



BILLERICA SUBSTANCE AWARENESS COMMITTEE

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Dina M Favreau, *Chair*

Darlene Torre
Joanne Barry
Daniel Darris-O'Connor
John F Gray Jr
Mike Higgins

John Kleschinsky
Erik Szymanski
Bernie McCann
Angela Caira

Billerica Substance Awareness Committee

Minutes

June 12, 2024 5:00pm

Hybrid

Videoed by BATV

Can be Viewed: <https://www.batvinc.org/vodchannels.html>

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TOWN CLERK
BILLERICA

Meeting was brought to order by D Favreau @ 5:01pm with a moment of silence of Det Sgt Ian Taylor.

Daniel brought forth 1 vacancy through Board of Health. Announcements.... Opioid Abatement Fund listening sessions will be held 6/18 @ 7:00 with Zoom option to be provided. Volunteers needed for annual Whiffle Ball tourney.

Per the Chair, the meeting minutes are not available for May and the Treasurers report is not available. Motion to table the approval of the May meeting minutes and Treasurers report made by D Darris-O'Connor and seconded by B McCann. Vote taken with all voting Yes.

Darlene asked about the meeting minutes not being available. If we do not have a committee member available to take the minutes, can we appoint someone else. The Chair indicated that Clancy Main has given approval to use a floating admin who will assist with the minutes and backlog.

Unfinished Business...Mike is on vacation but will try to call in with overdose stats.

Darlene...Opioid listening session in May went well. There was not a good turnout but there was great dialog and good participation from those who were there. There was no one in attendance with a big agenda which was good & it went longer than they thought it would. John [redacted] via Zoom...felt that there was not enough advertising for the event and was who was in charge of social media. Dina indicated that she is in charge of social media and that the post got over 3000 views. The Town also shared on their page. Darlene posted it on Next Door site at Joanne's request. Chair is open to suggestions from members on other sites that are frequented and she will look into posting there in the future. Joanne via Zoom...gave flyers to HS and both Middle Schools. Not sure if principals sent emails to parents. Businesses are also interested in sharing our info. Dina has shared the Zoom link and would like it to be put on Next Door as well. Chair would like all committee members to attend the next event if they are available. Zoom option has ben provided for the next meeting as not all interested parties may be comfortable attending in person. The Zoom will not be recorded so that they can feel more comfortable in sharing. Daniel....attended the event

and the biggest take away is that this is a real issue. He spoke with Clancy and the Town is looking at data from the survey and sharing that data. We should be compiling a list of resources so that we can get info out consistently. Dina...shared that they have excellent news on the survey with 1068 responses as of Monday. Response could be from flyers that were handed out at the well attended Spring Fling.

Community Updates...Spring Fling was very well done & attended. There were not enough committee members there volunteering. Lack of committee volunteers seem to be constant and it seems as though the same 3 or 4 people are always stepping up. Would like volunteers to be more evenly distributed moving forward. Joanne....knows that volunteering a full day can be a challenge but even a few hours are helpful. John...would like a Thank You note sent to Hannon's Auto as they donated the crashed vehicle to the event. Daniel...indicated that volunteering can be tough when people are involved with other activities/committees but that we should be open to volunteers outside the committee as well.

Yankee Doodle...Dina's time has become very limited so she has asked other members to step up to be on the sub-committee so that opportunities are not missed. Not sure if we can get a float together this year thinks it will be best to wait until next year to do the float again. Daniel, Mike & [REDACTED] to be on sub-committee. Chair will wait on date for 1st meeting. They will also work on getting volunteers who can work the table in 2 hour increments. Perhaps Daniel & Bernie can work with BMHS on getting volunteers.

Well Hub....Chair has sent brochure to all members. Looking to connect with Rob. Bernie...asked who is providing the platform and if we will have access to update to which Dina answered that it can be tailored to Billerica. Initial cost is \$3500 which can be onboarded to the school website as well.

Motion to set aside \$3500 to procure Well Hub app from Dynamic Influence for an online resource platform for Billerica residents. Daniel...would like to see the presentation first. Updated motion made by Bernie and seconded by Daniel to set aside the funds contingent upon presentation. All voted yes.

New Business...New speaker series suggested by Dina; Just a Kid With an IEP. Daniel...feels like he is a good speaker but doesn't see how it relates to substance abuse & mental health issues. Dina..indicated that IEP students are at in a high risk category of students who end up with mental health and substance abuse issues. Daniel...is wondering where the funds for the speaker will come from to which Dina said \$20,000 is already in the budget. Daniel feels that base on the budget the funds are not planned out enough, every month something else comes up. Last month we funded a \$700 to \$900 grant for the Sabrina Best Foundation without any formal application or documents. Per Dina all SBF documents are filed with Paul Watson's office and we have been working with them for several years. Dina has indicated that Dynamic Influence has been speaking for the last 3 years & she is looking to diversify our resource programs. Darlene...acknowledged the Chairs hard work in finding and vetting speakers. She has seen a lot of this speakers videos and he not only speaks about the support of Mom & family to those on an IEP but also discussed mental health. He goes into schools not only promotes good academics but mentions that students must also focus on their mental health. Speaker touches on having a good IEP & support system and if neither are in place there is a trickle down effect. If a student stumbles through school that can effect mental health and lead to substance abuse. Believes that this speaker would be very well attended and perhaps PAC and SPED if they want to join in on this (not financially) but they would certainly jump at the chance to get this type of speaker. Dina..agrees with Darlene and having experience with IEP the students are certainly at a higher risk & this speaker would target more substance abuse prevention & mental health. Erik...looked speaker up. Feels it is ok to have a speaker address mental health as most addicts have some mental health challenges. Always hearing that so & so is a great speaker but when they end up paying for someone to come in their presentation is not always as great as what was seen on social media etc. Shawsheen Tech paid \$15,000 for a speaker who came in but did not end up being worth the dollar value. We have a responsibility to the people who have given us money to get the right person in for that dollar amount. Dina...indicated that she is not talking about money yet, just putting forth the idea. Has not reached out about rates or anything like that this is just an idea. If anyone else has any resources, please bring them to the table and she will add to the agenda. Seems like she is the only person presenting ideas for consideration. Joanne...believes the ST presenter was Rob and that he did have the kids attention with the exception of the

kids who are always goofing off. IEPs are so common now, so many students are on them. Things can change and any student can go on an IEP given appropriate circumstances. She feels that we should move forward with the discussion. Bernie...feels that this would be a shift in philosophy as the speaker is not directly speaking about substance abuse but if it is benefit to the community then it would be ok. Would like to try to get speakers to evolve outside the box on topics such as anxiety. Supports topic and would like to have speaker give presentation & have sub-committee to bring in specific speakers. John (via Zoom)...has not looked at the link. Being new member still trying to figure out roles & responsibilities. Will look to bring resources forward in the future. Daniel...to clarify on previous comments. Wants to do what is best with regard to funding. Darlene, Dina & Joanne (via call in) to be on sub-committee. Speaker will be vetted and further info presented at the next meeting.

Supplies...table supply discussion because Mike Higgins needs to be present. Chair believes we may owe him some money for items provided for the Spring Fling event.

Motion to table supply discussion made by B McCann and seconded by D Torre. Vote taken with all members voting yes.

Grant Opportunities...info has been accessed. Grants available to bolster committee. Dina would like to get the grant info on the agenda so that we can start the discussion and tap Erik's expertise as a grant writer. MA divides grant info out and puts it into regions and then into specific areas. We would need to fit into 10 priority areas within the regional oversight to manage grants. Emergency Response and Opioid Response have different qualifications and areas of eligibility. Would take quite a bit to go through. Number One of the ten areas is the prevention of fatal and non-fatal opioid overdose. He will send out spreadsheet and as a committee put together the top five areas of importance. He can then identify what agencies handle that funding and where Billerica falls in that pecking order. Dina...best way to move forward is to send spreadsheet to her & she will send to group. Each individual must reply to the Chair and she will then compile a list for Erik.

Motion to adjourn made by Bernie and seconded by Daniel. Vote taken with all members voting yes.

Meeting adjourned at 6:11 pm.

Edit: In attendance for this meeting were: D Favreau, J Barry (via Zoom), B McCann, J Gray (via Zoom), E Szymanski (via Zoom), D Darris-O'Connor, A Cairra (via Zoom), M Higgins