



Stafford Family Services

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Judy K. Gardner, LMFT Executive Director

MINUTES – STAFFORD FAMILY SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD MEETING SEPTEMBER 7, 2017 -5:00 P.M.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Carol Davis, Pat Collin, Lt. Duncan, Cheryl Vail, Charlotte Hansen, Deb Winicki, Jen Arpin

YOUTH REPRESENTATIVES (non-voting): Malachi Campbell, Olivia Pease

MEMBERS ABSENT: Connor Slater, Tony Frassinelli (ex-officio)

STAFF: Brenda Henderson, Judy Gardner

I. The meeting was called to order at 5:02 p.m.

II. All members introduced themselves as there were two new youth representatives and one new Board member in attendance.

III. The revised Minutes from the March 2, 2017, meeting were approved (Cheryl Vail motion, Carol Davis second). Dr. Collin noted that the Board of Education did approve the policy relative to Narcan noted in the Minutes and that Stafford Family Services staff were trained as part of the process.

IV. Mr. Frassinelli was not present, but Judy Gardner updated the Board on the spending freeze issued by the First Selectman. This freeze will have minimal effect on program operations for Stafford Family Services as most of our expenses are program related. While the building was originally scheduled to be “rhinoshielded”, a bid will be issued to paint the exterior of the building and the actual painting will be delayed until fiscally prudent. The First Selectman also approved moving forward with the shift to an internal billing system. Brenda Henderson will begin training and determine a timeline for the transition. Internal billing will allow SFS to collect additional insurance payments because invoices will be submitted in a more timely fashion. This system will also allow our agency to track patient balances as they occur.

V. Ms. Henderson presented the final program and financial figures from the 2016 – 2017 fiscal year. A total of 282 new cases were opened. Ms. Gardner noted that some people only attend the intake and are still counted as new cases. Additionally, some people return to treatment at which time they are assigned a new case number. Financially a total of \$241,941 was collected in insurance payments for the fiscal year. This money goes into the Town’s General Fund. Since SFS only spent \$223,954 of its Town allocation Stafford Family Services operated at zero cost to the Town last

year and additionally added \$18,000 in pure income to the General Fund. Ms. Gardner expressed concern that this may not be replicated this fiscal year given cuts to the State grants on which we typically rely from DMHAS and SDE coupled with an increase in contracted per diem clinicians. Two interns that graduated in May, 2017 were hired as they are competent, qualified clinicians who have existing clients that benefit from their services. This allows us to serve additional clients. For July and August, 2017, 40 new cases have already been opened when, traditionally, there is less activity in the summer.

VI. Ms. Gardner reported that one client grievance had been filed since the last Board meeting. After meeting with the client, who felt they had been treated rudely by a staff member, it was determined that the client did not understand that SFS staff is not permitted to acknowledge clients in public due to confidentiality, and the grievance was resolved.

VII. Lt. Duncan provided a number of updates in Town aimed at reducing alcohol and drug use. There is a new billboard featuring Loki with a back-to-school message and 2000 Loki bookmarks have been made available to the schools. These two activities are funded through ERASE (East of the River Action for Substance Abuse Elimination), our regional action council, and Lt. Duncan noted it is an agency slated for consolidation in the current State budget proposals, which will affect available funding for Stafford. On August 16th Lt. Duncan made a presentation at the Senior Center regarding prescription drugs and distributed 40 lock boxes. There have been discussions with the Tolland County State Attorney to consider changes to how judges prosecute drug dealers in their attempt help reduce the flow of drugs into the area. Data regarding Narcan use in Town was presented, but this information only includes uses when the Police or hospital are involved. Family and friends can administer Narcan, and people don't necessarily go to the ER once they are revived, even though it is strongly advised. Ms. Winicki asked if there was a way to find out how many doses were actually sold and used, but this information cannot be collected. There have been three reported deaths in Stafford in 2017 from a drug overdose. Lt. Duncan discussed that the Police cannot make an arrest when providing Narcan even if heroin is present at the site because it would discourage people from seeking help.

Lt. Duncan thanked Dr. Collin for helping to organize the Community Safety Day that was held at the Middle School on September 1st. A DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) officer presented to the entire school regarding making good choices and then there were booths that included CPR, a drone, an exhibit from the Water Treatment Plant about how water gets filtered, and training on how to use fire extinguishers. TTM and the Rotary Club helped provide support for the day. Ms. Vail noted that this activity provides a chance for positive interactions with the students and the community. Ms. Winicki and Ms. Arpin noted that middle school age is the best time to influence decisions regarding safe behaviors. Ms. Vail pointed out that even if only a couple of kids change that is a great outcome.

There is an Internet Safety program at Rockville High School on September 19th from 7 – 8:30 p.m. that is open to the Public.

Ms. Winicki asked if homeschooled children could receive the Loki tee shirts and be included in future activities. Lt. Duncan will check about the tee shirts but indicated there are enough bookmarks. Ms. Winicki will provide Lt. Duncan the contact information for the Stafford Home School Facebook page. She also stated that there is a bulletin board at the library that serves as a resource to families that homeschool their children.

Ms. Arpin reported that in Willington they do not run prevention programs for high school aged children because these students attend EO Smith and Mansfield provides those services. While the Willington staff has been trained at Social Services to administer Narcan, the town doesn't have a local police force and relies on Troop C to provide services. The Willington Youth Services Bureau is considering a program relative to the 13 Reasons Why program, which is about a teenager who commits suicide and tells 13 peers their role in it to provide supports to teenagers that might be struggling with depression or suicidal thoughts. Dr. Collin talked about the Courage to Speak presentation as well as the Looking In Theater program from the CREC Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts that focus on topics around issues that teens face. The schools schedule the presentations to allow additional time for students to process the information from the programs with staff.

Mr. Campbell offered that his experience in Stafford is that kids are doing drugs because they are uncertain about their future. He thinks most of the drug use is recreational but he also said he doesn't spend time with students that might be using other drugs. He suggested that students would benefit from career guidance. Ms. Vail commented that she believes sometimes students are pressured to go to college when they would be better served with other options after high school. Ms. Hansen asked about summer jobs and other Board members suggested a career day at school to help students identify goals for after graduation.

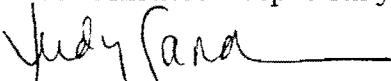
VIII. Ms. Gardner reported that we have experienced a 5% reduction from the DMHAS budget and another 5% cut is expected. We have not heard from SDE regarding its final funding levels.

Lt. Duncan stated that the Town has decided to hire another Police Officer, reducing its contract with the State Troopers, the latter of which costs \$200,000 for a State Trooper as opposed to a cost of \$80 – 90,000 for a town trooper.

IX. The next meeting is December 7, 2017.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

These Minutes Respectfully Submitted,


Judy Gardner