

**YOUTH COMMISSION MINUTES
JUNE 23, 2022**

Attendance:

Board Members: Sandra Scott, Sherry Clark, Joan Clementi, Gily Schneider-Nachum, Casey Rickli, Jennifer Lipton-O'Connor

Staff Members: June David-Fors, Director and Doreen Genna, Office Assistant

Student Guest: Sherry Clark introduced Landon Jorgensen, an ARHS student interested in joining the Youth Commission as a Student Liaison

Selectmen Liaison: Kristen Wixted

1. Call Meeting to Order: Motion made by Gily Schneider-Nachum, Seconded by Sherry Clark
2. Date of Next Meeting: August 18, 2022
3. Review of Minutes: April, May and June 2022 Minutes will be reviewed at the next meeting

4. Director's Report:

- There was discussion about the Selectmen's Community Forum held on June 16, 2022. The purpose of the Forum was for Selectmen to receive input and ideas from residents about how to spend ARPA Funds. Sherry Clark, Joan Clementi and Sandra Scott presented at the Forum to support the need for additional staffing for the Department of Family & Youth Services.

Sherry stated that she felt good about the meeting. She said that many of the other residents who presented on different ideas also supported the need for both mental health services and additional staff for Family & Youth Services.

Sherry also reported that the Selectmen have received many e-mails in support of adding staff to Family & Youth Services. Jennifer Lipton asked what the next steps will be. The Selectmen will review and discuss the information presented by residents.

- INTERFACE Referral Service has reported a "tsunami of need" for mental health services, impacting the wait time for residents to receive an appointment from 14 days to 40 days. During this time, Family & Youth Services is providing "Bridge Counseling Services" to those residents who cannot wait due to the seriousness of their issues.

Jennifer asked about this process. June stated that those residents in most need are given priority, until they can be seen by a therapist through INTERFACE.

June also stated that INTERFACE reported to her that they have more than 100 new communities waiting to contract with them.

- June described the Kick-Off event for "Be Well Northborough" held on June 22, 2022. It was very successful and well-attended with hundreds of adults and children participating in this event.

- Jenn Bruneau, the Library Director and June worked in partnership to bring the “Mental Health First Aid Training” to Northborough. This training will be provided by Shrewsbury Youth & Family Services. It is a free training, so there will not be a need to utilize ARPA Funds through “Be Well Northborough.”

The training will be offered to town employees and the general public during the daytime. Board Members asked if a future training could be held in the evening to accommodate families. June said that she believes there will be additional trainings, so, for the next one we can request evening hours.

- June followed-up with Jennifer’s request to receive and discuss the mission statements for both Family & Youth Services and the Youth Commission. A copy of each mission statement was handed out to Board Members and discussed.

A question was raised about what the procedure would be if Board Members wanted to make changes to the Youth Commission Mission Statement. Joan said that it may have to be presented as a warrant at a Town Meeting. June will follow up with the Town Clerk to clarify the procedure.

Jennifer stated that she just wanted to see the mission statements.

- Sherry spoke about the next steps involved in applying for ARPA Funds to increase staffing levels of Family & Youth Services. The application would be submitted to the Selectmen and John Coderre. It was recommended that it would be beneficial for Board Members to write a statement to the Selectmen to confirm their support of their ARPA request. The majority of Board Members agreed with this idea.

Jennifer said that she would first like to get more information about the role of the counseling position going from part-time to full-time. June said that this information was discussed at prior meetings in which Jennifer was not in attendance. June gave a recap of what had been previously discussed.

Casey Rickly asked what the full-time staff member would do. June replied that this staff member could provide new programs such as a support group for parents of children with mental health issues; a program to support teens, etc.

June stated that with our current staffing level we do not have the capacity to provide such programming.

- During the meeting Doreen discussed her work with helping residents to secure housing and other resources. June said that the work is very involved and complex. Doreen explained what it entails to assist residents including the extensive work she does to help them complete their applications for housing, legal services, and other resources. Jennifer asked Doreen what her credentials were.
- Sherry asked about a safety net for students during the summer. The ARPA funding could provide summer programs for teens.
- Jennifer expressed her frustration with the Youth Commission. She stated, “this is why I am so frustrated with this group.” It is due to the lack of progress over the last year. She reported that she is very unhappy with this group. She said that there seems to be discussion but no action. For instance, she recommended a mindfulness group. Sherry said this program could be supported by the ARPA Funds.

June wondered if the Youth Commission may not be a good fit for her, as she often expresses frustration and unhappiness about the meetings and members.

- At one point during the meeting, June identified that the atmosphere in the meeting was uncomfortable. June was especially concerned that a student was attending this meeting for the first time, and they were witnessing a tense and uncomfortable atmosphere.

June apologized to the student and reassured him that this meeting is uncharacteristic of any prior meetings. She stated that this has never occurred over the past 14 years that she has been here.

- Jennifer requested to follow up with June and a Board Member to discuss her concerns. June said that she would reach out to her to schedule a time to meet.

5. Board Members:

- Board Members spoke about a plan to recruit High School Student Liaisons to the Youth Commission for the Fall of 2022. The first step is to review the current application for students to submit.
- Board Members reviewed the current Student Liaison Application. Joan made the suggestion to take out a sentence from the second bullet. Sherry made a motion to approve, Sandy seconded it.
- The Board agreed to add the Election of Officers under Other Business.

6. Other Business:

Election of Officers:

Joan Clementi made a motion for Sherry Clark to become Chair, seconded by Sandy Scott

Sherry Clark made a motion for Gily Schneider-Nachum to become Co-Chair, seconded by Sandy Scott

Jennifer Lipton offered to be Secretary, Sandy Scott motioned, seconded by Gily Schneider-Nachum

7. Adjourn:

Motion to Adjourn made by Gily Schneider-Nachum, seconded by Sherry Clark