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Stafford Family Services

2022 MAR -7 AM 10:13

21 Hyde Park Road · Stafford Springs, Connecticut 06076

Tel: (860) 684-4239 • Fax: (860) 684-0511

E-Mail: family.services@staffordct.org

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Judy K. Gardner, LMFT Executive Director

MINUTES – STAFFORD FAMILY SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MARCH 3, 2022 – 5:00 P.M.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Steven Moccio, Officer Taylor, Jennifer Halstrom, Rachel Ayn Konick, Jen Ohlendorf, Sal Titus

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE: Ella Ohlendorf

MEMBERS ABSENT: Andrew “Osmar” Starkey, Brian Bradway, Judith Mordasky

STAFF: Judy Gardner, Brenda Henderson

- I. The meeting was called to order at 5:04 p.m. Introductions were made.
- II. The Minutes of the December 2, 2021 meeting were reviewed and approved (J. Ohlendorf motion, E. Ohlendorf second).
- III. Brenda Henderson presented the budget and client numbers for the time period July 1, 2021 – February 28, 2022. There have been 90 new client cases opened which is a reduction from previous years (not including COVID). These numbers are down in part due to lack of staff available as SFS currently has 3 interns and this is fewer than usual so not as many clients can be seen. This reduction in available appointments has also reduced income and while we are generating more income than during COVID fewer interns and fewer licensed clinicians has reduced billable hours. Ms. Henderson noted that there is an increase the number of clients with private insurance and we cannot bill private insurance for interns and unlicensed clinicians. Ms. Gardner explained that funding from DMHAS and DCF and the Town’s financial support allows SFS to see clients who do not have insurance or cannot pay their co-pay. Ms. Konick asked if there was a way to re-purpose some of the income to hire new staff and Ms. Halstrom asked why the income generated by SFS goes to the Town’s General Fund and not back into programming for SFS. There was no answer to this question. Ms. Gardner explained that one of the goals when she was hired was to make SFS budget neutral, with the money allocated by the Town balanced with income generated by the program.
- IV. Mr. Titus introduced himself as the new First Selectman and explained that he is working on preparing the first annual budget for the Town. This is being complicated by the recent death of the Town’s Chief Financial Officer which is a tragic loss for the Town.

V. No critical incidents or client grievances to report.

VI. Ms. Gardner distributed the Quality Assurance Plan for the current year. The plan will be updated for the June meeting and a new plan developed for the next year.

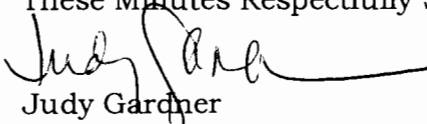
VII. Officer Taylor reported that with the COVID pandemic and people being shut in at home there has been an increase in reported domestic violence cases. There is also an increase in juvenile crime. They are seeing an increase in untimely deaths related to both alcohol and opioid overdoses. The police are finding more suboxone related issues and Ms. Konick explained that suboxone inhibits the desire for heroin but if someone who is not addicted takes it they can get high so it has a street value. Ms. Halstrom asked where people that are issued an EC (emergency commitment) are taken and Officer Taylor explained that the Police try and assess if the person has had previous treatment someplace that worked for them and location considering family obligations.

VIII. There was a long discussion about how to address the increasing problems in the Town and many suggestions were made. Ms. Konick and Ms. Henderson noted that children need a place to go after school and Mr. Titus reported that the Teen Center, which he had started many years ago and is now closed, was supposed to be a place where youth in town could have access to supportive adults and homework club. Ms. Halstrom noted that youth need positive peer supports and to make connections to be successful. Mr. Moccio noted that there has been a decline in parent involvement in the Town recently and efforts to engage parents have had very limited success. E. Ohlendorf suggested that as her class president she could design a survey for students to take that would identify the types of activities they would want to participate in after school if they are not doing sports. J. Ohlendorf noted the issue with transportation as the late bus is at 3 p.m. leaving lots of time for youth to be home without adult supports or access to programming. The point was made that there need to be supervisors for any activities and places shouldn't just be drop off locations for youth. Officer Taylor suggested that high school students could volunteer with elementary students. Ms. Gardner reported that the committee working on distributing Federal ARPA funds in the Town is willing to look at activities that support positive youth development and Mr. Titus noted that he is supporting a return to the Summer Recreation program and the opportunities this can provide for both activities and employment for children in town.

IX. The next meeting of the Advisory Board is Thursday, June 2, 2022.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m. (Moccio motion, Titus second).

These Minutes Respectfully Submitted,


Judy Gardner