

**Town of Barnstable
Human Services Committee
Meeting Minutes
February 11, 2014**

Names in bold indicate action items.

Present:

Scott Fitzgerald, Chair, Charles Hetzel, Heidi Nelson, Paul Thompson, (members), and Jen Cullum, Town Council Liaison to the committee

Absent:

Bill Doherty, Roy Richardson, Mark Thomas

Guests:

Gina Hurley, Director of Student Services, Barnstable school district

Approve Meeting Minutes from January 10, 2014:

The minutes of the January 14, 2014 meeting will be distributed before the March 11, 2014 meeting for approval at the March 11, 2014 meeting.

Review and Determination of Next Steps for Human Services Committee

Gina Hurley reviewed the services available through her department: counseling, nursing, mental health and substance abuse treatment services, services for English-language learners, data collection on homelessness and prevention of bullying.

Mental health services were funded for a drug and alcohol counselor one day per week through a United Way grant, the services were expanded to two day per week and continued with a Tower Foundation grant, plus sponsoring community forums and screening kindergartners for social and emotional challenges.

When asked about trends she sees at the schools, Gina said like everywhere she is seeing the shift from marijuana and alcohol to pills and heroine as the focus of drug abuse prevention and awareness, and more mental health issues related to kids' struggles to regulate emotions and increased stress and anxiety.

Jen asked Gina and the group, what is the role for the town? The schools play a key role during the day, however Gina recommended that the drive for prevention and education should be community-wide- helping kids to connect positively after school and in the evenings, and including all the schools not just the public schools. Instructional demands limit the time and resources available during the school day.

Jen shared that she and Heidi are on the newly formed Barnstable County Substance Abuse Council. Jen also promoted the idea of connecting townspeople through the town website to resources that might be compiled by the Council.

There was discussion about policy approaches to prescribing opiates (requiring parents signatures on prescriptions and promoting alternatives to opiates for pain relief). There was also discussion about the 'wellness credit' that high school students complete, which can be either a health or PE course. In grade school, the school counselors do a social skills lesson once a week for half of the school year.

Paul asked, what services does the school provide to the parents when problems are identified? Gina replied that beyond abuse situations, the schools are not tasked with outreaching to parents who may need services.

Charlie described his family's interaction with workers from JRI and HELP, and suggested that a speaker from the probation department or the Family Support Program might be helpful to the committee. Heidi referenced Kathy Quattromoni's program on truancy prevention through the district attorney's office. Jen hopes to help the Barnstable Youth Commission expand to include more students, and perhaps Cape-wide. Jen talked about an idea that she wants to promote whereby kids in older grades connect with and mentor kids in younger grades.

Discussion of topics for Future Agendas

We discussed defining our working topic going forward as 'substance abuse prevention for youth.' Jen encapsulated the idea as follows, 'The Town of Barnstable cares about your Family.' Ideas so far include: enriching the Youth Commission, establishing a prevention partnership for Barnstable or the mid-Cape, and sponsoring more forums for the community. In response to Charlie's question about including speakers who provide services to teens who have been identified as needing services, Scott explained that the focus of the group is on prevention.

Guests for our March meeting:

Patty from Gosnold and the Falmouth Prevention Partnership (**Jen to invite**)

Stacie Peugh from the YMCA (**Heidi to invite**)

Joe Izzo from the Hyannis Youth and Community Center was also identified as a possible guest.

We continue to **defer the following agenda items:**

Formation of sub-committees

Resource library

New Business and Items of Communication from the Town or Interested Parties

None were raised.

Adjourn

Scott adjourned the meeting at 5:30 p.m. (Charlie motion, Scott second)

Respectfully submitted:

Heidi Nelson
Committee Member and CEO, Duffy Health Center