



TOWN OF WEST HARTFORD

Minutes

Substance Abuse Prevention Commission

September 19, 2019 5:00pm – 6:28pm

Room 422

1. Roll Call

- a. **Voting Members Present:** Jean Schensul (co-chair), Jonathan Merritt (coordinator), Ben Grippo, Carl Shields, Nordia Napier, Howard Dashefsky
- b. **Ex-officio Members Present:** Helen Drohan, Amanda Martin, Helen Rubino-Turco, Nikia Newkirk
- c. **Guests Present:** James Mahoney, Christopher Dutton, Ken Plourd
- d. **Absent:** Lorna Thomas-Farquharson, Astrid Calderon

2. Introductions

3. Approval of Minutes

- a. Minutes of Meeting of: June 13, 2019
 - i. Jonathan Merritt motioned, Ben Grippo seconded, 5-0 in favor, approved.

4. New Business

- a. SAPC Membership Update
 - i. Resignation of Rep. for WHPS Superintendent, Kimberly Ambrose: The WHSAPC thanks Kimberly Ambrose for her service to the commission and the town of West Hartford
- b. SAPC Chair Vacancy
 - i. Jean Schensul, co-chair, is stepping down from her role as chair; would like to remain on SAPC as a voting member.
 - ii. Jean Schensul presented the SAPC Report to be attached to the minutes:

“Report submitted to SAPC by outgoing chair Jean Schensul, Sept. 19, 2019

SAPC Accomplishments last year:

- Regular monthly agenda and meetings.

- Sharing of information on opioids including state level data, vaping and kratom (an opioid substitute available on the internet)
- Discussion of student referrals to JRB and need for further support.
- Discussion of problems associated with vaping with and without cannabis, from school resource people
- Reports on status and use of dropbox (DSS and Police Department)
- Distribution of fliers, announcements of events, and information on activities (such as take back day and Artists against Addiction), via email
- Preparation of recommendations to Town Council and followup on recommendations for board of education.
- New SAPC members appointed
- Extension of the meeting to one full hour 5 – 6 PM.

SAPC challenges

- **Irregular attendance of some members**
- **Lack of full representation**
- **Difficulty in recruitment**
- **Timing of meetings (?)**
- **Need for more consistent coordination of presentations by SAPC members or speakers on topics of current concern**

SAPC Recommendations for Town Council and update

- 1. SAPC Recommends that Town Council approve funding in the WHPS budget to cover the cost of the high school and middle school survey, and to permit tracking and reporting of key prevention and health trends.**

This is not a recommendation to TC. It needs to be presented through the WHPS administration and proposed to and approved by the Board of Education. It has been reviewed with Lisa Daly and a process put into place to present an argument for approval with WHPS system. This will finalize a convincing argument to be used at higher levels.

Note: Are the middle and high school surveys important for SAPC and the Town. If so can match be found. The combined cost of the surveys for administration and preparation for analysis is approximately \$7500 every two years.

- 2. SAPC recommends that the West Hartford Prevention Partnership (WHPP) be endorsed as a West Hartford entity by Town Council.**

Followup: The TC does not usually endorse. The TC has acknowledged the WHPP by presenting recognizing West Hartford Prevention Week and noting the contributions of the WHPP and SAPC. SAPC should rephrase to recommend that information about

WHPP be presented to the TC as part of its mission to inform the Town of important dimensions of substance abuse prevention in West Hartford.

- 3. SAPC recommends that Town Council explore the expansion of the West Hartford Teen Center and endorse adding additional hours, an additional site, and/or providing transportation to and from each high school. *Howard Dashefsky motioned, Chair Jean Schensul seconded, 4-0 in favor, approved, with one abstaining. Coordinator Jonathan Merritt abstained citing his position as the Teen Center Director.***

Followup: Three new staff people have been appointed to staff the Teen Center. There is no Teen Center location in other areas of Hartford and no additional transportation to link high schools as yet.

- 4. SAPC recommends that the West Hartford Teen Center or the Elmwood Community Center charge all non-West Hartford youths to use the Teen Center facilities in line with policies and practices in place in other public West Hartford services (i.e. parks, pools, senior centers). *Carl Shields motioned, Howard Dashefsky seconded, 4-0 in favor, approved, with one abstaining. Coordinator Jonathan Merritt abstained citing his position as the Teen Center Director.***

No Followup till now.

These recommendations have not been submitted through the proper channels as yet. They need to go through the Town Manager and the Mayor. DSS can assist with this process (as it has already be helping to define what qualifies as a recommendation to TC and what should be addressed elsewhere), or the current recommendations can be sent. There are actually only two, one calling for submitting information about WHPP to the TC and the second calling for a change in membership rules for the Teen Center.”

- iii. SAPC thanks Jean Schensul for her service to the commission as chair, and to the Town of West Hartford.
- iv. Clarification on the process of submitting recommendations:
 1. Which recommendations should be pushed forward?
 2. What should happen to the recommendations once they are complete?
 - a. Sent to Mayor, mayor will hand to appropriate subcommittee
 - b. Town manager will be involved
 - c. Shared with board of education
- c. Jon Merritt presented on the 2018-2019 West Hartford Teen Center

- d. Ken Plourd presented on the accomplishments of the West Hartford Prevention Partnership (WHPP) in 2018-2019
- e. Ken Plourd presented survey data
 - i. Many questions from the commission regarding the questions on the survey
 - ii. WHPP will form a data review subcommittee to be able to answer many questions on the table
- f. Helen Rubino-Turco presented the potential changes coming to SAPC
 - i. Document can be sent out to members and community
 - ii. Potential changes are in draft form
 - iii. Town Council received proposal
 - iv. **Public hearing on October 7, 2019 at 7:25pm in the Legislative Chamber to the Ordinance Establishing a West Hartford Prevention Council**

5. Adjournment

- a. Carl Shields motioned, Jon Merritt seconded; 5-0 in favor to adjourn the meeting at 6:28pm.



Amplify, Inc. (formerly North Central Regional Mental Health Board – NCRMHB, merged entity of ERASE and NCRMHB)

ANY INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY WHO NEEDS SPECIAL ASSISTANCE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MEETING SHOULD CONTACT SUZANNE OSLANDER, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES 561-7570, FIVE DAYS PRIOR TO THE MEETING.