

Bedford Youth & Family Services Committee

MINUTES

Thursday, November 14, 2019

Attendance: Marcia Morgan, At-large; Marge Heckman, At-large; Sharon Curtin, Visitor; Heidi Porter, Director of Health and Human Services; Mary Seymour, Board of Health; Emily Mitchell, Select Board Liaison; Ann Guay, School Committee Liaison; Jeff Wardwell, Police Department Liaison; Scott Jones, Police Department; Amy Hamilton, Recreation Department Liaison.

Minutes: The minutes of September 12, 2019 were approved.

Welcome and Introductions: Heidi welcomed visitor Sharon Curtin and all members introduced themselves.

Youth and Family Services Department

- Christopher Bang has been hired as the new community outreach social worker for the town. He has a background with Child Services and has a number of ideas about new ways to engage with the community.
- “Talk Saves Lives”, a suicide prevention program is scheduled for Monday, November 18th. A similar program was presented to staff 3 years ago and well received. RSVPs – so far 20 people have registered.
- Safe Homes directory update is complete and directories are being sent out.
- Beacon Santa applications are coming in. Department also connecting people to resources for the holidays, including local holiday dinners.
- Vaping Prevention grant in conjunction with Concord and Carlisle.
 - Research on curriculum
 - Parent meetings
 - Community coffees
 - One parent education has already occurred in Concord
 - December 3rd Teen Vaping program in Bedford
 - Mint and menthol ban coming up in bill currently in legislature
 - Dr. Geller, local pediatrician, has agreed to do PSA for grant which will be shown on Bedford TV and at the high school
- Vaping and e-cigarette alert sent from schools and the health department. Other actions include:
 - department has bought some vaping paraphernalia to use for parent education
 - 2 vape detectors have been installed at the High school that send an alert to the assistant principal. Questions arose as to the possible consequences for students and currently a 3 day out of school suspension is being used. Concerns were raised among attendees as to the efficacy of that approach and whether an in-school suspension would be more appropriate. Jeff reported that the policy is still being evaluated as currently all kids found in the bath room are sent to the office. Ann will confer with the school committee as well.
 - Heidi reported on the diversion program that allows for a 1 day suspension and then 3 day after school educational program on vaping. These suspensions are not supposed to appear on a student’s record.
- Wait list for counseling is still high. In 400 responses from the Mental Health Survey, the wait list for access to any provider is noted as a chief concern. Deb, current Eliot contract contact, is open

to increased hours, including evenings. Clients can also get appointments at the Eliot clinic in Concord. Working on getting more hours from Elliot.

Heidi is also working with Alicia Linsey at the high school to work with Interface, a program at William James College that makes calls to help clients find providers. Residents can call and will be given 2-3 names of possible providers within 2 weeks and an appointment within 1 month. The annual fee for the program is \$13,000 and would be shared half and half between the town and the schools. It would provide a website for town residents to access the program. Ann asked whether or not the program covered help with hospitalization questions. It does not.

- Department has made purchase of gift cards to give out to residents in need. Have gotten some donations.
- The Department has put out articles in the media and on Facebook on the Great American Smokeout, vaping issues, and the Good Samaritan law. They have a bike “library” with bikes and helmets ready to lend out to residents.
- Annual Walkabout is on Dec. 7th

School Committee

- Ann Guay reported that there is currently an opening on the School Committee after a member stepped down. The committee will appoint someone to complete the term until town elections in March.
- Budget in in process. Biggest challenge is determining the number of students!
- Jon Sills continues work on a portrait of a Bedford student – what do we want to see?
- MCAS results are in and not as good as past years in some areas. Looking at where schools need to focus their attention. Patricia Clifford, new assistant superintendent is from Belmont, a well performing school there so she may have good input.

Board of Health

- Adopted temporary ban on sale of vaping products initiated by Governor so any enforcement action could be taken by the BOH if necessary.
- DPW focusing on tick problem especially on South Road and Springs Road playing fields. Have a 2 part plan for fencing to errant catch balls and mowing to keep vegetation down as well as stone border near fence. Jeff mentioned use of tick tubes and Heidi said consultant advised multiple approaches for the best results including possible pelletized spraying twice a year and consideration of deer culling, a very sensitive topic.

Select Board

- Emily reported that the Select Board will set tax rates on Monday, November 18th
- Select Board have heard a presentation about establishing a Bedford Cultural District

Recreation Department

- Amy reports good enrollment in fall rec programs
- In response to a question about financial aid, Amy reported that the Recreation Dept gives out lots of financial aid including \$20,000 for summer adventures last summer
- Ann asked a question about programs for kids with disabilities and Amy replied that the department works with families to help kids participate as they are able.

Police Department

- Jeff reports increased numbers of kids at the HS and MS with mental health related issues

- Increase in incidents of sexual assaults and harassment
- School uses Advocates for crisis situations