River Forest Mental Health Committee

Minutes November 7th, 2023 at 6:30pm - Zoom & In-Person Meeting

Present: Phillip Buta, Angie Grover, Kathryn Schmahl, Kristin Sneeringer, Melinda Peterson, Jonathan Howard, MD

Absent: Elizabeth Davies, PhD, Jessica Starck, MD, Helene Connolly MD

Staff: Sarah Schwarting, LCSW, Mental Health Administrator

1. Melinda called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and conducted roll.
2. Public Comments:
   * John from OPALGA+, also the Township’s new clerk, attended the meeting
   * OPALGA+ has existed since 1989 and is reassessing its branding to be as inclusive as possible. It has three major pillars: advocacy and education, social networking for adults, families and children, and volunteerism.
   * OPALGA+ is committed to expanding its support as the needs of the community change, including supporting transgender, nonbinary, and asexual individuals.
   * John spoke to the organization’s name which includes “Oak Park” and shared that OPALGA+ wants to support and be a resource for communities beyond that. Neighboring communities like Riverside, Brookfield, and Maywood do not have their own LGBTQIA+ organizations and OPALGA+ also wants to be a resource for these areas.
3. Melinda moved to approve the minutes from October 3rd, 2023, Phil seconded and the motion was carried.
4. Township Report from Carla Sloan, read by Sarah:
   * The committee has one opening and is seeking applicants.
   * The new website is launching this week.
   * The mental health resource guide is complete, is off to print, and will be mailed to all households in River Forest around Thanksgiving.
   * The board will vote on the levy next month.
5. Mental Health Administrator Report – Sarah Schwarting:
   * Sarah commended the group on the site visit reports, which are all complete and on time.
   * Fiscal Year 2025 funding applications will be emailed to agencies on November 15, 2023.
   * Funding recommendations will be discussed at the committee’s February meeting.
   * Parent University is coming up on November 15th, with topics of executive functioning, positive self -identity in BIPOC students, healthy communication, suicide prevention and others.
   * Sarah will begin attending Opioid Task Force meetings in the coming weeks.
   * Both consortiums met in October and the schedule for next year will repeat this year’s cycle
6. Addiction Recovery Team ­– Melinda Peterson: None
7. Other Updates from MHC Members: None
8. Old Business: None
9. New Business:
   * Sarah proposed an idea for the committee to support a local mental health organization by volunteering.
   * Angie mentioned New Moms as an important local organization.
   * Sarah proposed dates for a group training in QPR for suicide prevention.
10. The next meeting will be Tuesday, January 9th at 6:30 pm at the River Forest Community Center. NAMI will be our guest on this date.
11. Kristin motioned to adjourn and Angie seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 7:14 p.m.