COMMUNITY FOR CARE COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, January 14, 2015

Minutes are s**ubject to a** vote of a**pproval**.

3 pages

**CALL TO ORDER**

Pastor Woody Eddins, Jr., co-chair of the Committee for Care (C.f.C.), called the meeting to order at 5:59 p.m. on Wednesday, January 14, 2015. The meeting was held in the Board of Education meeting room at the Simsbury town offices. Also in attendance were Lisa Heavner, First Selectman; Cheryl Cook, Selectman; Chris M. Kelly, Selectman and new co-chair; Sue Homrok-Lemke, Assistant Superintendent of Schools; Mickey Lecours-Beck, Director of Social Services; Lt. Fred Sifodaskalakis, SPD; Neil Sullivan, Principal of SHS, and Brian White, Principal of HJMS. David Krayeski, Sharon Lawson, Sally Rieger, Becky Rosenthal, Thomas Steen, Ed LaMontagne, Heather Mudano, Stephanie Riefe, and many other members and interested parties were also present.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Everyone stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PUBLIC AUDIENCE**

No one spoke in public audience.

**1. APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 10, 2014 MEETING MINUTES**

Ms. Rieger made a motion to approve the minutes, as amended. The amendment will be made to the “Public Audience” section of the September 10, 2014 minutes. Instead of stating, “No one spoke in public audience,” it will state, “Several individuals described their personal experiences with young people and drugs during public audience.” Ms. Lecours-Beck seconded the motion. It was passed unanimously.

**2. UPDATES**

Ms. Heavner, as new First Selectman of Simsbury, noted that she will no longer be co-chair of C.f.C. She assured committee members that C.f.C. is very meaningful and important to her, and will continue to receive her full and complete support. Then she introduced Mr. Kelly, the newest selectman and the new co-chair of this committee. Mr. Kelly was warmly welcomed. Ms. Heavner also recognized and thanked Ms. Mudano for allowing her family to be the subject of a recent video about children struggling with addiction.

Ms. Cook announced that “Family Hearing Day” was taking place tomorrow at the State Capitol Building from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Mr. Sullivan noted that he wants to present more programs about student stress, homework overload, and the challenges of parenting adolescents in American suburbs. A successful program about motivating students and helping them juggle responsibilities was just presented at SHS. Mr. White mentioned that on Tuesday, January 20 at 7 p.m., a program at HJMS will give parents ideas about how to prepare their children for high school.

Ms. Homrok-Lemke announced that in March, a community panel about “How to Support Teens” will be organized. Coaches, teachers, police officers, students, parents and others will be invited to present and participate. On April 9, “Tall Cop,” a very tall police officer who has experience with youth issues, will be presenting a program in the SHS amphitheater.

**3. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE BY REPRESENTATIVE HAMPTON**

Mr. Hampton brought greetings from the State Capitol, and mentioned that he was honored to be appointed vice chair of the Connecticut Committee on Children. Some of the topics this committee will review include Lyme disease, children left in hot cars, childhood obesity, school-based health centers, pesticide use, and trauma training intervention. He encouraged committee members to contact him if they have any bill proposals. The deadline is Friday, but proposals will be accepted up to 30 days after. Mr. Hampton distributed two reports and asked the committee for its feedback. The first was a progress report on Public Act 13-178: “An Act Concerning the Mental, Emotional and Behavioral Health of Youths.” He admitted that much work still needs to be done to implement this act. The second was the “Report of the Office of the Child Advocate: Shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School.” Highlights of the long discussion include:

• How mandated reporters have a responsibility to report youth to authorities when they feel that these   
 young persons are a risk to themselves or others. Ms. Lawson wondered why Mr. Lanza was not   
 reported sometime along the way by a teacher, a mental health specialist, or a community member.

• Mr. Steen emphasized the importance of providing education at the community level to aid in   
 prevention. Mental Health First Aid, a 2-day training session, was mentioned as a worthwhile program   
 that could be brought to Simsbury.

• Lt. Sifodaskalakis noted the limitations that local police departments have when issuing pistol permits.   
 They have access to criminal records, but not to mental health records. If an individual has no criminal   
 history, completes the firearms training program, and answers “no” to the question about whether   
 he/she has ever been treated for a mental health condition, the police have no reason to deny the   
 individual’s application.

• Mr. Kelly mentioned how a portable digital medical record system would be an invaluable tool for   
 continuity of treatment. Individuals, rather than health care companies, would have access to their own   
 records. They could bring a complete history of treatment to each health professional they consult. The   
 pharmacy database system, which filters out double or conflicting prescriptions, was recognized as a   
 good example.

• Ms. Mudano requested that Mr. Hampton look into creating better guidelines for helping children in   
 mental crises get the care they need in CT. Without having a Physician Executed Commitment (PEC)   
 —a statement written by a doctor who acknowledges that the minor is dangerous to him/herself or   
 others—many children in a mental health crisis are sent home instead of being admitted to the hospital.

**4. UPDATE ON POSSIBLE SPEAKERS**

Several committee members agreed that Dr. Louisa Namerow, from the Institute of Living in Hartford, would be an excellent speaker for a future C.f.C. meeting, as well as for a larger community program. Mr. Hampton mentioned that Diana Urban, chairman of the Connecticut Committee on Children, would also be wonderful.

**5. DISCUSSION OF WEB SITE DRAFT, CONTENT, AND FORMAT**

Stephanie Riefe presented a rough draft version. Much of the information was taken from the C.f.C.-

sponsored booklet, “A Parent’s Guide for the Prevention of Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Use.”

Categories include Simsbury Social Services, the medication drop box at the police department, a

parent’s guide, the latest information about marijuana laws, and links to mental health and substance

abuse resources. Mr. Hampton will forward links to state resources. Recommendations included:

• Having information prominently featured on the C.f.C. homepage for what to do and who to call

in a crisis situation.

• Including a paragraph about what to generally expect when you bring your child to the ER

for a mental health or substance abuse crisis.

• Listing suggestions for how parents can best advocate for their children to receive the care they   
 deserve.

• Adding press or news releases as they come out.

• Having all upcoming programs taped by SCTV, and putting them on the C.f.C. web page   
 in a video library section.

**6. DISCUSSION OF BUDGET**

Ms. Lecours-Beck noted that June 1, 2015 is the deadline for spending the funds in the C.F.C. budget. Because of the funding source, the bulk of the money should be spent on children’s issues. The committee discussed printing more “A Parent’s Guide” booklets, and having them available at local pediatrician and dentist offices, as well as at school open house events. A mailer that could be sent to all town residents was also suggested. It will include a link to the C.f.C. web site and a list of useful contact information. It will be previewed at the next C.f.C. meeting.

**7. NEXT MEETING DATE:** April 8, 2015 at 6 p.m. in the BOE meeting room.

**8. NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. LaMontagne distributed a feedback form from the North Central Regional Mental Health Board. He requested that committee members complete and return the forms via the email or mailing address listed on the last page. He noted that individuals have experienced problems when they contact 2-1-1 or the Department of Social Services. Information collected from these forms will be brought before the state legislature and the commissioner of the Dept. of Mental Health Services to spur improvements.

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Kelly made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m. The motion was seconded by Ms. Rieger. It was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorrie McElligott, commission clerk