.
- **Coffee Talk for High Schoolers** – Coffee Talk is a drop-in group of high school students that will continue this school year. Topics will continue to include: peer pressure, homework stress, socialization, and NHS Cellphone policies. This past year the group had 10-14 students that attended on a regular basis and we hope to engage the same amount of students or more this year. Staff are also discussing with the high school about starting a 9th grade “New To Needham” walk-in group during X-Block. The purpose of this group would be to support 9th graders new to Needham High School who are coming from out of state or private schools and support them around social connections.
- **Lunch Groups** - Staff will run lunch groups at 4 of the elementary schools, Eliot, Sunita Williams, Newman and Broadmeadow during the academic year. Each group will have between 5-8 students in each and students will have

been identified and referred to the group by school guidance staff. These groups are designed to provide a supportive and engaging environment for students, fostering social skills and friendships. Staff will run the first group at Sunita Williams beginning on October 8th.

- **Diversion Program:** Mr. Serio and Ms. Kozak have begun orienting to their roles with Needham Police Department as Diversion Program Coordinators. They met with Needham Police Department and the current Diversion coordinator on September 20th and are working on establishing a framework for the program. The current tentative date for the onset of this service is October 15th.

Staff attended a training on IDECIDE, which is a therapeutic substance misuse treatment program. The hope is that this program will be incorporated into the Substance Awareness Program.

COMMUNITY ISSUES BEING ADDRESS:

Needham Youth & Family Services is awaiting to receive data from the 2023 MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey once this data is made available to the public

- Highlights from the 2021 MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey finds that in Needham:
 - For the middle school: reports of mental health issues increased since 2018: 12-month reports of depressive symptoms increased from 9%-13% and self-injury increased from 6%-8%. Life reports of seriously considering suicide also increased from 10%-12%. This increase in mental health concerns in increasing consistently among various genders.
 - For High School Students: depressive symptoms increased from 13%-22%, self-injury increased from 9%-16% and seriously considering suicide increased from 9%-12%. All of these areas also grew substantially in the Metro-West region.
 - For both middle school and high school, the proportion of youth spending 3 or more hours on screen time on the average school day increased substantially (50% for middle school and 52% in high school).
 - For both age groups: the indicators of school connectedness are lower in 2021, reports of having a friend to talk to about personal problems decreased (M:68%-62%/HS: 73%-66%), and reports of adult supports at school have also decreased (MS:72%-70%/HS:75%-72%).
- We are assessing additional community needs and virtual programming.
 - Our focus is to continue group treatment to increase the number of youth accessing services
 - We are working on increased training for staff in trauma informed care
 - We are working closely with a school group on helping support the school community and families on many different levels.
 - We are planning some community presentations to help educate and support residents.
 - We are finding nontraditional ways to address mental health such as expressive art therapy workshops and community outreach projects

- Helping to address issues of racism and inequalities and ensuring that all have access to services if needed

FURTHER PROGRAMMATIC SERVICES:

Peer Tutor – This program pairs high school students in grades 10-12 with younger students in grades 3-8 in need of academic support and mentoring after-school. This program is an opportunity for high school students to receive their 30 hours of community service, completing half of their requirement for graduation in one academic year. This year's Peer Tutor Program is underway with registration open and staff preparing for the application and interview process. Staff plan to have 16 tutors and 16 tutees meeting at the Needham Free Public Library. There is also an option for tutors to attend the Extended Day Program at Eliot Elementary. The program will run from October 2024 to April 2025.

VIP Peer Mentoring Program - This program pairs high school students with 3rd, 4th and 5th graders to offer a weekly space to offer a social space, a space to play games, and peer mentoring. The 2024-2025 program is underway and Ms. Whirley and Ms. Weitzel have begun the application and interview process for participants. Staff plan to host 20 pairs of Bigs and Littles. It continues to be a positive experience for the mentor-mentee pairs and to see the development of some wonderful peer mentoring relationships. This year staff also have some "big" floaters to help make sure the "littles" can still participate when a "big" missed a meeting. Staff will hold training for the BIGS on October 8th where participants will review guidelines of the program. The first VIP meeting is scheduled for October 22nd at 6:30pm.

SHOP (Students Helping Older People) – SHOP is an intergenerational program where we pair students with older adults to make connections and help with grocery shopping. This need started as a response to the post-pandemic challenges faced by the older community in public but the need continues to prevail. This program will give students an opportunity to volunteer directly within the community in addition to connecting with the older population, reinforce the importance of relationships, especially to more vulnerable populations during a time when many connections are lost. Y&FS has also talked to some local housing for older adults with the idea that the program could be brought directly to these communities as well.

Mindful Community Lecture Services – Talking About Mental Health. Youth & Family Services has partnered with the Needham Community Council and the Becca Schmill Foundation to create a speaker series to help support the community. The committee is actively researching and contacting various speakers in an effort to meet the most pressing needs of families in our community. Currently, we have two presentations scheduled for the fall.

On October 24th at the Center at the Heights, Ms. Elizabeth Warner, a founding member of the SMARTmoves treatment modality and seasoned clinician will be presenting information and techniques related to how caregivers can help their children manage themselves during times of dysregulation. Ms. Warner has extensive knowledge of helping kids regulate themselves utilizing her full body multi-sensory modality of SMARTmoves. We are also hoping to have 2-3 small group discussions with caregivers who are interested to help them reinforce the techniques discussed and answer any questions that arise from utilizing the various techniques and strategies discussed in the presentation.

On November 7th in Powers Hall, Deborah Kris will present on helping parents of children create and teach an emotional vocabulary to their children in an effort to establish kindness as an underlying principle of their behavior. Ms. Kris is a parent educator, educational journalist, children's book author and founder of Parenthood 365 and she has presented to thousands of parents across the country. She has written about education for NPR's Mindshift and has helped create a soon to be launched PBS series.

Volunteers Around Needham is an opportunity for middle and high school students to give back to the community while also getting their needed community service hours. Staff had two successful days during February Vacation, one at Circle of Hope to help sort clothes and donations for homeless families and one with Youth & Family Services to help prepare for future programming. Staff implemented two days of April vacation at Temple Beth Shalom and had 15 volunteers. Volunteers helped them clean up their grounds, laid mulch in the playground area, put new sand in the playground sandbox, and replenished the pollinator garden box in addition to created 250 kits for preschool kids for a bookmaking project. Dates and locations for the summer programming have been secured. Staff will host days at Temple Beth Shalom, Circle of Hope, the Needham Community Council, Clean up at Riverside Park with Parks and Forestry, The Needham Community Farm (2 days), and the Needham Fire Station.

Cuerd@s- staff are working with a local non-profit, Cuerd@s, to host a parent workshop. Cuerd@s is an organization that teaches embroidery to groups to create tactile patches for sensory seeking people to use on their everyday clothing. This workshop will be a space for parents to make clothing for their children while processing the stressors or parents and share strategies.



Members of the Health and Human Services team have been trained to teach **Youth Mental Health First Aid virtually**. Youth Mental Health First Aid is a public education program that teaches participants how to recognize and respond to the signs and symptoms that suggest a potential mental

health challenge, how to listen nonjudgmentally and give reassurance to a youth who may be experiencing a mental health challenge, and how to refer a person to appropriate professional support and services. Eleven people were trained on March 4th including all of the school nurses. Youth & Family Services and Public Health have trained all big groups of staff at the Needham Housing Authority and the Needham Community Council. Thank you to the Needham Community Council for sponsoring these trainings. There has been a huge increase in interest in this training.

In addition, 5 staff have been trained to be **teen Mental Health First Aid** trainers which teaches teens how to help their peers experiencing a mental health challenge. The hope is that the class will not only give skills to the students but will also help eliminate barriers to treatment (including stigma and access) and will help identify students in need. The goal this year is to teach the entire 10th grade which has required hours of planning, scheduling, and preparing. Staff have completed training the entire 10th grade and plan to continue the work next school year.

Each class required 4.5 hours of training time over six sessions. The session contains the following information:

Session 1: Mental health, what mental health challenges are, and how common they are in teens.

Session 2: The impact of mental health challenges on teens, how people with mental health challenges can get better, professionals who can help.

Session 3: Helping a friend who is in crisis because they are suicidal, introducing the tMHFA action plan (look, ask, listen, help your friend) and how it can be used in a crisis situation. A video shows a teen helping a friend who is experiencing suicidal thoughts.

Session 4: Helping a friend who is in another type of crisis, such as threatening violence or harm to others, engaging in non-suicidal self-injury, or experiencing a traumatic event such as bullying, abuse or assault; practicing using the tMHFA Action Plan in these types of crisis situations

Session 5: How to help a friend who may be in crisis due to substance use, how to help if someone might be developing a mental health challenge. tMHFA does not teach you how to diagnose! It's information about being a supportive friend, encouraging friends to seek help and knowing when it is time to get a responsible, trusted adult involved.

Session 6: Recovery, resiliency and all final activities to complete the tMHFA course.

Question, Persuade, and Refer (QPR) training– 2 staff members, Mrs. Whirley and Mrs. Weitzel, completed QPR training and have started to provide training. Staff are working on developing a training schedule for this. “QPR is a suicide training for participants to be able to recognize warning signs of suicide and question, persuade and refer people at risk for suicide for help.”

Employment Program Update: Youth & Family Services help connect residents to students who are looking to do various residential jobs such as lawn care, shoveling, babysitting and odd jobs. Staff are slowly recruiting more students for these lists that have helped to support older adults and other residents in need. Staff have also started a volunteer list as well so that people who need assistance but may not be able to afford to hire someone can still receive the services.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION:

Needham Harvest Fair – Youth & Family Services hosted a table at this year's Harvest Fair on Greene's Field in Needham on Sunday, September 29th. Staff are able to make connections with residents and members of the community to discuss programming and clinical services. This year the department's “swag” and goodies seemed to be popular with the young people, including sensory fidgets and textured mindfulness stickers as well as a temporary “tattoo” station.

Jog for Joy- Highrock Church Metrowest is hosting their annual Jog for Joy. The Jog for Joy is an annual 5k which started in 2019. The fun run is in support of mental health resources for the community and build awareness around mental health, decreasing stigma. A portion of the proceeds continues to support Youth & Family Services. This run was hosted on June 9th at 10AM.

Staff have partnered with the **Charles River YMCA** to provide scholarships to youth to attend YMCA sleepaway camps in New Hampshire throughout the summer months, for families who have limited financial means. All youth reported having a significantly positive experience,

most having never attended camp before, and expressed a desire to return next summer. Staff will continue to work with the YMCA to make this a reality for youth in the community.

Staff have been meeting with the guidance counselors at St. Joseph's School and brainstorming ways to collaborate. Staff are planning to host the movie "Screenagers" followed by an offered space for discussion. "Screenagers" is "an award-winning film that probes into the vulnerable corners of family life and depicts messy struggles over social media, video games, and academics." The film offers solutions on how we can help our kids navigate the digital world. Our plan would be to show the movie and offer time and space for a discussion. Staff plan to host Screenagers January 16th, 2025 in Powers Hall.

International Overdose Awareness Day - Youth & Family Services joined a group last year dedicated to planning and implementing the Annual International Overdose Awareness Day and continued the collaboration again this year. The 3rd Annual vigil occurred on Thursday August 29th with the annual flag display commemorating those affected by overdose. Y&FS was able to coordinate two student volunteers to assist with the flag display in front of Memorial Park.

Youth & Family Services has joined a group led by the Needham Housing Authority called **Family Self Sufficiency Program Coordinating Committee**. This purpose of this program is to provide a comprehensive range of services including education, job training, financial literacy and homeownership assistance which will equip participants with the tools and resources necessary to achieve self-sufficiency and break the cycle of poverty. The first meeting occurred March 12th and staff will continue to be involved in this initiative.

Youth & Family Services has joined a **Needham Homelessness Prevention Coalition** that helps assess needs in the areas and helps to prevent homelessness. This meeting occurs monthly. This meeting is a meeting to address homelessness on a larger scale and discuss patterns and solutions for individuals and families, many of the attendees in this group help with specific incidents on a day-to-day basis.

Youth & Family Services has joined the **Online Safety Coalition**. This is a group that has gotten together to help caregivers navigate the always changing online environment that children spend so many hours engaging in. The Coalition includes representation from the Needham Board of Health, Youth and Family Services, Community Council, Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital, Walker School, Needham High School, Becca Schmill Foundation and community members. The coalition will provide parents with reliable information about various online safety topics. The group is working on a newsletter to be distributed regularly.

Youth & Family Services continues to work closely with the students involved in our **Chapter 84**, which is a peer-to-peer led nicotine prevention group. Students are involved in various trainings and advocacy initiatives.

Youth & Family Services' staff regularly attend the meetings of **SPAN** --- Substance Prevention Alliance of Needham (formerly known as the Needham Coalition for Youth Substance Abuse Prevention). Youth & Family Services is represented on all 3 action teams and are also represented on the steering committee. There are several initiatives coming out of this group including creating online substance use support, peer support, community activities and educational webinars. Director, Sara Shine, was part of a SPAN community

event title “Edibles, Vapes & Spiked Seltzers: Tips for talking with your teens about drugs & alcohol in today’s world.” The event hosted Dr. Safdar Medina as he spoke about tips for talking with teens about drugs and alcohol, followed by a panel with Pollard Middle School Principal, Tamatha Bibbo, Sara Shine and a SALSA student.

Narcan Administration - We have two staff who are currently trained in Narcan administration (aka Naloxone) through the Public Health Department. We are now more equipped to educate families on the use of Narcan to prevent fatal overdose, how to contact emergency responders, and the existence of the Good Samaritan Law in Massachusetts. While we cannot directly provide residents with Narcan due to required licensing, we are collaborating with public health nurses on the best protocol to provide to families in need who may be facing stigma. Narcan is a life-saving measure that works as an opioid-antagonist which means that when opioid use overwhelms our brain's receptors and begins to cause respiratory distress, slurring of speech, nodding off and other signs of overdose - Narcan is an agent that binds quicker to our receptors, effectively "knocking off" the opioids, restoring the brain back to normal functioning and reversing the symptoms of overdose in a matter of minutes.

The **Domestic Violence Action Committee (DVAC)** meets regularly. Youth & Family Services has a representative at these meetings. Some of the staff have attended various training courses to help support their committee work around domestic violence. In addition, staff have joined a DVAC has a sub-committee that is working on a cable channel series to be aired in October for Domestic Violence Awareness Month. This is a 6-part series and staff will be participating in the 4th episode called Healthy relationships.

Staff have continued to be involved in the **Community Crisis Intervention Team (CCIT)** and attend these meetings regularly. This meeting is attended by the police department, fire, town social workers from various divisions, the health department, a SPAN representative, and Riverside Crisis Team. The team discusses community members in crisis who may need additional supports. Quarterly, there is a larger meeting that includes other community partners including the hospitals, Walker, local mental health, and substance use organizations. Quarterly this team meets with larger community providers (including local mental health agencies, BID, NWH, Walker) to discuss the overall community needs and trends.

The Youth Resource Network is a roundtable including representatives from multiple youth-serving organizations that meets during the academic year to address specific needs of school-age youth and families that reside and/or attend public school in Needham. These meetings have been very popular this year as there are so many families in crisis. Youth & Family Services chairs this meeting monthly.

Staff are attending the quarterly municipal **Youth Commission/Youth Services meeting**. Represented at the meeting are directors from towns such as Medfield, Hopkinton, Holliston, Wayland, Wellesley, Southborough, and several more. We have also joined a smaller group of Directors from the Metro-West region to increase collaboration. There has been an effort to bridge gaps between programs so that staff have more co-workers to collaborate with. There have also been conversations about working together on therapeutic groups and community presentations. Two breakout groups have recently formed with municipal staff, one for case management and prevention and another for clinical consultation, and these groups meet monthly. Towns are coordinating when to host the next All-Staff Meeting.

Youth & Family Services is part of the **Community Health Resource Group** which gets local agencies/departments together for information sharing/support. This meeting is attended on a regular basis.

STAFF TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

Staff members are continuing to work on Post-Graduate Certificate in Advanced Clinical Practice for Children, Youth, and Families (CYF) through trainings at Boston College School of Social Work. The Certificate in Advanced Clinical Practice for Children, Youth, and Families provides a deep exploration of theoretical perspectives of attachment, trauma informed care, and neuroscience, as they relate to the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of these groups.

De-escalation, Diffusion and Self-Care for Library Staff: Christine Weitzel and Kristina Kozak participated in the Needham Public Library's professional development day to present on techniques on how to de-escalate and diffuse difficult situations and then how to engage in self-care. The presentation included whole-group techniques, and then small group break out scenarios and ended with meditation. The presentation lasted 90 minutes and was presented to approximately 30 staff members.

On September 12th, Christine Weitzel attended a training titled "Trauma Informed De-Escalation: Calming the "I" of the Storm" that was hosted by the MA Department of Public Health, Bureau of Substance Addiction Services & AdCare Educational Institute.

Playmaker University: Two clinical staff members are registered to attend Playmaker University hosted by Life is Good in October of this year. This training is a two day in-person training in Beverly, MA. "Life is good Playmakers is national movement, started in 1989, to heal and strengthen children – especially those whose lives have been deeply impacted by trauma." Playmakers Life is Good Training is a program that focuses on enhancing both physical and mental well-being through running and walking. It is designed to promote a positive mindset, personal growth, and community engagement. The training usually involves structured workouts, group sessions, and motivational elements, all aimed at helping participants improve their fitness levels while fostering a "Life is Good" philosophy. This philosophy emphasizes optimism, gratitude, and resilience, encouraging participants to find joy and purpose in their physical activities and daily lives.

Mr. Serio attended an in-person DBT training through the Boston Child Study Center in September. This immersive, introductory in-person four-day workshop introduced clinicians to the foundational principles and techniques essential to provide Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) to fidelity with an emphasis on working with adolescents and families, providing our clinical staff with further professional development to deliver the utmost quality of care to our families.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES:

Staffing Update: The two new positions funded by money from Children's Hospital have been filled. Youth & Family Services is excited to welcome Anthony Serio as the Outreach

Clinician and Kristina Kozak as the Community Training Coordinator. Both new employees started in June. We also have Grace Burnham joining the team as a full-time clinician in September. In addition, we have two graduate-level interns beginning in the fall.

Case Management Services: Youth & Family Services staff helped many families in need with various support such as camps, gym, YMCA memberships, after school programs, childcare and transportation. In addition, staff have been able to connect families with some specific mental health supports and wrap around services.

Youth & Family Services Resource Guide: A resource guide has been established, both in electronic and in paper form for the community to be aware of different resources and trainings that are available in Needham and surrounding communities. The following topics are explored: neurodiversity, disabilities, special education, school avoidance, mental health support, LGBTQIA+, substance use, domestic and/or interpersonal violence, suicide and self-harm, basic needs, eating disorders, and bullying. In each section, there is information about the topic, available trainings by the Department of Youth and Family Services, and available resources that take referrals.

Curriculum: As part of the new community training coordinator position, Ms. Kozak has been establishing new short-term curricula that are available for families in need.

A restorative justice training is being established as a program for students who have bullied others. This 6-session course is designed to explore relationship, respect, responsibility, repair, and reintegration and how they impact bullying.

A school avoidance training is being established. This will be a short-term program that occurs in-home and include counseling and parent training to increase a child's willingness to attend school. The tentative date for this program is December 1st.

A de-escalation program is also being established. This will be a short-term program to teach family members how to de-escalate a dysregulated family member. This program can occur in-home or at any private site. The tentative date for this program is December 1st.

Youth & Family Services' budget for FY25 has been approved by the finance committee and Town Meeting. There is a modest request for increased funds for expenditure in addition to keeping the FT ARPA funded position, moving this position to the operating budget.

Youth & Family Services continues to raise money for family in need by promoting the **Crisis Donation Fund**. There is now the ability to donate to this fund online electronically, making it easier for people to donate. Youth & Family Services has received a number of donations this holiday season. Most recently the Needham Community Council has donated \$5,000 and we continue to receive donations and support from residents towards this fund.

Interface Referral Service is a service that helps connect residents to therapeutic services when needed. Funds for this service were secured last year but the contract ends in June – HHS is working on the contract for FY25. BID-Needham and Needham Public Schools have generously offered to help fund the program as they have in the past. The hope is to keep these services as they help support residents, but they continue to increase their cost significantly, so staff are monitoring this.

Staff have been building our social media platforms in hope of reaching more community members with the information, programs, and events our department has to offer.

Facebook: Facebook.com/needhamyouthservices 755
Instagram: 640 Followers @NeedhamYouthServices
NotifyMe (Listserv): 1132 signed-up

Proposed schedule for FY 2025:

Wednesday, September 11 th	Town Hall
Wednesday, October 9th	Town Hall
Wednesday, November 13 th	Town Hall
Wednesday, December 11 th	Town Hall
Wednesday, January 8 th	Town Hall
Wednesday, February 12 th	Town Hall
Wednesday, March 12 th	Town Hall
Wednesday, April 9 th	Town Hall
Wednesday, May 14 th	Center at the Heights
Wednesday, June 11 th	Town Hall

Ms. Mullen made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Brienze seconded. Meeting adjourned at 6:23pm.

Notes Written By: Alyssa Cellucci
Reviewed By: Sara Shine, Director