

Minutes for March 11, 2022 Zoom meeting of the Youth Advisory Council

In attendance remotely via Zoom were Chairwoman Lisa Raftery, Dr. Malcolm Astley, Wayland Youth Officer Shane Bowles, Wayland Det. Tyler Castagno, Ms. Pamela Cerne, Ms. Brenda Ross and Mr. Jason Verhoosky. The minutes were taken by Mr. Peter Bochner.

Chairwoman Raftery made a motion to call the meeting to order at 9:33 a.m. The motion was seconded by Dr. Malcolm Astley. In favor were Ms. Brenda Ross, Ms. Pamela Cerne, Det. Tyler Castagno and Dr. Astley.

Roll call was taken. Dr. Astley, Ms. Ross, Ms. Cerne, Det. Castagno and Youth Officer Bowles stated they were present. Absent were Rabbi Louis Polisson, Ms. Allison Kates and Dr. Dossie Kahn.

Chairperson Raftery asked if there were any edits for the Feb. 4 meeting minutes, and, when none were offered, made a motion to approve the minutes. Approval of the minutes was affirmed by Dr. Astley, Ms. Ross, Ms. Cerne, Det. Castagno and Chairperson Raftery.

Chairperson Raftery announced that she had to leave the meeting at 10:30 a.m. She then said that she and Mr. Verhoosky had come up with a to-do list for the Youth Advisory Council (YAC), based on the forward progress made on agenda items and an update on them. She also said she came up with idea of flipping the agenda, and, rather than waiting for the end of the meeting, would open it up to anyone from the board or community that would like to share their thoughts and perhaps have more airtime.

Dr. Astley asked if this was the best time to discuss the Sudbury-Lincoln-Wayland Domestic Violence Roundtable. It was said that that item was further down on the agenda, so it might be best to address it later in the meeting.

Mr. Verhoosky began with the **clinical updates**. He said he had recently met with Dr. Dossie Kahn and clinician Kelsey Sanclemente, and said that the status for Youth & Family Services (Y&FS) is that although they are booked up, they are still receiving regular inquiries for service, where “we attempt to do client intakes and evaluations. Y&FS is conducting a brief session to evaluate where clients are, see if a new client is a good fit for us, or if it is better to report out to other resources, or to not continue services. We still have room for new clients at the highest level of need, and don’t foresee that changing in near future. It appears that COVID numbers are down, and that people seem to be in a little bit better place.”

Mr. Verhoosky then said, “We are looking to have a meeting with the William James College INTERFACE Referral Service. We have received \$30K in earmark funding from the state, which goes into work in prevention and mental health services. We are looking at providing a subscription to the INTERFACE service. If we sign up as community, it allows anyone in the community to go onto INTERFACE, and find INTERFACE approval for being placed with a clinician, as well as finding out if it is covered by insurance.” This would increase the capacity of Y&FS, he noted.

He said if the deal with INTERFACE goes through, there will be direct links on the homepage of the new WaylandCares website, as well as on the Y&FS page. The plan is to also get it out to schools.

Ms. Ross asked if such services would be conducted as telehealth, or would they be a hybrid offering. Mr. Verhoosky said that currently, most clinical services are happening via telehealth,

Ms. Cerne said that Wayland was still waiting to hear back on its quote, which was between \$5,000 and \$8,000.

Mr. Verhoosky said the remaining funds would go toward social host licensing and professional development. The funds won't go "incredibly far," he added, noting that the money needs to be spent by June. He said the INTERFACE referral service would be available communitywide.

Dr. Astley said, "I don't know what kind of communication we're doing with the public. Various presses keep underlining how desperate people are to find services. Can we commit to doing that?"

Mr. Verhoosky said "We can commit to full promotion of INTERFACE, once it's in place. We definitely want to get out that Y&FS is-has availability, since there are new clients coming from the schools, guidance and sports, as well as our partnership with the police department. So yes, we want it known, but since our capacity is limited, we don't want to become overloaded. That's why we don't want to take out a community billboard."

Dr. Astley said, "The only way we will know if we're meeting needs is if we're open about our desperation. Maybe we're in better shape than we think. Having numbers out is critical."

Mr. Verhoosky said the suicide prevention letter is being drafted. Dr. Kahn is updating the one she sent out previously, and will get it out this spring. It will go out digitally and on paper.

Dr. Astley asked, "Are we are tracking suicides for our catchment area?"

Mr. Verhoosky said he did not have the answer to that, as the police department is not tracking statistics on suicides. However, he said they would be able to poll town statistics.

Dr. Astley said, "I urge that we continue to try to make decisions about this for clarification. If we can handle this one, I think we should. Are we on the increase? Decrease? What are the needs?"

Mr. Verhoosky said he would be happy to request current numbers as well as historical numbers.

Chairperson Raftery asked who in the town would have those numbers. Mr. Verhoosky said he would pull them in from the Town Clerk, who can search by code. Chairperson Raftery asked if the numbers were public? Mr. Verhoosky said he would be looking only for opioid-related

statistics, not individual names, to protect confidentiality. He then asked Youth Officer Bowles and Det. Castagno if they had any insight into this topic.

Det. Castagno said he would have to go through the Chief of Police, but said the numbers for Wayland were very low.

Mr. Bochner asked if the numbers could reveal the difference between a suicide and an accidental overdose caused by a drug being laced with fentanyl. Det. Castagno replied, "How it works ~~if~~ **is** that a file of a person's history can be viewed, which would include whether the OD was on a specific drug. In the case of death, there would be a toxicology report. If the presence of fentanyl were higher than usual, that would trigger an investigation in order to find the source."

Violence Prevention

Dr. Astley discussed the March 8 Domestic Violence Roundtable presentation on "Transforming the Culture of 'Power Over': Compassionate Accountability" by JAC. Patrissi and her associates. He described it as "quite stirring but hard to absorb." He said there were about 60 people attending at the beginning and there were still 60 at the end. He said he sent Mr. Verhoosky copies of the articles that he could pull out from the presentation. He said the session was recorded, but recommended it be watched in small doses. He said the basic thesis of the presentation is that power and coercion are built into our systemic thinking. It also discussed what it means to take over a colony, discussed the powers it gave those to establishing a colony, to own property. He said the Patrissi organization says there are important beginnings to subjugation, to some people receiving endowments of power. He said the presentation looked at how all this relates to domestic violence, and how one partner has power over another. He again said the presentation was very gripping and very powerful, and asked, "Can we distribute it?"

Mr. Verhoosky said, "We can." He said the presentation "was incredibly powerful, that it was a lot of information to squeeze into 90 minutes, and that he would love to hear the full expanded version from the Patrissi organization, and that would be beneficial."

Dr. Astley said, "We have a video of the whole program to share," but again, urged taking the program in "in small doses." He said there was an enactment offscreen that attendees could hear, that involved a man and a woman in fierce conflict. It was up to the audience to select which values were being applied in coercion."

Chairperson Raftery said she was at the moment on the Wayland Y&FS webpage and asked if suicide prevention could be incorporated. Mr. Verhoosky said it could.

Chairperson Raftery said there was also nothing on the webpage about the White Ribbon Group. Mr. Verhoosky said links could be added ~~links~~ to the Y&FS page, as well as the new WaylandCares website, and said there would be more expansive resources there too.

Dr. Astley said he would be in favor of the Patrissi video being posted, although it would be controversial. He said he was not advocating 100% of the views expressed, but rather a discussion of the views expressed.

Mr. Ross asked if Y&FS would need permission to put the video on its website. Dr. Astley said, "It's hard to make the argument that we can't post it, since the Patrissi organization released it, and all the participants have a copy."

Chairperson Raftery said the White Ribbon group falls under the Sudbury roundtable. She suggested it include cautionary wording.

Inventory of services, tools and resources in place

Mr. Verhoosky said. "We are working on creating an inventory of services about what is available in schools. We are talking to the guidance departments, administrators, and discussing MVP, RAD and Y&FS. We talked to Wayland High School Guidance Department Coordinator Marybeth Sacramone and she said they are swamped, but it is on their radar. He said, "I am hoping to have a true update on the inventory in April. This would involve what we are trying to achieve with the violence prevention subcommittee and task force. We see a lot of similar faces on similar boards, and are trying to figure that out in order to be more efficient. Having an update of the inventory and seeing what everyone's capacity is is a good way to start this."

Dr. Astley said, "I am growing a little desperate. I understand the quandary that the town and schools and YFS are involved in. I am still worried that in efforts not to overburden people, we will lose initiatives. Jason, it would help if we agreed on priority initiatives, and you may or may not want that, it will be your call, but the essence is a referral system for youth at risk at harming themselves or other people. What's in place and what do we want to have? I don't know what the process is. I know there are caring people on the lookout. Marybeth Sacramone and [Wayland Middle School principal] Betsy Gavron were at the Patrissi event. The goal is training everyone to be alert to the warning signs we're discussing. That is a practical approach, no matter who's involved."

Mr. Verhoosky said it is important to do an inventory yearly, or every other year, to show the growth in capacity. Much of this is being addressed through the task force, but that is on hold at the moment. He said it is important to hearing firsthand from everyone where their capacity is, even for low-hanging fruit.

Dr. Astley said, "What is low-hanging fruit? We continue to have 15 girls and women killed each year in our state. We are not organized to deal with it, and the trend is we're not dealing with it. We have informal processes in place. I'm happy to speak in order to take the onus off you [Jason]. In Massachusetts 150 girls and woman have been killed over the last 10 years. We need more in place that's organized. Are we identifying the folks that need help? That's the death rate we are trying to do something about."

Mr. Verhoosky said, “What I can agree to, once I am able to procure a type of inventory checklist, is to get a clear message out. I don’t know when that will be exactly. Could that potentially happen in spring or fall?”

Ms. Ross said, “The focus should be on how to prioritize Y&FS services -- all of them. We will need to prioritize our top three, because resources are limited. For me, other things rise to the top of the list. I don’t know if we have the resources to get us to where Malcolm wants us to be. Those are important, but they may not be at the top of the list.”

Mr. Verhoosky said, “I’d be happy to put together a universal list of services provided.”

Ms.. Cerne said, “It never hurts to take stock. Resources are stressed, but understanding that might help us understand priorities.”

Chairperson Raftery said, “The first step is to take stock. It should be, if not annual, then a six-month checklist. We should take stock of what our offerings are, and what community leaders and counselors are seeing and where they need help. This will be a first step.”

Dr. Astley said, “Completing that process will put us in a much stronger position to allocate resources and also lead to clarity in terms of accomplishments. It’s hard to have a list of things to do and then not get to a single one at the end of day. I will be stepping off this board at the end of my term. If we have 10 priorities, it would help to know if something is No. 6.”

Chairperson Raftery said, “Could we have a concrete list by our April or May meeting, and review and have a discussion about that? I will meet with school staff next week, so as far as creating a list of services, we should have that by the YAC April meeting.”

She then asked, “Tyler and Shane, are MVP and RAD being offered this spring?”

Youth Officer Bowles said, “We are teaching adult RAD every Tuesday through Parks and Rec. As far as what’s offered in the schools, [Wellness Director for Wayland Schools] Scott Parseghian is the person to talk to. I don’t know about MVP. I haven’t been asked to help at the high school since COVID.”

Chairperson Raftery said, “Would you mind following up on whether RAD is available to juniors? They may have forgotten. I know there are different RAD classes for boys. Will you check with Scott Parseghian to see if there are dates?”

Dr. Astley said, “RAD training for boys is a good idea. One in six boys experiences sexual coercion in their lives.”

Asked for a Youth Leadership update, Mr. Verhoosky said, “There is not a lot going on there.” Asked for a WaylandCares update, he said, “The website is in progress, Meghan [Wohlfarth] has been working on it the past month. We have the money to pay the monthly fee to host the website. We are hoping to have it launched by the end of March. We have a Twitter and an

Instagram account where you can follow WaylandCares. The Instagram account is called Dear Future Me, but the name may change. And we are working on the host liability campaign.”

Ms. Cerne said, “I just became the first follower on Twitter.”

Chairperson Raftery said, “I’m the 10th person to follow on Instagram. Very interesting items come up when I search for Dear Future Me.”

Det. Castagno said, “RAD is being offered for females in the fourth quarter.”

Chairperson Raftery announced it was time for her to step off the meeting, and appointed Ms. Ross to chair the rest of the meeting.

Mr. Verhoosky continued with WaylandCares updates. He said, “Part of the update is to review our mission statement. We can vote on the mission statement when beta goes live at the April meeting. We will be returning to in-person meetings in April. I hope that returning to in-person meetings, will be able to breathe some life into it. We want to determine the priorities of the community.”

Dr. Astley asked if defining the function of WaylandCares, trying to sharpen its mission, will be part of the beginning of its resurrection.

Mr. Verhoosky said that with the updating of the mission statement, “we will clarify what WaylandCares is, what Youth & Family Services is, that we’re one and the same, that Youth & Family Services was here before WaylandCares, that WaylandCares is the overarching umbrella of resources, education, and community outreach.”

Dr. Astley asked if WaylandCares’ focus on substance use will be reviewed also.

Mr. Verhoosky said, “Our roots are in substance prevention. My education and experience are rooted in that, as well as violence prevention. We will address where the community sees a need.”

Special topics

Mr. Verhoosky said that vaping and substance use issues are continuously popping up, especially at the high school level. “I have a meeting on Monday [March 14] to further discuss trying to reduce numbers. What we are seeing is not uncommon. Other schools are seeing similar behaviors. So we are doing poorly together. I will report back on this in April.”

Ms. Ross asked if the vaping workshop was recorded, and if so, “where can we find it?”

Mr. Verhoosky said it can be found on the Wayland High School website, although “it’s kind of hidden.”

Dr. Astley said there should be help flags on the Wayland High School website.

Mr. Verhoosky said that for social host community event, “we have two interviews scheduled next week about youth experience in regard to alcohol and its availability. We’re excited to have the youth voice, with earmarked funding, postcards and town signs. We are going to identify the Saturday morning to do the sticker shock campaign with local retailers. Mr. John Berry and SADD are finalizing the mock car crash. And there are two proms happening.”

Ms. Cerne said they are trying to resurrect Late Night.

Mr. Verhoosky gave an update on SBIRT, which stands for Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral for Treatment. He said SBIRT is a state mandate. Screening has been completed at the Middle School, with he and Kelsey screening all 8th grade students. SBIRT is not intended to catch people doing dangerous things. The focus is on brain health and safety, by providing a list of resources. We talked to 75 students over the course of two days. Most reported making healthy decisions. We added some new questions, based on the last 12 months, about whether they had consumed liquor, marijuana, either smokable or edible, or any other substance, including prescription medicine? We asked how many days have you chosen to use a vape device for either nicotine or marijuana?” He noted that they are in the process of scheduling SBIRT at the high school level, and will be interviewing 10th graders, because the biggest jump in substance use is between 10th and 11th grades.

Ms. Ross asked if a student can refuse SBIRT. Mr. Verhoosky said, “They don’t have to take it. They can also not be honest. But we try to keep it casual.”

Ms. Cerne said she thought it would be trickier at the high school level. “As a high schooler, I would be reticent to say anything,” she noted.

Mr. Verhoosky said, “We addressed that when we started it years ago. If I feel concerned about a specific individual, if there’s a level of risk, if they are in medical danger, we’re going to have a further conversation, but it will be confidential.” He added that currently there is a request from the WHS guidance staff if they can skip SBIRT this year, because they are overburdened right now and don’t know if they have the time to do it.

Mr. Verhoosky said that SBIRT went very smoothly at WMS, even with the new upgraded tool.

Dr. Astley said, “Pressures have increased tremendously, and the signs of mental health strains on both adults and youth are quite clear. I urge it to stay in place. Establishing relationships is terrific.” He said he was currently reading a biography of Ulysses Grant and his struggles with alcohol.

Regarding the series of Internet safety events, Mr. Verhoosky said that April 5 is the tentative date at Claypit. He said he is waiting for final confirmation from Dr. Easy, and is also waiting to hear back from the other elementary schools. He said “Lisa had a conversation with Betsy [Gavron] at the middle school regarding internet safety. Betsy has reached out to the wellness

staff for me to meet with wellness classes or entire grades via assembly.” Asked if that would be the first time the Internet safety event was offered to the Middle School, Mr. Verhoosky said it was offered four years ago, but “this would be the first time with this much focus.”

Acting chairperson Ms. Ross asked if there was any public comment. There was none.

Dr. Astley again raised the issue of help flags, in terms of access to help on the WHS website. “It would be helpful if we can review the website, particularly in terms of how youths in need can make use of website, find basic flags which tell them, ‘Here are the resources’.”

Acting chairperson Ross suggested devoting some thought at the district level, instead of just at the high school level, about health resources and how people can find them easily.

Mr. Verhoosky said, “I am able to navigate the site and find the resources, but only because I know where they are. It is not the most user-friendly navigation. It should be that a visitor can click on one button and be directed to a page with everything.”

Ms. Cerne said, “Especially if you’re a kid in crisis, or a family in crisis. It’s nice that it’s there, but it’s hard to find. Finding resources is very cumbersome.”

Dr. Astley asked if there was any word on a new Special Education director. Mr. Verhoosky said no.

Dr. Astley made a motion to end the meeting. Ms. Cerne seconded the motion. Polled as to ending the meeting, Ms. Cerne said Aye, Dr. Astley said Aye, Det. Castagno said Aye and Chairperson Ross said Aye. The meeting was ended at 10:56.