Town of Greenwich
BOARD OF HUMAN SERVICES MINUTES
Virtual Meeting, September 21, 2021

ATTENDING
Board Members Present: Patty Roberts, Natalie Queen, Dawn Turner, Winston Robinson, Debbie Appelbaum, Gillian Ingraham, Tara Restieri, Gregg Pauletti, Susan Warner

Staff/Other Attendees: Commissioner Demetria Nelson, Jennafer Kalna, Linda Sandiaes

CALL TO ORDER
Chairperson, Patty Roberts, called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

BOARD PROTOCOLS
Patty Roberts made a motion to approve the minutes from the July meeting. Winston Robinson and Debbie Appelbaum seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

PRESENTATION BY JESSICA REID
Jessica provided a review of (Instagram) social media posting. Jessica discussed how to create stories from Instagram (IG) posts. She explained that stories on IG can be shared through various outlets. Jessica discussed how to add items to the posts including tagging agencies and people. Performing these actions can increase the department’s visibility by others inside and outside of the community. The more that you engage with a post, the more that it can be reached. Jessica mentioned the importance of having a release signed when posting pictures or videos with people in them. Jessica discussed creating reels of staff, board members, and anything that will boost the department and the work it is doing.

UPDATE BY LINDA SANDIAES
Linda provided an update of the current seasonal programs/applications. The department is still accepting applications for Operation Fuel. Rent Rebate will close on October 1st for Seniors or those that are disabled that will give them a stipend from their utilities account. Energy Assistance will start on October 18th. Energy Assistance is a state program for utilities or deliverable fuel. Boots and Shoes will be ending soon for the year. BANC After School started on 9/9. The maximum number of students for BANC is 79. There are eight (8) on the waiting list. ESL classes have started. They are held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30am to 11:30am. The classes are facilitated by the Board of Education. The maximum capacity is 10 students because of COVID. This program has reached its maximum capacity.
The community can find out about the programs through press release, newsletter, IG, Facebook (FB), site visits at Greenwich Communities complexes, and flyers posted in various places in town. They can also be found in the First Selectman’s newsletter.

**COMMITTEE UPDATES**

*Community Partnership* - The primary focus was completing the RFP process. The RFP application was reviewed, then revamped. The RFP application was sent to current community partners and potential partners that requested applications. A link was posted in the GDHS website and a press release was sent to area media outlets. Applicants submitted their applications to GDHS. The committee was divided into smaller teams to complete evaluation interviewers with applicants. A rubric was used as a means of standardizing the evaluation process. One of the new areas of assessment was the agency’s ability to promote GDHS as a funder of its programming. The committee will meet at the beginning of October to review the evaluation forms from each small team.

*Strategic Planning* - This committee continued the review of the previous plan. The committee will work on the development of a new plan. Next steps are to consider bringing a consultant in to assist with the planning process.

*Communications* - This committee is focusing on several areas: increasing subscribers to the newsletter, establishing a targeted communications list to improve department visibility, increasing followers on IG and FB. This committee also discussed creating a new GDHS logo. We will work with a few designers and see what can be created. The annual report is due in December. A timeline will be developed.

*Client Relations* - This committee discussed the annual survey and when it will be distributed. Tara developed the new draft of the client survey with input from other committee members. The fall survey will be more service based and the spring survey will be more community based. It will go out by email as well as by mail. The survey will also be translated to Spanish. We will discuss with IT as we always do, and it will be formatted in Google Docs. A link for a survey related to Hurricane Ida was emailed out to clients. 650 emails were sent out. 100 bounced back. Staff is following up
to update those emails that bounced back. The survey will be sent out on October 19th and will be open for three weeks.

COMMISSIONER’S REPORT

Commissioners Report: The Commissioner provided a broad brush overview of the meetings that she participated in during July and August, including meetings related to the American Rescue Plan. She discussed trainings that she attended, e.g., SBIRT (Screening Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment) conducted by DMHAS. The Commissioner discussed assisting the Conservation Commission with completing the food assessment and homelessness prevention related sections of the Town’s Sustainable CT application. She also informed the Board of her tour of the Neighbor to Neighbor construction site. The construction is progressing well. The new building is scheduled to open in late fall of 2021.

Operating Statement: The Commissioner indicated that we are current 9% under budget.

Clinical Activity Dashboard: The Commissioner reviewed the board reports. She indicated that some of the numbers related to staff have been impacted by staff members being on leave and one recent resignation. GDHS is currently recruiting candidates for the vacant position. She also described overall changes in the calculation of some of the data presented, i.e., data related to averages and percentages. The goals related to number of clients served and direct client hours continue to be met, but the numbers have decreased slightly from the previous fiscal year. The Commissioner commented on how the cases have become more complex. She also mentioned that GDHS has received calls from residents whose homes were damaged by Ida. As appropriate, this information has been passed along to the American Red Cross and GDHS has attempted to provide direct assistance per GDHS’ scope.

This Board will continue to have virtual meetings at this time.

MEETING ADJOURNED

Motion was made Debbie Appelbaum and Winston Robinson by and seconded by Patty Roberts.

NEXT MEETING

The next Board Meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 19, 2021 via Zoom at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Natalie Queen