



TOWN OF OLD SAYBROOK

Office of the Board of Selectmen

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AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) AD HOC COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

HYBRID MEETING

Tuesday, April 26, 2022

5:00 p.m.

Old Saybrook Town Hall – First-floor Conference Room

To access a recording of this meeting: <https://youtu.be/4BK-BHIEGUs>

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by the chair, Mr. Carlson.

Members Present: Bruce Carlson (Chair), Susan Esty (Vice-chair), Kristen Roberts, Judy Sullivan, Kacie Hand, Elizabeth McEvily and Brad Thorpe.

Absent: Maureen Zavatone (Secretary).

Others Present: Carl Fortuna, Matthew Pugliese, Scott Giegerich, Jennifer Donahue, Gail Haesche, Mary Ann Iadarola, Priscilla Funck, Mary Briscoe, Tina Belmont (Town Nurse), Stan Mingione, Heather Milardo, Elizabeth Steffen, Eric Dussault, Dennis Tulumieri.

II. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no comments from the public.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from the April 12 meeting were reviewed. A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Thorpe and seconded by Ms. Esty to accept the minutes as submitted. Mr. Thorpe pointed out that in the last paragraph he was referred to as “Ms.” instead of “Mr.” With that amendment, the motion passed unanimously.

IV. GUEST PRESENTATIONS

Ms. Haesche from the Visiting Nurses Association (VNA) presented on behalf of the Public Health Nursing Board (PHNB) because its chair, Diane DePaolo, was unable to be present. Ms. Haesche detailed the history of the relationship of the VNA with the town and the PHNB as well as some of the mental health issues that they have been seeing in

town for elderly residents, which have been exacerbated since the pandemic began. The group is asking for \$150,000 to fund a 30-hour position for a psychiatric APRN to diagnose and prescribe medicine for individuals who need mental health care. The money would also fund community education programs on mental health. The services would be available to people of all ages in the Old Saybrook community, though they would primarily be utilized by the elderly, and would reduce hospitalizations resulting from mental health crises. They hope to sustain the position as part of a return to having a mental health component to their home care services. Committee members followed up with questions.

Mr. Mingione and Ms. Milardo from The Estuary explained that through a grant they obtained from the Eastern Connecticut Area on Aging their organization was able to hire a social worker to work with the seniors for 25 hours a week. The demand has been greater than expected and they asked for proportionate funding in the amount of \$10,000 from Old Saybrook to add 5 more hours a week to the person's schedule. This is approximately 60% of the funding needed to expand this initiative as 53 of the 92 people the social worker has assisted so far have been from Old Saybrook. The social worker provides screenings, education, referrals and group work. They feel that there is a good chance they can get grant funding to continue the program if they can continue to prove its success. Many people have used the service as it is offered at a location where they feel comfortable and familiar. Committee members followed up with questions.

In response to what they might do if they could get more money, Mr. Mingione added that a vehicle for meal delivery would be very helpful as Meals on Wheels is at an all-time high. The downstairs of their building is also in need of renovation after the thrift store relocated. If the structural issues there could be solved, they could have a wellness center downstairs with dedicated space for each of the services they offer.

V. OLD BUSINESS

No old business was discussed due to time constraints.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Carlson reviewed the upcoming visits for the committee. He noted that, according to the state, Old Saybrook still has the same number of licensed spaces for childcare as pre-pandemic. Whether those are being used in the same way is unknown. He is looking to see if someone from the Women's Business Development Center would be free for the next meeting. If not, senior health could be discussed in light of the many presentations that have been received about that. Mr. Fortuna and Parks & Recreation will present at the May 24 meeting and Kelly Vallieres of Connecticut Workforce Development will hopefully be able to appear at the first meeting in June. He suggested that after that the committee put together some short- and long-term goals and send a recommendation for funding for the short-term goals to the Board of Selectmen by the

end of June. During the summer and fall, long-term projects can continue to be discussed.

Mr. Carlson also noted that YFS sent a detailed social services request which he will distribute to committee members. A request has also been received from the Lions Club for funds lost during the pandemic.

An affordable housing forum with more than one presenter was discussed for the future.

VII. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE

There were no additional comments from committee members.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Thorpe made a **MOTION** to adjourn at 6:04 p.m. Ms. Sullivan seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The next meeting of the committee will be held on Tuesday, May 10, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. in the Town Hall first-floor conference room.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Donahue