



Stafford Family Services

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Judy K. Gardner, LMFT Executive Director

MINUTES – STAFFORD FAMILY SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD MEETING SEPTEMBER 7, 2023 – 5:00 P.M.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Steven Moccio, Brian Bradway, Jen Halstrom, Rachel Ayn Konick, Jen Ohlendorf, Ella Ohlendorf

MEMBERS ABSENT: Sgt. Joseph Strogoff, Bruce Taylor, Andrew “Osmar” Starkey, Sal Titus (ex-officio)

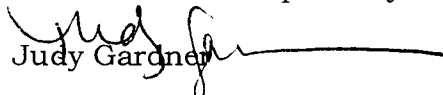
STAFF: Judy Gardner, Brenda Henderson

- I. The meeting was called to order at 5:09 p.m.
- II. The Minutes of the June 1, 2023 meeting were approved (Bradway motion, Moccio second).
- III. The financial report and new cases information was presented by Ms. Henderson. It was noted that 3 new interns just started the day before and we have been accepting new clients for the past couple of weeks now that we will have staff to meet with them. Private insurance revenues are down a little because of the lack of new clients. Ms. Gardner reported that there will be a significant increase in revenues starting in January 2024 because we will be able to bill for Medicare for licensed clinicians (not interns or licensed associates). Ms. Gardner also reported that DCF decided to change how they were allocating the additional supplemental funding that had been awarded by the General Assembly last year and instead of awarding equal funding to each town DCF decided to allocate the funds based on population which significantly reduced Stafford’s allocation (from \$14,000 to \$3,000). Ms. Gardner has presented her concerns to CYSA and is talking with other smaller YSBs that were negatively affected by this change. Ms. Henderson reported that the Town has changed how they track budget expenditures and now the figure in the financial report includes salaries for the 3 fulltime SFS employees, the evening receptionists and the benefits associated with these positions. To help balance the Town’s budget SFS cut \$15,000 out of the Town line items for counseling and supervision as the fulltime clinician will now also be a supervisor for the interns. This does reduce the number of hours she is available to see clients.
- IV. There was no report from the First Selectman as he was not present at the meeting.
- V. There were no critical incidents or client grievances this past quarter.

- VI. The draft of the final annual strategic plan was distributed and reviewed. Suggestions for the strategic plan for 2023-2024 include tracking the results of the PHQ-9 depression scale that has been added to the intake packet and working closely with the school system to ensure a referral system when results of their depression screening tool, the DESSA, indicates a need for clinical intervention. Mr. Mocchio noted that this year the middle school has separated physical education from health class (trimesters) so there can be more specialized focus on health issues like dating violence. Miss Ohlendorf noted that in her experience students need to learn what to do if a friend discloses a mental health issue to them. The final report was approved as written (Mocchio motion, Bradway second).
- VII. Mr. Moccio reported that the Board of Education is using the LPC funding this year to purchase vape detectors for the middle and high schools. Miss Ohlendorf asked what the consequences were for a student found using illegal substances and Mr. Moccio noted that the case goes to expulsion for anyone bringing drugs into the school and for cases of students found in possession of drugs it is an individualized approach. Ms. Halstrom asked what Connecticut's approach is to harm reduction as in Massachusetts Narcan is being distributed in a variety of community settings including hospitals, public housing complexes, clinics and justice-involved programs. Ms. Gardner raised the option of using a special fund set aside for substance use to purchase Narcan for clients or their families who are at risk of overdosing and not willing or able to purchase Narcan on their own. Ms. Halstrom noted that she carries Narcan on her person all the time just in case it is needed. Ms. Konick recommended school-wide training on the risks of overdose from a variety of drugs and Miss Ohlendorf asked if the schools have Narcan (Mr. Mocchio noted that Narcan is in the nurse's office in the middle and high schools) and Miss Ohlendorf stated that it is hard to "scare" kids about this. Mr. Bradway asked if the police can investigate at the schools and Mr. Moccio responded that they can only involve the school resource officer if the school's investigation discovers that a crime has been committed.
- VIII. Mr. Moccio recommended that the new First Selectman be invited to the December board meeting so they can have an understanding of what SFS does and the challenges the community faces in relation to mental health and substance use.
- IX. The next meeting of the Advisory Board will be on Thursday, December 7, 2023.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 6:05 p.m. (Bradway motion, Halstrom second, Ella third).

These Minutes Respectfully Submitted,


Judy Gardner