

**WEST HARTFORD PREVENTION COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING - MINUTES
THURSDAY, JUNE 11, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.**

This regular meeting of the West Hartford Prevention Council will be conducted as a virtual meeting. Members of the public may view the meeting on West Hartford Community Interactive: Comcast Channel 5, Frontier TV Channel 6098, YouTube and www.whctv.org.

Members of the public may also provide comments on agenda items by calling at the scheduled date and time and using the following access code:

June 11, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. Call 1 (408) 418-9388 Access Code: 132 372 9359

MINUTES

1. Roll Call

a. Voting:

i. Present: Jean Schensul, Heather Alix, Brenda McKeown, Carl Shields, Jonathan Merritt, Howard Dashefsky, Kadzo Kangwana, Nordia Napier

ii. Absent:

b. Ex-Officio:

i. Present: Helen Rubino Turco, Astrid Calderon, Tor Fiske, Helen Drohan, Natalie DeLaCruz, Ari Steinberg

ii. Absent: Amanda Martin, James Mahoney

c. Guest: Jacqueline Zea-Edgar, Jennifer Evans, Gina Varano, Ken Plourd, David Reyes

2. Approval of Minutes

a. Minutes of Meeting of February 13, 2020

i. Motion: Jean Schensul

ii. Second: Howard Dashefsky

iii. Vote: 8-0 in favor, pass.

3. Old Business

a. Needs Assessment Surveys & Reports, Carl Shields

i. Sent Council members a summary with 6 links of reports including PowerPoint presentations

- Work with DMHAS with UConn; global, regional, and West Hartford Specific
 - 31.5% of Connecticut students felt sad/hopeless
 - 25% felt they could get help they needed
 - 18.4% inflicted self-injury during school year
 - HW: 13.5 have considered suicide
 - LGBTQ kids: 32% seriously considered suicide
- SEOW has an open data portal that we will need to know

- going forward
- Connecticut State Report
- Major Substances of Abuse
 - Pain medications
 - Alcohol
 - Overdoses
 - Emergency Room data
 - Prescribing Data
 - By Age, gender, race, culture
 - Admission data
 - Treatment data
- Using publicly available data for needs assessment
 - What is important for this community?
- Substance Abuse in Connecticut Report
- ii. Last 6 months have been speaking with members about needs assessments for mental health and substance use

b. Prevention Week Activities – canceled, Helen Rubino-Turco

- i. Numerous members of WHPC worked hard to develop a robust schedule of events focusing on wellness; while theme may change next year, many of the activities we worked on including pollinator gardens, doing a walk at holy family church labyrinth, other activities, can be put in back pocket for next year.
- ii. Acknowledge new member joining us: Natalie DeLaCruz, student from Conard High School

4. New Business

a. Social Services Director Report

- i. Amplify Grant, Astrid Calderon:
 - Edit several activities due to covid-19
 - 7141\$ given to Social Services
 - Grant that has requirements, including reports for money given
 - Funding given to The Bridge for “Every Family” newsletter
 - Hoarding self-help Group – now moved to virtual format due to Covid-19; currently a waiting list
 - 15 sessions, 2 hour each
 - Eliminated funding for Safe-Grad
 - Supporting Town that Cares cards handed out to emergency services and schools
 - Next application must follow goals to reduce vaping from 12-18, and increasing public awareness of substance abuse prevention
- ii. Met with Town of Bloomfield
 - Educate residents on Naloxone
 - Met once, other meetings were cancelled due to Covid-

- Formally offer this distribution to both towns Bloomfield and West Hartford
- iii. Working with community on basic needs during this time

b. WHBHD Report, Helen Drohan

- i. Working on contact investigation
- ii. Reaching out to people in nursing homes
- iii. Talking to patients who have been positive for covid
- iv. Working on providing PPE
- v. Shout out to Astrid working together and collaborating, Social Service department, fire and police are all working together
- vi. Special testing site near hillcrest area – get information out to that area; flyers will be in several languages

c. WH Public Schools/BOE Report

i. Ari Steinberg:

- Wrapped up for a month, will be meeting again in August, sooner if things arise
- Looking to fill one vacant seat
- Holding interviews and letters of interest in the next week or so

ii. Tor Fiske:

- Proud to be a part of WHPS and the way the district moved to online platforms
- Successful connection of students to essential services during this difficult time
- Conard update: Natalie DeLaCruz, Conard Representative – Herron Project Club w focus on prevention and inclusion
 - Created social media platform

d. Youth Service Bureau Report, Jonathan Merritt

i. Changes in Programming due to Covid-19

• **Mentoring Report:**

- In February, our busiest month for mentoring, we held 86 mentoring sessions serving 30 youths.
- In March, we held 60 sessions, serving 27 youths.
- In April our numbers dropped drastically; we held 49 sessions, but only served 15 youths - we were unable to reach half of our kids - schools reported having much difficulty reaching the families of these students as well.
- 32 sessions in May

• **Teen Center Report:**

- Teens have been reporting talking to a lot of their friends and mental health is a general concern with regards specifically to depression and anxiety.

- Our Virtual Groups have been successful with a small cohort of teens; we currently serve about 20 teens online
- Offer the following virtual groups:
 - Movie Group (8 members) M 2:30-3:30
 - Girls Group (5 members) W 2:00-3:00
 - Leadership Group (14 members) W 3:30-4:30
 - Book Club (5 members) Th 2:30-3:30
 - Game Group (8 members) F 3-4:30
- We have been conducting bi-weekly check-ins to assess needs of teen center families; we have 65 families on the list of "teen center regulars"
- From those needs we have provided families with gift cards to grocery stores

- **Summer Programming:**

- Group Mentoring for up to 6-10 youths
- Leadership Summer Program for 6-10 youths
- Teen Center Group Activities
 - Photography
 - Gardening club at ECC – Garden Clean up and planting to commence next week
 - Biking, Fishing, other outdoor activities
 - Individual Mentoring for 8 youths

e. WHPP Report, Presentation on work in community, Ken Plourd

- i. Report of WHPP sent to all members
- ii. Age 4 highlight: Substance use trend chart looking at trends over the last 10 years
- iii. Brochures designed by teens at teen center
- iv. Check out link to WHPP website
- v. Blogs written with reactions to articles on drug use
- vi. WH risk survey:
 - 23% reported drinking at least 1 in past 30 days – slightly lower than national average; declined from last survey as well
 - Of this 23%, 12.2% report getting drunk at least 1 time
 - Most students who drink are drinking at home parties
 - 111 students reported drinking alone
 - No difference between drinking rates in both Hall and Conard
 - Students who identify non-binary drink significantly more
 - 4 mental health indicators discussed
- vii. Jean Schensul:

- Flyer reflects views of west hartford youths
- Data and written reports will be available to council members
- Will be helpful with needs assessment
- Council moving forward: look at Robert Wood Johnson program – culture of health and wellness
- Consider ICR in future endeavors
- Ken Plourd:
 - Share report to the group to the summer
- Thank everyone for collaboration

f. Upcoming Events / Activities of Interest

- i. One Empty Council seat: Benjamin Grippo, Substance Abuse Counselor
- ii. Possible second council seat opening: Jean Schensul, West Hartford Resident
- iii. Nordia Napier Questions:
 - Is public health department working with the superintendent to prepare for the new school year or is that another public health team?
 - Can the process of the board of education member be re-explained briefly?
 - Is the public health department able to collaborate with the school district to notify parents of the testing that may occur in the Hillcrest area?

5. Public Comment

- a. none

6. Adjournment

- a. Motion: Jean Schensul
- b. Second: Brenda McKeown
- c. Vote: 7-0 in favor, pass.

Next meeting: Thursday, September 10, 2020, 5 PM- 6 PM; Format/location TBD