River Forest Mental Health Committee

Minutes June 6th, 2023 at 6:00pm - In Person Meeting at the River Forest Community Center

Present: Phillip Buta, Helene Connolly, Elizabeth Davies, Jonathan Howard, MD, Melinda Peterson, Kathryn Schmahl, Kristin Sneeringer, Jessica Starck, MD

Absent: Jean Meister, Elizabeth Dunne

Staff: Sarah Schwarting, LCSW, Mental Health Administrator

1. Melinda called the meeting to order at 6:05pm and conducted roll.
2. Public Comments: None
3. Melinda moved to approve the minutes from May 2nd, 2023, Jessica seconded and the motion was carried.
4. Township Report from Carla Sloan, read by Helene:

* Many thanks to the MHC for your time, effort and expertise this past fiscal year. You are a passionate and dedicated group, and I wish you a wonderful summer and look forward to seeing everyone in the fall.  Please know that the work you are doing is valuable and valued, as we continue in our mission to serve our community in support of mental well-being for all.
* The Pride flag raising and walk were held on June 1. RFT was a sponsor of the Pride Walk this year, as part of our Youth and Family Services funding of the Lincoln Belonging and Inclusion Committee.  We are excited to be funding this organization for the first time this year. Although I couldn’t attend the event, Sarah and our Trustees attended, and all report a successful and happy event. We look forward to continued support of this group and its mission of belonging and welcoming.
* We have a new Clerk, John Becvar, effective May 31. John has hit the ground running and is already doing a wonderful job. We will miss our outgoing Clerk, Vanessa Druckman, who has increased her hours and responsibilities at Wonder Works in marketing and fundraising.
* Township Senior Services staff will be working at RFT one day per week, helping residents with benefits counseling, money management etc. Staff was here monthly prior to COVID, and we are glad to finally have them back in person here at RFT.
* You were all part of the cook county assessor’s property reassessment process in RF. The average 32% increase in property values sent hundreds (maybe thousands?) of residents to our township assessor, Pam Kende, with questions and the desire to appeal. Many thanks to Pam and her Deputy Assessor, Kathy Elliott, for their overtime efforts to assist our residents with their appeals.
* Youth and Family Services is once again conducting its back to school backpack and school supply drive, thru August 4. New supplies and high quality backpacks only, not used. You can either drop items of at OPT at 105 s OP Ave, or scan the QR code on the flier Sarah can send you. This directly purchases the supplies on Amazon and ships to OpT. Items will be distributed to families in August before school starts at the annual Youth and Family arrives event.
* Julie Bach, professor of social work at Dominican, along with her grad students, will be conducting a reminiscing project for older adults this summer. If you know of anyone who may want to participate, contact Betsy Kelly in our office.
* Bus transportation is available to older adults and those with disabilities to and from the OP Farmers Market on Saturday mornings. People have to call and reserve

the bus ahead of time, during the week before. 383.8060.

* Last, the MHC is a public Committee of the Township. As such, your names, and MHC agendas and minutes, are public information. Your names are posted on our website, but not your personal contact information. Regardless, it is possible that you could receive an email or call from someone making a FOIA request or asking for information. If you do receive such a request, please do NOT respond in ANY way. Please refer any requests for information to me immediately at [supervisor@riverforesttownship.org](about:blank), as I am the central resource for official Township information. Thank you!

1. Mental Health Administrator Report – Sarah Schwarting:

* All agency contracts will be finalized and emailed out within the next month.
* Temporary approval of agency grant requests were emailed to all agencies; pending official board approval June 20th.
* Jean Meister is officially stepping down as a committee member, after 10 years of service, and we will miss her. We will need to find her replacement hopefully before we reconvene in September.
* PYD in person wrap up meeting will be June 14th, and the committee is still trying to figure out best practices for sharing the movie ‘screenagers’ with the community.
* I am looking into how to share more strategies to parents for the next Parent University, our kick off meeting for this will be Aug 28th.
* We had township representation at the kickoff luncheon for celebrating seniors, the NAMI gala, and the 50th anniversary for Oak Park’s community mental health board.
* The parade and Pride walk both went well and were fun.
* Carla and I were at the ribbon cutting for the Live4Lali stigma busting van, which I will talk about more under new business.
* Both consortias will meet again in July.
* IPLAN implementation meetings are ongoing and a community wide meeting event is being held tomorrow night from 5-7 at the OP main branch of the library.
* The resource guide now has an affordable printer and we will be getting back to that later this month.
* Resources were shared with RiverEdge hospital and they are interested in collaborating with and coming in to talk with the committee.
* I will be attending the Townships of Cook County conference in June and mental health topics will be discussed at this conference which I will bring back to the committee in Sept.
* All agencies were asked to direct their staff to our social media handles – Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn.
* I am working on a process under which we will consider new agency grant requests should they come up within the next year or two.
* The They Deserve More coalition’s contact of representatives has garnered direct service providers a $2.50 wage increase.

1. Addiction Recovery Team ­– Melinda Peterson: None
2. Other Updates from MHC Members:
   * Kathryn requested that the committee plan to fund LGBTQIA+ programs in the next fiscal year, citing the marginalization LGBTQIA+ individuals around the country are currently experiencing and the connection to mental health.
3. Old Business: None
4. New Business:
   * Sarah mentioned the ribbon cutting at Way Back Inn, marking the start of the harm reduction plan. Sarah hopes to establish a regular schedule for the Live4Lali Harm Reduction Van to visit River Forest.
   * Sarah initiated a conversation about upcoming meeting guests starting in the fall of 2023; conversation ensued with Riveredge Hospital, OPALGA and others being mentioned as potential upcoming guest speakers.
5. The next meeting will be Tuesday, September 5th at 6:30pm at the River Forest Community Center.
6. Melinda motioned to adjourn and Kristin seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 6:37pm.