River Forest Mental Health Committee

Minutes February 6th, 2024 at 6:30pm - Zoom & In-Person Meeting

Present: Elizabeth Davies, Angie Grover, Melinda Peterson, Kathryn Schmahl, Kristin Sneeringer, Jessica Starck, MD, Debbie Borman

Absent: Phillip Buta, Helene Connolly, Jonathan Howard, MD

Staff: Sarah Schwarting, LCSW, Mental Health Administrator

1. Melinda called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. and conducted roll.
2. Public Comments: United Cerebral Palsy/Seguin – Jim, Laura
   * The agency serves 85 communities in the Chicagoland area which includes 75 group homes. Day services, employment services, vocational training, hygiene, financial education and social recreation are among their programs.
   * The agency was able to give an overview of programs offered, how the MHC grant supports them and where they’re looking toward the future.
3. Jessica moved to approve the minutes from January 9th, 2024, Elizabeth seconded and the motion was carried.
4. Township Report from Carla Sloan, read by Sarah:
   * Efficiency Report - The government efficiency act requires all Townships to convene a Decennial Committee and produce an Efficiency Report. The committee consists of the Township Board of Trustees and at least two residents.  We are fortunate to have on our committee residents Melinda Peterson, John Phelan (former D200 Board President) and Barb Hickey (former D90 Board President). We have also had the assistance of a grad student intern from NIU, under the mentorship of Trustee Deana Herrman. The final draft of the report is complete and is being circulated to the committee for final comment.  We anticipate final committee approval in March and final Board approval in April.  We will be happy to share the report with MHC members who are interested.
   * Policy Handbook - A policy handbook has long been a vision for the Township, outlining employment policies, ethics policies, job descriptions, etc.  At long last, the final draft is being circulated to Trustees for their approval at the February meeting.  This is an important internal milestone for us.
   * Youth & Family Services - Similar to the MHC, the Youth & Family Services Committee is reviewing grant applications and making recommendations to the Township Board of Trustees this month and next. The Senior Services Committee and the YFS are also having a joint meeting tomorrow night to discuss a new intergenerational project.
   * The Senior Home Repair Program has won a major Program Excellence Award from the International City/County Managers Association.  Participation and repeat business are strong; the program is deemed a wonderful success and has added on the services of an OP and nurse to help seniors stay in their homes.
   * Oak Park Township finally has a new Township Manager, replacing Gavin Morgan.  Evan Michel starts this week; we look forward to working with Evan. One of our first projects with Evan will be the renewal of our Intergovernmental Agreements for Youth & Family Services, Senior Services and General Assistance.  All of our 2-year agreements are up for renewal April 1, 2024.
   * Sarah and Carla participated in the parent support group meeting for D90 parents whose children have IEPs. There was an excellent turnout.  Our role was to share community resources related to therapy, tutoring and education/support.  We believe that our efforts were well-received by the parents.
   * We continue to receive positive responses to the Mental Health and I/DD Services Guide which was mailed to all RF households in December, as well as to the senior informational mailing which was also sent to all RF households in January.  Both pieces have a QR mechanism for residents to sign up for various Township newsletters.
5. Mental Health Administrator Report/PYD Report – Sarah Schwarting:
   * The ‘They Deserve More’ effort paid off and we successfully contacted legislators and put a stop to the threatened cut in hours to all direct service professionals for people with disabilities
   * Materials for parent support group for parents of kids with IEPs went to D90 and Carla and Sarah attended the support group held on Feb 1.
   * Quarter 3 stats are in
   * Parent University has successfully secured all speakers and is in the process of making sure the evening goes as smoothly as possible, the date is set for Wed April 10th
   * PYD and OTF are now separate groups. The Opioid Task Force will be meeting Feb 8th, and the addiction recovery team may be discontinued or joined with opioid task force.
   * PYD is hosting a bike drive and bike ride to build awareness about the importance of keeping kids off of substances, and signage is complete for store owners to discourage them from selling substances to kids
   * I/DD consortium was held and resources to build supportive housing was discussed
   * A health rhythms drumming event will be hosted at the CRC, date to be announced
   * Support 4 u, a mental health texting platform for teens was discussed with Kimberly Knake and a meeting will be held to determine its future
   * PlanIt Green is moving ahead with goals and strategies for 2024 – handout will be forwarded
   * Carla and Sarah visited The Loft at 8 Corners in Brookfield and received more information on programming and intake processes. This center has also expanded its services to include kids ages 12 and up starting Feb 1.
   * We are actively supporting awareness of teen dating violence prevention month
6. ART Report/Community Event Report ­– Melinda Peterson: None
7. Other Updates from MHC Members:
   * Kathryn spoke about a local nonprofit that she is partnered with in fundraising. The upcoming fundraiser is Feb 17th with a surgical mission trip to Tanzania starting Feb 20th. The organization is Handzania.org.
8. Old Business:
   * Review of Funding Applications: the committee discussed the funding applications from local agencies and reflected on their meetings with each agency to determine funding recommendations for the township board of directors.
   * The committee will delay voting on funding recommendations until the next scheduled meeting.
9. New Business: None
10. The next meeting will be Tuesday, March 5th, 2024 at 6:30 pm at the River Forest Community Center.
11. Kristin motioned to adjourn and Elizabeth seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:06 p.m.