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TOWN OF BURLINGTON

Youth & Family Services

Board of Directors' Meeting January 18, 2023

Present: Board Members Roberta Mills, Martha Simon, Melissa Interest, Karen DiRienzo, Becky Norum, Manisha Parwani, Christine Shruhan; Executive Director and Jennifer Priest; BYFS Administrative Secretary

Absent: Chais DiMaggio, Linda Collins

I. CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m.

II. MINUTES: The board voted to approve the minutes of the September 12, 2022 meeting. 6-0-0 Manisha was not present for the vote

III. DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

A. Agency Update:

- a.** Fees collected since the September meeting – \$7,043.00
- b.** Staffing/Cases – The 4th quarter statistics show the department provided services to 222 residents. Staffing is currently (2) 35 hour positions (2) 30 hour positions (1) 22 hour position and (1) 19 hour position. The 19-hour position is funded through ARPA and will end at the end of August 2023. The department does not currently have a wait list.
- c.** Group – the group program is currently running winter groups; which include yoga/ self-expression and rock climbing.
- d.** Youth Homelessness Grant Update: Christine explained that grantees were expected to contribute 25% of the total amount of the grant. The department applied for and was granted a waiver. Included in the funding is a 2 year full time position. The position was posted and 7 applications have been received. Christine also noted that a portion of the funding can be used to address barriers that prevent youth from accessing housing. For example assistance with obtaining a driver license, outstanding utility bills etc. Roberta expressed being impressed with the flexibility of the funds.

The Federal government has also provided staff that assists grant recipients throughout the entire grant cycle. At present, Christine and Jess attend weekly meetings. Local community partners like Community Teamwork are also grant recipients. They have been involved in other federal grants and have been an asset in providing resources and answering questions. If the grant is successful, the town will continue to receive annual funding provided the program continues. Christine attended the Select Board meeting last week to share the news about the grant with the community. Martha asked about working with the schools and Christine stated that BYFS reached out to Christina Ciccolini, the youth homelessness liaison for the Burlington Public School system, when applying to get her input on how many students could be serviced through the grant. The plan is to include Christina in the interview process and to collaborate with the school department throughout the grant cycle.



- e. BACC Gala – the event will take place on February 4th. Christine was able to fill the table. Raffles items the department is donating are Celtic tickets and gift certificate to a spa. The evening is typically as follows: - a toast, dinner, raffle and dancing. In the past, the event has raised around \$3,000 - \$4,000 for each of the nonprofit organizations.
- f. Depression Suicide classes – Staff conducted depression/suicide classes at BHS in November. They will return in the spring to present the curriculum to the other half of the freshman class. The curriculum helps students identify the warning signs, provides them with tools on how to help someone struggling with depression and suicidal thoughts, and most importantly to tell a trusted adult. Staff work with teachers to ensure students for whom this might be difficult, get appropriate support. Roberta asked about starting something like this at the middle school. Christine explained the history of the curriculum and is open to working with the middle school.

IV. COMMUNITY UPDATES:

- A. **SEPAC** (Special Education Parent Advisory Council): Becky updated the board on SEPAC. Working on building relationship with the new director. A new class has started at the middle school for high needs students who are normally out of district placements. Martha helped explain how the DSC program at Pine Glen. This year is the first year the students of this program reached middle school. The program is funded from the accommodated account. The schools are contracted with NECC (New England Center for Children) staff to support the program this year. If all goes well, the plan is to staff the program with school department employees and use NECC for training/resource. Roberta asked about the nursing needs of the students. Becky explained that the needs of the students in the program is a mixture of developmental and physical disabilities. The nursing ration at the middle school is at 1.5 nurses at this time.
- B. **Schools:** Martha provided the board with an update. The multi-tiered instruction in academics and Social emotional learning are being used at the schools. This method has 3 tiers i.e.: Tier 1 everyone gets general instruction, Tier 2 small groups, and Tier 3 individual instruction. Chrissy Conceison received a grant to purchase telehealth for the district. The program is call Cartwheel and services students' grades 5-12. It offers assistance for Spanish and Portuguese speaking students/families.

The vacant Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) position will be filled. Mr. Porch left in September after the school year had started. The plan is to fill the Assistant Superintendent position and then fill the DEI position. While discussing this Becky shared that 3 black school employees at the administrative level resigned around the same time frame, and how it reflects poorly on the town and the schools. She expressed concern for how the situation is affecting students in the district.

ELL (English Language Learners) 50-60 languages spoken in the homes here in Burlington. ELPAC (English Learner Parent Advisory Council) group is up and running they have offered workshops like how to sign up for sports, pot luck and other great resources.

- C. **Transportation:** Melissa shared that the transportation committee gave its final report in the November Select Board meeting. The committee's recommendation was to hire a Transportation Coordinator for the town. There is just too many parts to this and having one person in charge would benefit the town in this area. Member Melissa Massardo applied for Grant funding and some money was received for signage and lines at Fox Hill School. This was to address traffic issues near the Fox Hill School.
- D. **Burlington Police Department Mental Health Services:** Karen updated the board that communication with the schools has increased. In November school threat assessment team training happened. Those in attendance were 2 officers, school resource officers, school staff (teachers and principals), 2 BYFS staff and Karen. Karen stated the training was helpful and now the town has a Threat Assessment Team.

V. NEW BUSINESS

- A. On March 23, 2023, remote participation will be end. The only option will be the one that was established by the select board in 2019 for being out of town or sick. Board member will need to contact chair for permission to be remote and quorum needs to be held in person.
- B. Change May meeting to 5/1/23

VI. NEXT MEETING: March 6, 2023 6:00 pm

C. VII. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m. A motion was made by Roberta and seconded by Becky. voted to approve 5-0-0

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Shruhan, LMHC
Executive Director