

Minutes of the Bernards Township Municipal Alliance /Youth Services Commission
January 12, 2020

Mayoral-Appointed Members Attending

Joan Bannan, Chair, Township Committee Representative
Kaitlin Cartoccio, Vice Chair, Health Department Representative
Jennifer Korn, BOE Representative
MJ Postal, Senior Citizen Representative
Cathy Phillips, Substance Abuse Representative
Rebecca Tritt, Ridge High School SAC, School Representative
Alex Timoney, Student Representative
Madison Clowes, Student Representative
Ellen Houlihan, Civic Group Representative
Tracy Baldassare, Bernards Township Police Department
Phil Jasina, Bernards Township Police Department
Catherine Santiati, PTO Representative

Other Attendees

Lucy Forgione, Bernards Township Health Department
Monica Sprague, Youth Services Commission
Jennifer Sorenson, Somerset County Alliance Coordinator
Rachel Talbert, Bernards Township Library

Members Not Attending

Swapna Uradi, PTO Representative
Cindy Fleischer, Citizen Representative (BRMA)

Call to Order

Joan Bannan called the meeting to order at 6:06 PM. All attendees stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mission Statement

The Mission Statement was read by Joan Bannan. 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) Ellen Houlihan

2) Cathy Phillips

Tracy Baldassare abstained

Reports

Somerset County Alliance Coordinator – (Jennifer Sorenson)

- The name change of Freeholders to County Commissioners is official
- Grant contracts were received from the towns and sent to the county, when they are sent back they will be returned to the towns.
- DEDR collections are down therefore funding is up in the air, there will be more information available next month.

Youth Services Commission – (Monica Sprague)

- An opportunity was offered for a 2nd competitive grant for new innovative programs
- Bernards Township was able to submit an application for the Grant for the 2020/2021 grant year
- Collaborative Program is happening as a virtual event between the Somerset County Health Department and the Library system. It explores healthy social media uses for teens, tweens and families.

Community Program Coordinator – (Kaitlin Cartoccio)

- As mentioned above, a competitive grant was submitted for a new innovative program. The last time was RISE peer educators which ran for two years.
- This is a partnership with the library, Rachel Talbert is the Teen Program coordinator from the library. The program is a Grab and Go project with the Teen Advisory Board. They did winter stress relief kits for teens. The grant will be used to expand the program. The kids (open to all the teens in Bernards Township) will pick up a kit and there will be a follow up a month later via zoom with Kaitlin, Rachel or a guest speaker.
- In December the program made 50 kits with snacks, geodes and other things to help kids with stress. Planning Sharpie Mugs for January with hot chocolate bombs. Different activities are planned (zoom or live depending on the pandemic)
- Very exciting partnership, the program will revolve around the kids schedule:
 - Spring Break
 - Relaxing during AP's
 - How to relax outside

- Try to be very inclusive while focusing around the holidays. Rachael does the follow up with her program kids and Kaitlin with her program kids.
- Purchasing a button maker and will have a monthly contest to design the button then include the winning design in the Grab and Go bags.
- Program will be known as Grab and Go Teen Outreach.
- Even without the grant, Municipal Alliance will still partner with the library for the program.
- DEDR report is delayed
- Bernards.org is redesigning the website, the Health Department and Municipal Alliance will also be part of the redesign. Some links may be unavailable during the redesign.
- Trying to develop plans for the vaping grant
- Mental health first aid trainings are planned – hopefully they can be in-person
- Community in Crisis received a new grant and has new staff members. There will be a meeting with them.
- The PRIDE survey is up in the air until it is clear what will be going on with school.
- Spring take back day is happening.
- Officer Jasina – WAMS School Resource Officer – coordinating the 6th grade letter program with LEAD (Law Enforcement Against Drugs). Write letters to HS seniors to make good decisions around Prom, graduation and/or going away to college. All letters are read to make sure they are appropriate. Letters can be written to cousins, sisters or brothers.

Agenda Items

1. Welcome New Members

- Rabbi Robert Green – Clergy Representative
- Phil Jasina – Police Representative Alternate
- Rebecca Tritt - School Representative

2. Nominations

- Vice Chair – Kaitlin Cartoccio – nominated by Joan Bannan, seconded by Ellen Houlihan.
- Secretary – Jen Korn – Nominated by Kaitlin Cartoccio and seconded by Joan Bannan.
- Subcommittees – tabled to discuss any changes that might be made

3. REACH (Ridge Education Action & Community Health) – Alex Timoney

- Trying to work on engagement and have Zoom meetings where the app PearDeck is used that enables interactive slide presentations.
- Brainstorming social media posts and have regular posts scheduled to Instagram (ridge.reach)
- Great graphics that are designed by the members

- A video project is being planned to address school stress. It will be a zoom video. The script is being planned and once completed, the video will be posted to Instagram. It is still not known if it can be shown in the health classes.
- Hopefully in person programs will return in time for LMTI. Includes 8th graders to Freshman. The camp includes 5 days of leadership workshops where they learn to write action plans and leadership skills. The kids then bring big ideas back to the towns.
- **Upcoming Programs**
 - Upstanders – Online screening and discussion. The movie is about resilience and bullying. Wednesday, January 27th 7pm
 - The flyer was sent out in the Friday Folder and posted on the Bernards.org site.
 - Alicia, of the Watchung Hills Municipal Alliance came up with the idea of the Alliances pooling resources to have virtual screenings.
- **Subcommittees Update**
 - RHS Booth –No Updates
 - Fundraising/Twilight Challenge – No Updates
 - Mental Health –Still trying to get the Ross Farm Event underway by the end of next year.

Local Events/Municipal Alliance Member Comment

- Kaitlin shared that Blueprint Mental Health is presenting Parenting in the New Normal – Thursday, February 4th 7pm on Facebook Live with a mental health Q & A.
- Safe and Sound Somerset County – Love doesn't have to hurt, violence awareness – warning signs of abusive relationships. February 11 6-7:30 on zoom for Middle, High School and their parents. Using giveaways to promote the event. (ear buds)

Adjournment – 7:35 pm

Motion 1-Kaitlin Cartoccio
 2-Jen Korn

Respectfully Submitted,
 Jen Korn