



HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

April 13, 2023

7:00 PM

ACTON TOWN HALL, ROOM 204

472 MAIN STREET

Present: Jeff Bergart (remote via Zoom), Mark Conoby (remote via Zoom), Madeline Cruz, Leo Fochtman, Boris Klebanov, Franny Osman, Danny Factor, Fran Arsenault (Select Board Liaison), Laura Ducharme (Staff)

Absent: Paula Walsh, Hema Santhanakrishnan.

Opening

Mr. Fochtman opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

1. Regular Business

No resident concerns.

2. Chair Update:

Mr. Fochtman announced the April 27th meeting has been moved to Town Hall Room #9. Room 204 is needed for a practice session for the Town Meeting.

Ms. Arsenault announced that a Tenants rights and Protections presentation, presented by Metro West Legal services, April 27th, from 6 to 7, 30 P. M. Can be viewed via zoom.

Mr. Factor mentioned that a select board candidate forum, being sponsored by Housing, Climate Justice for Acton and Housing for All in Room 204 on April 19th.

Ms. Cruz thanked the people that organized the Holi festival. Also, the library will be moving the copier back downstairs to make copies.

3. Presentations (presentations have been save in the folder for additional materials – see below)

Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership - Becky Manseau Barnett

Ms. Cruz thanked Becky and said that she wished these services were available 5 years ago.

Mr. Klebanov asked:

- What is a peer specialist – Answer: Somebody that's "walked to road, i.e. had similar problems as the person calling in.
- How many people provide services – Answer: Call center – 42 individuals.
- What are the challenges is Becky's team coming across – Answer: the number 1 challenge is shifting folks' mindset from how we used to approach behavioral health. I go to the emergency room if I have a need to. Oh, wait! There's a whole host of ways that I can access behavioral health care. Options instead of going straight to the emergency room or to the police (911). Staffing is another issue. Need more diversity.

Ms. Cruz asked if there is an age limit – Answer: No age limitations.

Ms. Arsenault asked how these plays into schools – Answer: The school administrator, the provider, can call the BHL. We'll have a conversation here and figure out what's needed, and probably in a lot of those cases, what's needed is mobile crisis intervention, so the BHL can connect to the appropriate remote crisis intervention. Get them out on site within an hour to address that that situation.

Mr. Factor asked:

- What is the difference or is there a difference between Behavioral health and mental health. – Answer: Behavioral health is a broader umbrella. Covers mental health, substance abuse, etc.
- Are you guys' mandated reporters – Answer: we are always going to choose the least invasive option for care. A lot of folks with good reason might be scared to call, because what if it ends up in a call to the police and I'm unjustly treated. So, we're just very mindful of that reality. And yes, we are mandated. Yes, and we want to be careful.
- How do you handle when somebody is waiting for services? – Answer: community behavioral health centers and the behavioral health urgent care centers now offer urgent care access within 48 h, to include the being a treatment like to include treatment starting, and right away within those 48 h you can get peer support and group therapy
- As far as language issues do you have access to on phone interpreters, and how many languages – Answer: in over 200 languages, and we can get them on the phone within 45 s.

Mr. Conoby asked:

- Can you provide those links to the Health Department so we can get that done immediately. – Answer: Links are in the presentation.
- What more can we do to help. – Answer: Help connecting diverse populations.
- Where do you see your program adding and growing within the next 6 months to a year? You mentioned it's an airplane you're putting together. So, kind of tell us where you think things are going. – Answer: It's getting the word out about the resource in culturally appropriate and meaningful ways that reaches the diversity of the people. We serve in Massachusetts. and it's having at a culturally and linguistically and otherwise appropriate services readily available or the needs of our of our diverse population

Ms. Friedrichs (resident) remarked: I urge you to have a way that people can self-serve. Concerned about privacy i.e. anonymous chats, tour browsers (IP address not registered)

Recreation Department-Melissa Settipani – self funded except for three staff members.

- Mr. Fochtman asked if there is financial help for the summer camp – Answer: Yes, through our Community Resources Coordinator (Laura Ducharme), also through the Doli Atamian Campership Fund. There is also a gift account created from community donations that can be used.
- Ms. Osman asked if Recreation has transportation needs – Answer: Recreation would like to coordinate more with transportation, but events are not normally held during times that bus drivers are available.
- Mr. Factor mentioned that the town lacks a community center, and asked about what recreation goals are. – Answer: Would love to get an after-school program at the rec center. Currently a big need, they sell out for school vacation programs. Community ed has after school programs and since they're at the schools there is no need for transportation. The rec center would need access for transportation to have an after-school program. Would like to have an open center. Mr. Factor asked if Recreation would prefer to be funded more by the town instead of being self-funded. Answer: Yes, she discussed give backs and how she'd like to keep the money that recreation has raised.
- Mr. Bergart asked if Melissa mentioned the handicap accessible bicycles that are being lent out for the Bruce Freeman Rail trail. – Answer: The rec department has ADA trikes for both adults and children that can be rented for free for Acton residents at NARA park. \$5 for non-residents. Mr. Bergart and Ms. Settipani discussed the new senior park that is planned for the space between the future dog park and McManus housing. Questioned transportation of pets
- Ms. Osman asked if Danny's place if moving and will there be a collaboration with the Rec Dept. – Answer: No, not currently. Ms. Osman also asked about the availability of bikes and Ms. Settipani would like to use "Sign Up Genius" which is currently used for reserving tennis and pickle court reservations. Lastly MS. Osman asked about having a ping pong table which has been asked for by the Chinese community. Ms. Settipani said she welcomes suggestions and tries to find ways to get things done.

- Ms. Arsenault asked if there was an after-school program what would span of the age of kids is envisioned. - Answer: Ms. Settipani said she is discussing this with staff.
- Ms. Cruz asked what the HSC can do to help the recreation department. – Answer: Communication – correct misconceptions. Ms. Cruz. Asked if there are volunteer opportunities. – Answer: volunteers are always needed, especially for events.
- Ms. Friedrichs asked if we can have a way to list free programs.

4. Future Presentations

- United Way – Ms. Osman will work with them to find a time for a future presentation.
- Acton Food Pantry – Ms. Arsenault will coordinate with Ms. Osman to find a time that we can have both the United Way and Acton Food Pantry present on the same night.
- Acton Faith Community Representatives – Mr. Bergart will contact the group and see if he can find one representative to speak for the group.
- Neighbor Brigade – Mr. Factor has a contact.

5. Short Term Goals – on hold. More progress needs to be made.

6. YouTube upload of HSC meetings

- Need to Contact Mark Hald about linking meetings to Acton TV.

7. Discuss methods for outreach to the community

- Duplicate of #5
- Discussion with time limits, pros / cons, respectable.
- Mr. Factor mentioned Emergency Outreach to be put on the future agenda. Add to Agenda

8. Discuss Town Meeting Warrant during 2nd meeting (4 Thursday) April 27th

9. Review HSC Documents

- Mr. Bergart and Mr. Fochtman will work together on document suggestions and put together a sample form that other committee members need in order to give more instruction as to what is needed.
- Asked for people to give feedback on half-buck
- Mr. Conoby suggested adding info on texting, versus just phone number.
- Mr. Factor said that he would send Mr. Fochtman information on the domestic violence hotline.
- Mr. Fochtman asked again for members to send him content for the HSC Document
- Mr. Fochtman asked everyone to send Ms. Ducharme what they believe their document responsibility is.

10. Review meeting minutes for December 8th

Ms. Osman moved to approve the meeting minutes for December 8th, MS. Cruz seconded. Vote 6-Yes, 0-no, 1 Abstention (Mark Conoby).

11. Future Agenda

Time limits, number of questions.

12. Adjournment

Mr. Factor enters a Motion to Adjourn, Ms. Osman seconds, (Yes – Unanimous, 0-no, 0-abstention)

Additional materials can be found online: <http://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-16554>

not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law. Reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities are available upon request. Include a description of the accommodation you will need, including as much detail

as you can and include a way we can contact you if we need more information. Please allow advance notice. Send an e-mail to manager@actonma.gov or call Town Manager's Office (978)929-6611

For more information about Human Services Committee contact hsc@acton-ma.gov