

Meeting of the Youth Advisory Committee (YAC), Friday, March 8, 2019

In attendance were (in alphabetical order): Dr. Malcolm Astley, Youth Officer Shane Bowles, Det. Tyler Castagno, Reverend Ted Crass, Ms. Sarah Greenaway, Ms. Jane Purser, Ms. Lisa Raftery, Ms. Brenda Ross and Mr. Jason Verhoosky.

The meeting was called to order at 9:21 a.m.

The minutes from the Feb. 1 meeting were reviewed and accepted 6-0.

Mr. Jason Verhoosky began with an update on grant funding for Youth and Family Services. He said there have been no major changes since his last report. He said funding is in place through the end of September and he has submitted his next to last report, which is still under review. He is now looking at a STOP Act grant (STOP is an acronym for Sober Truth on Preventing Underage Drinking) for substance abuse and underage drinking through the federal government. That grant would be for \$50,000, vs. the current grant of \$125,000, but with staff salaries moving to the town budget, the smaller amount will still cover the majority of what Youth & Family Services does. Mr. Verhoosky is also looking at local foundation funding to supplement the STOP Act grant.

Regarding the staff salaries moving to the town budget, Mr. Verhoosky said that his salary is covered by the town budget and the town will be utilizing funding to bring Ms. Jane Purser on as a town employee. Mr. Verhoosky is also putting together a plan for the town's personnel board to increase the hours of Youth and Family Services clinician Kelsey Sanclemente.

Events

The educational vaping presentation that had been scheduled for the previous night (Thursday March 7) had to be postponed due to the need to reschedule Monday night's information event on tuberculosis, which had been canceled due to the snowstorm. He said he is working with Wayland High School principal Allyson Mizuguchi to reschedule it as soon as possible.

SBIRT screening was to be administered for all 8th graders at Wayland Middle School on Monday March 11 and Tuesday March 12. The goal of the program is to provide the students with a positive point of contact in the world of prevention, to let them know that there are adults who are looking out for them and caring for them, and to reward teens for engaging in good habits rather than trying to catch them engaging in risky behavior. The students get exposed to resources they didn't know existed, even if that simply means talking to someone about their behavior or a friend's.

Mr. Verhoosky said that the screening process is kept as anonymous as possible. Students come down to the screening room in groups and then perform self-screening. The questionnaire starts off innocuously, then veers into general alcohol consumption, then delves further by asking how many drinks the student has had in the last six months. Only

1% of students get flagged and those who are flagged get asked for more information, such as whether the drinks they consumed were for a cultural event or a family get-together. Anyone identified as truly engaging in risky behavior then goes through a longer interview, and, if needed, a separate meeting at a later date.

Last year was the first year SBIRT was administered at the middle school. Of the entire 8th grade class, only a couple of students needed further motivational interviewing. Mr. Verhoosky said this is the third year SBIRT has been conducted at the high school and the first year Youth and Family Services has base level data. Mr. Verhoosky said that SBIRT is now state-mandated, and it was hoped that Wayland would have gotten data back from the state showing how Wayland compares to other towns, as is the case with the MetroWest Adolescent Health survey. However, so far, no data has been shared by the state. He said that the town of Medway recently implemented SBIRT and has published its own report on how it went. Dr. Malcolm Astley said he would like the opportunity to review the Medway report, due to its being so current.

At Wayland High School, guidance department head Mary Beth Sacramone organized the SBIRT screening. It was presented as being given to assist the students in their college plans, and have a check-in point that lasted 10 minutes. Everyone who undertook it described the experience as valuable.

Mr. Verhoosky said he felt the responses from the students in terms of substance use were accurate at the middle school level, but slightly underreported at the high school level.

Dr. Astley suggested making preventive structures and processes a future agenda item.

Comment [P1]: Does this sentence sound right?

Mr. Verhoosky said he was waiting to see what the latest version of the MetroWest Adolescent Health survey had to say about vaping and its prevalence at the high school and middle school levels. He said he was doing marijuana education with Wayland High School freshmen in conjunction with wellness teacher Ms. Rachel Hanks, and helping the students set their professional goals and opportunities, and working with her on creating an evidence-based curriculum, which could potentially be distributed to other communities.

Dr. Astley asked if there were a scientific study that could be examined for the purpose of testing an evidence-based curriculum, and then procure the funds to get the curriculum tested. He said he keeps hearing that curricula aren't tested, and that there is no funding to do so, or else no one has the will to obtain that funding.

Empower campaign

Mr. Verhoosky reported that WaylandCares was continuing with its Empower campaign. He said that the banners created by the students are very effective.

Ms. Jane Purser reported that every school's Empower banner looks very different. For instance, the Happy Hollow poster includes quotes that the students researched.

Mr. Verhoosky related an anecdote related to the Empower campaign. He said that after leaving work recently, he went into the Music Go Round store on Route 9 while waiting for traffic to abate. He picked up a guitar and started playing. A young girl and her father were in the store, looking at guitars, and the girl started staring at him. She said, "You're really good. Did you talk at my school recently?" She told him she went to Happy Hollow elementary school and she had helped paint the Empower banner. Mr. Verhoosky said they spent 10 minutes talking about guitars and it was the highlight of his month.

Ms. Purser suggested interviewing Christine Soeltz, the art teacher at Happy Hollow, who she felt did a particularly good job helping her students with their Empower banner.

Mr. Verhoosky said the plan was to take pictures of the Empower banners and put up reproductions of the original banners around town, because the originals are delicate, and would not survive being put up on billboards around town.

Ms. Purser said that WaylandCares is now looking at ways to bring Empower to older students, perhaps by getting them to talk how they feel empowered by graduating. At the high school, the banner will be hung vertically on the tower case where they have the booster jackets. That is expected to happen in June.

Mr. Verhoosky said that for the Middle School, Ms. Purser came up with idea of chalk art, taking the concept of Empower and designating a square on the sidewalk for a chalk mural.

Youth Night

Mr. Verhoosky said that the Youth Night at the Middle School was taking place that evening (March 8) from 7 pm to 9 pm. Detective Tyler Castagno said that 83 Wayland Middle School students had preregistered. Mr. Verhoosky said that Youth Night was Ms. Purser's idea, to fill the vacuum of there being no more Middle School dances or social events. She had met with school administrators to come up with the concept of a fun night, without the pressures that comes from a dance, such as needing a date. SADD supervisor John Berry was going to deejay, so there will be music. Adults in attendance were also going to include Detective Castagno, Youth Officer Shane Bowles and representatives of the Recreation Department. Activities were to include game play, kickball tournaments, board games, team building and problem solving events, and crafts, with the message being there is something for everyone. Pizza was going to be served.

Ms. Purser said she hoped the number of attendees would rise to 100. The teens attending would need to be dropped off and picked up by adults. She noted that the Wayland Police had donated \$250. The thought was that an event like this could possibly be held quarterly.

Ms. Purser mentioned that the Boston Globe had asked Wayland freelance journalist Julie Suratt to write an article about disappearance of middle school dances, indicating that Youth and Family Services is not only one asking the question.

Youth Advisory Committee roster

Mr. Verhoosky brought up the subject of the changing roster of the board members. He said that Ms. Corrie Dretler was leaving, due to time constraints. Pam Cerne was interested in replacing her, but she realized that, as the treasurer of Wayland High School Parent Organization (WHSPPO), she could be facing a time conflict. Reverend Ted Crass, who is leaving, said that Rabbi Louis Polisson of Congregation Or Atid would be joining YAC in near future, and he said it might be sooner than originally thought.

Junior Prom

Det. Castagno said that this year's junior prom was taking place at a hotel in Boston, one that has never hosted a prom before. The question was asked if having a prom at a hotel could be an issue, i.e., would students be able to get a room and leave the event to go there? Youth Officer Shane Bowles said that students were not allowed to leave the ballroom.

The topic of Late Night came up. Mr. Verhoosky said that he was working with WaylandCares member Lana Murphy, who was overseeing Late Night. Late Night runs from 11 pm to 2:30 a.m., and is overseen by the PTO, parents and police, not by the high school.

Det. Bowles related several incidents related to intoxication that had taken place at previous Late Nights. He said that parents were being sent a letter informing them of the severe consequences if their sons and daughters violated Late Night's no-alcohol policy. The no-alcohol policy extends to Pre-Prom and the Prom itself, and, as in previous years, the promgoers will undergo a breathalyzer at the event itself.

Mr. Verhoosky said that this year, all students attending Late Night will be allowed to bring a bag containing casual clothes they can change into. The bags will have luggage tags identifying the owners, and the bags will be checked for contraband. Parents and promgoers will be informed that if any contraband is found, it will be confiscated and the bag's owner will lose the privilege of attending the prom. Their parents will have to drive to Boston and pick them up. Contraband items include alcohol, liquids of any kind, water bottles, Juuls and other vaping devices and tobacco products. The bags can only be checked by the police.

Ms. Brenda Ross brought up the issue of the language used by the high school students. She said she was appalled by the language she hears. She suggested an agenda item about students using more respectful language. Ms. Lisa Raftery mentioned that middle school students are listening to the explicit versions of songs on their phones.

Social Host Liability Laws

Mr. Verhoosky discussed the problem of making parents aware of social host liability laws. He said that every time he brings it up to parents, they are in shock once they realize what could potentially happen to them in terms of criminal and civil liability. He said that WaylandCares once did a postcard campaign on the topic. It was suggested that parents could sign a release form, acknowledging that they have been made aware of these laws, similar to the way parents must watch a video on concussions if their son or daughter is trying out for a school sport.

Det. Castagno said that if a parent were in, say, New Hampshire, and one of their children threw a party without their knowledge, that the police could make a charge of a disorderly household, and if anything happened, the parents would still be liable. Youth Officer Bowles said that the parents cannot say that they don't know.

Mr. Verhoosky said that a clinical update of Wayland Youth and Family Services would not be given because Dr. Dossie Kahn had had a nasty fall. He said she was recuperating and was now able to work half days.

WaylandCares

Dr. Astley reported that the *Loved to Death* workshop for Wayland High School students, which took place on March 7, drew 40 attendees from 15 to 20 organizations. The session included a showing of the *Loved to Death* documentary that had been presented on the TV show *48 Hours*, a *Loved to Death* curriculum and a workshop discussion, all geared to promoting effective relationships and the prevention of dating and break-up violence. He noted that the concept of youth teaching youth has received validity.

Dr. Astley said that a state awareness campaign focused on healthy relationships and violence prevention will be launched in May and will run through October. In another initiative, the governor's office has increased funds for high school pilot courses on healthy relationships from \$150,000 when it began several years ago to \$1 million. The New England Patriots previously contributed \$1.5 million to another initiative on support for service agencies and on mentors and violence prevention team training at around 150 high schools. He asked that YAC members write a letter to the Patriots organization and the governor's office thanking them and encouraging completion of the training.

Mr. Verhoosky reminded all that the town election would be held on April 23, and that ratification of the town meeting vote prohibiting marijuana retail establishments in Wayland would be on the ballot. He said that official statements and reminders would definitely be sent out to the town's registered voters this time. He said that the spring Town Meeting begins on April 29, and that there another marijuana-related article will be voted on, this on pertaining to the clarification of the marijuana district.

Mr. Verhoosky said that Brookline was opening its first retail establishment for recreational marijuana, run by New England Treatment Access, the same parent company

that owns the dispensary in Northhampton. It was to open on Saturday, March 23. NETA Brookline will be the ninth retail dispensary in the state, and as each one opens, the wait times and traffic jams are being minimized. According to Mr. Verhoosky, the state has realized \$74 million in retail sales of marijuana since the first store for recreational users was opened. He said the establishment in Hudson was getting 700 customers a day.

Mr. Verhoosky said that before marijuana was legalized by some states, 80% to 90% of the country's supply was grown in Northern California and Washington. Today that market is flooded. In Oregon and Washington, a pound of marijuana is going for \$400 on the black market. In Massachusetts, a pound of marijuana sold at the legal retail level would go for \$3,500.

He noted that 38 states now have some form of legalized marijuana, and with eight or nine of the Democratic candidates for president in favor of legalization, there is some speculation that the federal government could move toward legalization within the next three years, vs. earlier estimates that were in the five-year time frame.

The question was asked if, in states where marijuana is legal, an employee can smoke marijuana at work. The answer was that employers that receive federal funding can lay down rules as to what employees cannot do on work time.

The next meeting will be Friday, April 5.
The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 a.m.