

Minutes for 1/28/2014
Norwalk Youth Services Advisory Board Meeting
4:00pm-4:55pm Room 231 City Hall

Present:

Jasen Getner - Youth Services Dept.
Elizabeth Murdoch - Family & Children's Agency (FCA)
David Walenczyk - Director Youth Services (Staff to Board)
Sharon Preston - Dept. of Children & Families (DCF)
Lt. Ashley Gonzalez - Police Dept.
Mike Moccaie - Parks & Recreation Dept.
Ed Green - State of CT Juvenile Probation
Corrine Weston - SONO Alliance (Community Member) guest

Absent:

Theresa Argondezzi - Health Dept.
Joseph Russo - Board of Education
Darlene Young - Mayor's Office SYEP

The meeting began promptly at 4:00pm. David Walenczyk acted as chair for the meeting.

A copy of the minutes previously submitted to the Board electronically was presented for acceptance. Lt. Ashley Gonzalez made a motion to accept the minutes, seconded by Ed Green, unanimously approved.

Dave Walenczyk provided an update on the A.R.T. program and reported that the current grant had been extended through 06/30/2014 with funds expected to be expended by that date. Mr. Walenczyk also reported it is the intention of the Department to maintain the program albeit at a much reduced level of functioning (fewer groups) until alternate funding/grants could be procured to expand the program to its current level of functioning. Mr. Walenczyk reported there were 46 active counseling cases and a steady flow of incoming referrals.

Jasen Getner provided updated statistics on JRB caseload activity, with 56 active cases and 7 of those cases being from Westport. Mr. Getner noted A.R.T. groups are not being operated at Briggs due to a lack of resolving logistical issues to support the program at the school. All A.R.T. groups are currently being offered at City Hall.

Mr. Walenczyk reported on the status of the Department's 2014-2015 Budget request which was seeking to elevate the Assistant JRB Coordinator position from part-time to full-time and to procure a vehicle dedicated to full time Department use. Mr. Walenczyk stated the funding increases for the position and the vehicle were not recommended in the Finance Director's budget but the budget process was fluid and it was hopeful this request could be restored as the process goes forward. Mr. Walenczyk stated he would discuss his budget before the B.E.T. on

February 24th and hope to get a favorable resolution before the finance board.

Ed Green reported Steven Grant replaced William Carbone as head of Court Support Services Division (CSSD). He also shared information about the new Family Resource Centers at CT Renaissance that should be implemented by summer 2014. These centers will provide services to Probation referred youth as a diversion type program.

Sharon Preston shared that DCF will be moving to their new offices on Route 7 which will combine the Stamford and Norwalk offices.

Mike Mocciaie reported that they are also experiencing a “tight” budget year. He reported on an annual basis Parks & Recreation is serving about 900 youth, 750 youth via their summer programs. He also reported they will be offering a new 8 week adventure camp for youth ages 13-15 at Fox Run school. Smaller portions of this program can be accessed and there are fees for these programs. A brochure will be available shortly detailing the offerings and costs.

Corrine Weston added that NEON will still continue to fund some summer camps as well.

Lt. Ashley Gonzalez reported the Mayor is very supportive of the Department’s JRB and School Resource Officers (SRO), with a plan to add an additional SRO. He also reported on the School/Police conducting safety drills at the schools.

Elizabeth Murdoch stated there were no new updates for her Agency, Family & Children’s Agency.

Corrine Weston, representing SONO Alliance provided an overview of her organizations purpose and function. She shared that the alliance is a 20+ year collaborative between the Norwalk Police Department and the South Norwalk Community. She is the co-chair representing the community portion of the alliance. Their mission is to address concerns related to drugs, gangs, and crime through such interventions as improving street lighting, peace walks, and doing community presentations. Their current focus is to develop a City-wide Youth Council for youth to tell adults in the community what they want and need. She expressed concern over a lack of resources for youth due to such things as the loss of the local YMCA, funding cuts, and loss of programs in the community.

She also stated her alliance plans to utilize heavy input from youth, partner with the local Youth Service Bureau and other Agencies, and establish themselves as a 5013c in order to receive charitable funding and grants. She reported they have 15 partners lined up (i.e. churches, FCA) to initiate programming.

Dave Walenczyk also added that a focus on youth employment might be something the Alliance would want to pursue. He also invited Ms. Weston to consider joining the Youth Services Advisory Board as a former community member, Jessica Fogg, resigned and a replacement is needed. She said she would consider and follow up with the Director.

Lt. Gonzalez made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Elizabeth Murdoch; unanimously approved.

The next meeting is proposed for Tuesday, April 8th, 4:00pm. Room TBD City Hall.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,

David Walencyk - Director Youth Services / Staff to Youth Services Advisory Board.