COMMUNITY FOR CARE COMMITTEE - Regular Meeting
Wednesday, September 9, 2015 - “Subject to Approval”- 3 pages

*CALL TO ORDER*

Chris M. Kelly, selectman and co-chair of the Community for Care Committee (C.f.C.) called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. on Wednesday, September 9, 2015. The meeting was held in the Board of Education meeting room at the Simsbury town offices. Also in attendance were Woody Eddins, Jr., pastor and co-chair of the C.f.C. Committee; Cheryl Cook, selectman; Sue Homrok-Lemke, assistant superintendent of pupil services; Mickey Lecours-Beck, director of Social Services; Lt. Fred Sifodaskalakis, SPD; Ken Pera, assistant principal of SHS, and Brian White, principal of HJMS. David Krayeski, Sally Rieger, Becky Rosenthal, Thomas Steen, Hannah Reynolds, Karen Gallagher, and Richard Holden were also present.

*PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE*

Everyone stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

*PUBLIC AUDIENCE*

No one spoke in public audience.

*REVIEW OF MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING*

Ms. Gallagher noted that she had been credited in these minutes for discussing the “Looking In Theatre” organization. She had not. Ms. Rosenthal made a motion to approve the minutes, as amended. The amendment will be made to the “New Business” section of the April 1, 2015 minutes. Instead of stating, “Ms. Gallagher discussed,” it will state, “A committee member discussed the “Looking In Theatre” organization in Hartford . . .” Ms. Cook seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion passed.

*PRESENTATION*

Nancy A. Scheetz, APRN, B.C., executive director of the Farmington Valley Visiting Nurse Association, gave an enlightening presentation about mental health and addictions in the elderly population. She distributed a 3-page report she created and titled: “Depression and the Elderly,” and a 6-page print-out titled, “Depression in Older Adults and the Elderly,” from the [www.helpguide.org](http://www.helpguide.org) web site. Highlights include:

• Ms. Scheetz reported that depression is the lowest funded medical condition, even though anti-depressants are the third leading classification of medications prescribed today.

• In general, behavioral health issues in the elderly, such as depression and addiction, are undiagnosed, under-diagnosed, untreated or not treated appropriately. There are several reasons for this:

1. Sometimes 70, 80 or 90 year-olds are embarrassed to tell their doctors or their children about their struggles, or afraid that they will be forced to leave their homes if they do.
2. Like children, the elderly are very adept at hiding their conditions.
3. There is a misconception that loss and depression are normal parts of aging.
4. Many elderly individuals are on a variety of medications and herbal remedies. Doctors or pharmacists don’t regularly review a total list, or don’t get a complete picture during patient consultations. As a result, depression or addictions caused by drugs or supplements (or a combination of them) can be easily missed or misinterpreted.
5. Many rehab, detox / substance abuse programs cannot accommodate elderly patients who have mobility issues, or who are too sick or on too many medications. Out-patient services for older adults are also dwindling.

• Mr. Kelly inquired whether there was any web site that would allow family members to research medications. Ms. Scheetz recommended [www.epocrates.com](http://www.epocrates.com). It states that it can check for potentially harmful interactions between up to 30 drugs at a time. A free app is also available.

• Suicide is a real risk for adults aged 85 and older because it is perceived by them to be a more palatable choice than long-term suffering.

• Ms. Scheetz noted that 45.7 is the average age of Simsbury citizens. This is 10 years older than the population of many other towns in the state.

• The C.f.C. Committee discussed ways in which it could help its older population, besides its “Simsbury Senior Outreach Program.” Lt. Sifodaskalakis noted that the police department always conducts a follow-up home visit to anyone age 60 or above who is listed in an accident report. He also suggested that EMS personnel can be the best sources of information on elderly living conditions because they enter homes. Ms. Lecours-Beck and Ms. Scheetz agreed that family awareness and involvement is critical. They recommended that educational series be directed to the younger generation of caregivers, and be easily accessible. Web site presentations and resource lists would be extremely useful.

NEW BUSINESS

Content on the C.f.C. web site will need to be reviewed twice a year, in January and July.

If the committee decides to distribute an annual booklet and magnet, a subcommittee will be
created to develop new ones in 2016.

Mr. Krayeski reported that a state bill, mandating that insurance companies cover the costs for wrap-around programs for adolescents coming home from addiction/mental health facilities, died in the last legislative session. He felt that action needed to be taken immediately to revive this bill. Mr. Steen made a motion to form a subcommittee of C.f.C. to work with representative John Hampton. The subcommittee’s goal will be to create model mental health legislation for the State of CT on post-treatment consultation, integrating with anything happening on the national level. Mr. Kelly seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion passed. Mr. Steen volunteered to be on this subcommittee.

Mr. Krayeski recommended Connecticut FAVOR, Inc.—a statewide family advocacy program for children’s mental and behavioral health—as another great resource. Its web address is [www.favor-ct.org.](http://www.favor-ct.org.) Its executive director, Josephine Hawke, offered to help the C.f.C. Committee create a training program for parents. The topic would be “What questions to ask if your child goes to the ER.”

*POSSIBLE FUTURE SPEAKERS*

The committee discussed having all the speakers booked ahead of time for next year. Dr. Kaminer, a UCONN professor and research specialist on medical marijuana, was recommended again. Mr. Steen agreed to schedule him in 2016. Noting the recent trend to be honest and open about deaths from addictions in local obituaries, Pastor Woody suggested that the committee invite family members of these individuals to speak. Ms. Homrok-Lemke also proposed adding a panel of mental health/addiction specialists, police, and community members to round out the presentation.

*COMMUNITY FOR CARE – STATEMENT OF PURPOSE*

Noting that the meeting was running late, Mr. Kelly asked if the committee would like to defer discussion. Ms. Cook made a motion to table discussion of the C.f.C. statement of purpose until the next meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Homrok-Lemke. All were in favor. The motion passed. Mr. Kelly distributed a 1-page report for committee members to review. It shows the original statement, an interpretation, and subgroup discussion points.

NEXT MEETING

January 13, 2016 at 6 p.m. in the BOE meeting room.

Mr. Kelly distributed a 1-page document showing the C.f.C. meeting dates in 2014 and 2015, and the proposed meeting dates for 2016. He asked the Committee whether meeting quarterly still worked. Ms. Homrok-Lemke thought quarterly meetings were sufficient, as long as subcommittees met regularly in between. Ms. Cook made a motion to have the C.f.C. Committee continue to meet quarterly, on the second Wednesday of the month, on January 13, April 13, June 8, and September 18 in 2016. The motion was seconded by Ms. Lecours-Beck. All were in favor. The motion passed. The approved 2016 meeting dates will be submitted to the Town Clerk.

It was noted that since the presentations made at these meetings would benefit the greater community, they should be actively advertised as a public speaking series. A short discussion followed. Suggestions included: 1. Running future meetings with two parts: An open, public part, and a closed, committee-only part; 2. Rotating the meeting venues from Town Hall to Simsbury Public Library, Eno Hall, and the Housing Authority; 3. Having the presentations recorded by SCTV, and posted on the C.f.C. web site.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Kelly made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 p.m. The motion was seconded by Ms. Homrok-Lemke. All were in favor. The motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorrie McElligott

Commission clerk