

Minutes of the Bernards Township Municipal Alliance /Youth Services Commission
Zoom Video Conference
December 8, 2020

Mayoral-Appointed Members Attending

Kaitlin Cartoccio, Vice Chair, Health Department Representative
Jennifer Korn, BOE Representative
Alex Timoney, Student Representative
MJ Postal, Senior Citizen Representative
Ellen Houlihan, Civic Group Representative
Catherine Santaiti, PTO Representative
Cathy Phillips, Substance Abuse Representative

Other Attendees

Lucy Forgione, Bernards Township Health Department

Members Not Attending

Tracy Baldassare, Bernards Township Police Department
Swapna Uradi, PTO Representative
Cindy Fleischer, Citizen Representative
Joan Harris, Chair, Township Committee Representative
Amy Stern, William Annin Middle School SAC, School Representative
Johnny Graves, Clergy Representative
Laurie Albee, Community Representative

Call to Order

Kaitlin Cartoccio called the meeting to order at 6:08 PM. All attendees stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mission Statement

The Mission Statement was read by Kaitlin Cartoccio. The mission of the Bernards Township Municipal Alliance Against Substance Abuse is to provide consultation, programs, training, and resources to members of the Bernards Township community with the goal of preventing and reducing the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

Three goals of the Alliance: ESP!

1. To **Educate** about the damaging effects of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs,
2. To **Support** events & programs that provide healthy alternatives to substance abuse, and
3. To create community wide **Presence** in the identification of problems and in designing effective measurable solutions.

Staff Comment

None

Minutes Approval

Motion (1) – Jennifer Korn

(2) – Kaitlin Cartoccio

Reports

a. Somerset County Alliance Coordinator (Jennifer Sorenson)

- Jennifer Sorenson could not be at the meeting; Kaitlin gave an update.
- The next Request For Funding (RFA) has been delayed. The funding comes from DEDR Collections (fines and taxes from drug enforcement). These funds are low because of COVID-19, this affects the July 2021-June 2022 year. The funding had been lower for this year and anticipated for next year, and we are not even able to apply for the funding yet.
- In response to the funding frustration, Jennifer Sorenson wrote a letter to the Governor's Council on Alcohol and Drugs.
- The letter was very well received by all the coordinators, it expressed the frustration everyone is feeling regarding the funding calculations.

b. Youth Services Commission

- Ms. Sprague shared her support for the letter and that it represented the concerns for funding very well.
- There were no updates from the County.
- The grant funds for Bernards Township were released and the check will be cut by December 11, 2020. This money represents the funding for REACH and Viking Yoga.
- A second RFP was sent out today. It is for a competitive grant in which only 4 applications were received. It was decided to give some more people a chance to apply. The deadline is January 12, 2021. The objective is to address the disparities caused by COVID. It is worth between \$3,000 and \$12,000.
- The fiscal year is now Jan-Dec. because of the obvious challenges in 2020. It is not clear if this will remain or it will reverse back to Sept-Aug. Assuming a slow transition back to "normal" after COVID and the fact that unspent funds that must be spent to meet reworked goals, it is not likely that the fiscal year will change back soon.

c. Community Program Coordinator

- RFP is on pause.
- Ms. Cartoccio has been meeting with Stephanie Smith, Director of Guidance for Bernards Township Schools and Rebecca Tritt, SAC at RHS. We have \$5,000 from Hackensack-Meridian for a vaping prevention program.

Originally planning for in-person events (might have to rethink). Perhaps put money towards kids who want to quit vaping. The grant must be used between Jan.'21-Dec'21.

- Ms. Cartoccio has started a partnership with the library. Rachael Talbert, Teen Services Librarian, created grab and go bags for certain events. Ms. Cartoccio and Ms. Talbert created Holiday De-Stress bags that teens can pick up at the library. The bags include stress balls, tips on breathing techniques, coloring pages and hot chocolate. All together they made 50 bags for students and Bernards Township kids to pick up.

Agenda Items

1. REACH (Ridge Education Action and Community Health)

- Alex Timoney gave an update on the leadership meeting with LMTI and how they are trying to rethink events because of COVID. They came up with new areas of interest to plan new events.
- There was a discussion about social media outreach to spread the information on plans and events and have a larger presence:
- Mental Health Mondays – Instagram
- Wellness Wednesdays – Instagram
- Flashback Fridays – Instagram
- @Ridge.REACH –Instagram ID
- The in-person events were well attended, all properly social distanced and outside. There was a pumpkin painting event and a rock painting event.
- The RAADSGiving was very popular with 18 attendees at Harry Dunham Park.

2. 2021 Program Brainstorming

- Below see the link for Jamboard with a list of the ideas and a calendar:
- Trying to make a plan for each month of the upcoming 2021 year.
Jan/Feb – what can be done outside (paddle /pickleball, online workouts (Yoga), snowman making)
- Catherine Santaiti shared this list from her friend and it all thought I was inspiring and something that could be shared with others.

ISOLATION WELL-BEING

☐ SHOWER

☐ MEDICATION

☐ DRINK WATER

☐ CLEAN ONE THING / SPACE

☐ TEND SOMETHING GROWING / LIVING

BE MINDFULLY PRESENT TO...

☐ A SOUND OR SONG

☐ A SENSORY FEELING

☐ SOMETHING YOU SEE

☐ A SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

☐ REACH OUT TO A HUMAN OUTSIDE YOUR HOME

☐ DO ONE THING TO GET YOUR HEART RATE UP

☐ DO ONE THING YOU'LL BE GLAD YOU DID LATER

☐ DO ONE THING JUST BECAUSE YOU WANT TO

☐ GET IN AT LEAST ONE GOOD LAUGH

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- March – Spring Take back day
- Happy Place suggestions from MJ, its so important to have socialization for the elderly and the young. It's very lonely in isolation.

- Doing good deeds and helping others to help yourself.
- Can we do outreach to the elderly or connect them to one another? Via pen pals, families writing letters; create a partnership with Ridge Oak/Fellowship Village

3. Subcommittees Update

- RHS Booth – no update
- Fundraising/Twilight Challenge – no update
- Mental Health – Try to do the Stigma Free concert in May at Ross Farm

Public Comment

No public comment

Local Events/Municipal Alliance Member Comment

No Comments

The next Alliance meeting is January 12, 2020. Happy Holidays!

Thanks to Johnny Graves and Amy Stem for their service to the MA/YSC

We do not have a Clergy representative for next year if anyone knows someone who would like to join the MA. Rebecca Tritt will be joining us as our new school representative.

Adjournment –

Motion (1) Catherine Santaiti
(2)MJ Postal

Respectfully Submitted,
Jen Korn
Secretary