

Litchfield Prevention Council Draft Meeting Minutes

Bantam Town Hall Annex, 80 Doyle Road, Bantam and on Zoom

October 10, 2023 at 7:00 PM

Members Present: Chair Gary Waugh, Co-Vice Chair Maria Ziello, (on Zoom), Co-Vice Chair Priscilla Jeffrey, Secretary Jaime Makuc, Matt Dyer (on Zoom),)

Others Present: Emma Johnson-Hollis of WCC (on Zoom), Barbara Putnam, Recording Secretary

Members Absent: Jill Johnson, Treasurer, Colleen Kinkade, Jacqueline Tiul

Gary Waugh called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

School Liaison Report: None

Law Enforcement Liaison Report: None

Approval of Minutes from 9/12/23 Matt Dyer moved and Priscilla Jeffrey seconded a motion that the minutes be adopted as submitted. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

Treasurer Report: Jill was absent.

Correspondence: Gary reported that we have received a thank you note from the Northwest Suicide Prevention Foundation for our \$500 donation, and from the Historical Society for our \$100 donation.

Old Business:

- **Berson Bench dedication event on September 18th:**

About 50 people attended, a series of varied voices spoke, and Jackie did a good job managing the refreshments. Physical invitations were sent and are effective.

- **Scarlett Lewis event on October 6 –**

In spite of our efforts to get the word out with school media, social media, and posters, there were only 25 people at this event.. There were several conflicts: heavy rain, the Black Bear Music Festival, early dismissal from school for the long weekend, and a PTO fall festival. Chris Leone did not attend, nor did he send any administrators. There had been a faculty training event in the afternoon, and the Scarlett Lewis Program was not given as an alternative.

Her liaison, Patrick Kiernan will send us her information -- a mental health curriculum that is compatible with the current one being used in the schools, Step Two. It covers K-12.

Discussion touched on the fact that there were three mental health emergency calls on the day of the presentation for young people in Litchfield; that the Newtown shooter had invited his first grade classmates to his birthday party and no one came; that mental health patients average

17 visits before they get treatment; that shooters who survive report feeling that they are not seen, that children see their peers who need help not getting effective help; and that we are going to put them through another difficult transition when we move them to new schools with regionalization.

We have not done a survey of our school kids since 2021. Emma has data from other towns similar to Litchfield but it's hard to get a complete picture of our community when the school board removes questions from the survey and parents opt out. We can hope that the more often we offer surveys, the more they will be accepted.

- **Matt Bellace Event on October 16 –**

He will do three presentations: Litchfield Schools and Wamogo during the day, and a parents' event in the evening. His theme, A Better High, was well received the last time he came. Gary requests that members of the council attend one of the sessions.

- **Scarecrow Contest October 13 –**

Jaime and her daughter are working on the scarecrow and expect to have it done by Friday. We will collect slips of paper on which participants write what they do for fun and how they take care of themselves, in a jack-o-lantern. We will have a QR code for our website and will offer to post the suggestions submitted to the pumpkin on our blog.

- **Suicide Awareness Prevention Walk on October 28**

The walk begins at 11 a.m. We are walking as a team. Members are encouraged to bring others.

- **Problem Gambling Adult Presentation**

After discussion, it was decided that putting this off until March will give us more time to plan. We would like to piggyback on another organization's event, such as PTO game night, or a sports assembly. We want to reach parents of middle school children to warn them of how gambling has changed, as is available to young people through social media.

Gary mentioned that Kate Zullo is interested in organizing Narcan training for local nonprofits whose staff may encounter overdoses in their work.

- **Update on Website Development –**

Harmony does our updates for an hourly rate, and has billed us for an hour this month. It would be helpful to have a presence on Instagram.

New Business

- **Membership update:**

Coleen Kinkade has not resigned. Jaime will resign after this meeting, and Barbara will not continue as Recording Secretary after this meeting.

- **Progress towards a Student Run Group**

There was discussion about seeing if we can get one of the new school social workers to work with us on this.

- **Progress on the WCC Grant Application:**

Jill was going to work with Emma to get this done by September 30, but now she is dealing with a flood at her school, so Gary and Priscilla will see if they can get this done. .

Adjournment:

Priscilla made and Jaime seconded a motion to adjourn. All voted in favor and the meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.