



RECEIVED

By Town Clerk's Office at 12:30 pm, Apr 13, 2021

TOWN OF BURLINGTON

Youth & Family Services

Board of Directors' Meeting
January 13, 2021

Present: Board Members Anne Marie Browne, Martha Simon, Marilyn Langley, Roberta Mills, Rick Picariello (arrived at 6:40pm), and Christine Shruhan; Executive Director and Jennifer Priest; BYFS Administrative Secretary

Absent: Linda Collins

I. CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 6:08 p.m.

II. MINUTES: The board voted to approve the minutes of the September 16, 2020 meeting. Roll call: Anne Marie Brown, Martha Simon, Marilyn Langley, and Roberta Mills; all members voting to approve. Rick Picariello was not present at time of the vote. 4-0-0

III. DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

A. Agency Update:

a. Fees collected since last meeting \$3,285.00

b. The department is up and running with COVID procedures in place. Clients continue to be seen via telehealth. We have a handful of clients who have chosen to wait to resume treatment until in person can be offered again. Around 97% of our case load are currently receiving treatment. Jennifer has been sending monthly invoices to clients to collect the fees monthly.

c. Open board seats were brought to the boards' attention since the passing of the chair Ron Mackenzie and Dave Cullen moving out of town. Christine would like to see if an elementary, middle school and/or high school parent might be interested in participating on the board.

d. With the death of Ron Mackenzie, the chair the board voted in a new chair. Martha nominated Vice-Chair Marilyn Langley as chair of the board. Anne Marie Browne Seconded. Roll call: Anne Marie Brown, Martha Simon, Marilyn Langley, and Roberta Mills; all members voting to approve. Rick Picariello was not present at time of the vote. 4-0-0. Martha Simon nominated Roberta Mills as the temporary Co-Chair; seconded by Marilyn Langley. Roll call: Anne Marie Brown, Martha Simon, Marilyn Langley, and Roberta Mills; all members voting to approve. Rick Picariello was not present at time of the vote. 4-0-0.

e. Budget update – The Clinical Supervisor position remains open as a result of the town's hiring freeze. Christine was given approval to hire a clinician (up to 19 hours) on a temporary basis. She has reached out to a former intern who will be covering some if not all of the 19 hours.



Christine reported that at the last department head meeting the conversation around budgets was the same as previous conversations. The town anticipates continued budget cuts. Martha asked what the vote was at September's Town Meeting. Christine replied they approved the budget cuts brought to them and the hiring freeze. Martha stated there is still a need for mental health services and inquired as to how the police department was able to hire. Martha made it clear she was not against the new hires at the police department if they have shift that need to be filled. Martha stated that they have a need and we have a need and BYFS need is just as important. Roberta agreed and stated there is an increase need for mental health services during the pandemic. The board all agreed some sort of support for Christine and the position was needed. Marilyn suggested drafting a letter from the board. Christine also brought up that when we go back to 'normal' the need for mental health services will continue increase. We saw this happen when students returned to school in the fall. The school is seeing an increased need for mental health services for kids who prior to the pandemic were doing well. Martha agreed and expressed that there will be a lot of trauma and grief as we return to normal. Martha also asked if it would be possible to have the letter drafted for town meeting in 2 weeks. The purpose being to bring the difficult budget cycle to the town meeting members attention and have staffing back for July 1st 2021. Roberta suggested having parents who use the service sign the letter as well. Anne Marie suggested posting the letter to the parent's network on Facebook and having the community help support the letter to town meeting, the town administrator and selectman. Jennifer suggested a google form to sign in support of the letter and anonymous letter would be welcome to be dropped off at the office in the mail slot.

f. The department has already started interviewing Interns for the 2021-2022 academic year and have hired interns for 2 of the positions. It is still unclear whether the department will have 3 or 4 positions; in part because of COVID requirements. Roberta asked if we had the space to accommodate 4 students. Christine explained that the group room is large enough to accommodate 2 interns in that room.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Police-** Anne Marie reported that they have decreased the number of people they are holding at the station to meet COVID guidelines. Mental health crisis calls have increased along with reports of domestic abuse now that everyone is home. Karen DiRienzo's position is currently funded by a Cummings Foundation Grant which is set to expire in October. The department is looking to fund the mental health and PAARI positions as part of the police department budget. Anne Marie announced she will be retiring as of June 1, 2021.
- B. Schools** – Martha provided an update on the December school committee meeting. Chrissy Concesion and Joe Attubato reported that mental health hospitalizations for high school students increased this fall. The guidance department has also been screening for increases in stress and depression and are finding the numbers have increased significantly. The school department continues to address the needs of students of color. Affinity groups were set up at the middle and high schools with a type of affinity group being started at one of the elementary schools. A support group for teacher of color was created as well. It was reported that teachers have worked on making classrooms more inclusive around ethnicity. Martha shared a story that one teacher almost quit the first week because they were overwhelmed. The student school committee member reported that the teacher supported the students around the US capital events last week and have been aware of the students' social emotional health. Christine mentioned that the Burlington School Department was recently chosen to be part of CoIIN, which is a pilot program aimed at assessing

and addressing the mental health issues of students. The state chose a handful of districts to participate and Burlington was one of them. An assessment was sent to parents and teachers. Thus far 500 parents and 150 teachers from the district have responded. The goal is a district wide approach in addressing the social, emotional and mental health needs of the students. The group will be looking at the data that is collected and work on developing a district wide webpage designed to provide parents with resources on the Social emotional health of students. Christine may also join one of the evening conversation forums requested by parents. The plan was for staff from each grade level to facilitate one of three nights.

BYFS staff will be helping the book club that BHS guidance has been offering. The focus of the books is on mental health issues. The group has reported all of the books are being checked out of the library however, the attendance for the Zoom discussion meeting has been low.

Christine will be meeting with Christine Conceison to review the data on referrals to William James' INTERFACE. BYFS is hoping to be creative with presenting the Teen Depression/Suicide curriculum that we've taught at BHS. Staff may structure something that is prerecorded. BYFS is also looking into a parent component.

BCAT- Christine met with BCAT in December. They will be airing a segment on mental health and the pandemic this month.

- C. **Clergy-** Rick reported that checking on congregant's mental health during difficult times is much more difficult with how things are currently set up. A lot of things that were taken for granted such as hospital visits and the grieving process that a funeral offers is very different since COVID. We are learning how to help when you don't see folks in your community every week to check in on them and the grieving process. There has been a significant amount of outreach in regards to depression and feeling lonely and it being hard.

Students at Mount Hope were remote the week before and after Christmas. They had some positive cases that required one class to go fully remote. Teachers were struggling with teaching remotely given this is not how they were trained to teach. Rick shared that it took some getting used to seeing the kids masked up and distanced.

V. NEXT MEETING: March 29th, 2021 6:00 pm

VI. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m. Roll call Martha Simon, Marilyn Langley, Roberta Mills, Rick Picariello, and Anne Marie Brown all responded Yes. 5-0-0

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Shruhan, LMHC
Executive Director