

**Old Saybrook Youth & Family Services
Commission Meeting
Tuesday, September 1, 2020; 5:00 PM
Via Teleconference Due to COVID19/Corona Virus State of CT Public Health Emergency**

**Direct link to the recording:
Y&FS Commission Meetings: https://youtu.be/Q_GdDM1R9e0
Covid-19 Playlist:**

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLKX0JMf1KPP8IRBZS_ZdP8IwLPaujsfIH

“To collaboratively support and advocate for positive relationships in an inclusive community”

I. Roll Call	<p>Attendant Members: Mike Rafferty, Chair; Michael Spera, Chief of Police; Lisa Castro, Old Saybrook Middle School Counselor, Jonathan Paradis, Old Saybrook Parks and Recreation; Mary Ann Iadarola, Public Nursing Board Representative; David Plotkin, Community At-Large Member; Jeff Harder, Community At-Large Member</p> <p>Student Representatives: Libby Stuart Absent Student Representatives: Joe Bradley, Kyle Wisialowski Attendant Staff: Heather McNeil, Executive Director Susan Consoli, Social Services Coordinator Angela Gaidry, Commission Clerk</p>
II. Call to Order	Meeting called to order at 5:02 PM. Pledge of Allegiance
III. Comments from the Public	No one from the public was present.
IV. Approval of Minutes	Motion made by J. Paradis to approve the minutes of Tuesday, June 2, 2020 as presented. The motion was seconded by L. Castro and approved.
V. Chairman's Comments	Roll call and introductions for new members. M. Rafferty mentioned new members should receive their letters from First Selectman, Carl Fortuna to be sworn in.
VI. Director's Report for 9/01/2020	<p>H. McNeil mentioned to new members that an orientation packet will be going out. Any questions to email/ reach out to H. McNeil. H. McNeil invited Susan Consoli to speak about Social Services during COVID-19.</p> <p>S. Consoli As COVID began, numbers in need have risen. YFS encompasses positive youth development, social services and clinical services. All greatly impacted. Steady growth to help people meet basic needs (ex. health insurance, SNAP, energy assistance, etc). Over 1,000+ OS residents receiving assistance. Big increase in newly unemployed residents. This creates new challenges as unemployment processing has a 4-6 weeks backup, leading people to fall behind in bills. Lose health insurance. Need to enroll in Access Health (low cost or no-cost insurance). Gov. Lamont has extended State of Emergency Feb. 9, 2021. https://portal.ct.gov/Office-of-the-Governor/News/Press-Releases/2020/09-2020/Governor-Lamont-Extends-Connecticuts-State-of-Emergency-in-Response-To-COVID19</p>

Additional \$300 through a FEMA grant.
Applications for services must all be applied separately which adds to the confusion.
For people who have never applied for services, barriers include just knowing what is available. With families struggling - how it affects youth. With partnership within the schools, communication is the key.

M. Rafferty commended YFS for the great programs, bulletins and newsletters being sent out via email. How to get the information out? Explore other avenues, methods? Event magazine, OS town website, Chamber of Commerce, Facebook, etc.

Social Services Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/Old-Saybrook-Social-Services-302479953783285/>

H. McNeil

Feedback: Ongoing conversations with entire community (town residents, members of school community, town partners/organizations, etc.) on how to move forward.

Assessing community needs/Committee Work-

Recovery taskforce (YFS- emotional wellness & social services component includes church leaders, clinicians and medical professionals)

Consistent message- Adaptable & Flexible. Prioritizing competing demands within the agency and beyond requires flexibility. Who/what needs our attention 1st and how to adapt accordingly.

Taking care of staff needs/schedules, being able to see clients via tele-health or outside off-site, etc.

Fall 2020 for Mental Health Services-

Interns (4 CCSU, 1 U. Central FL, 1 Rutgers) to help facilitate school-age youth programs and meetings (virtually), community/parent groups (virtually), education/resources/support- national recovery month, also teacher & staff support available. YFS clinicians' suicide prevention training for community.

Holiday Giving- last year over 80+ families, approximately 200 children.

Due to COVID, this year process has changed. Gift cards only. Letters to donors giving parents the autonomy to purchase the gifts. Will provide wrapping paper/bows. Deadline before Thanksgiving.

Chief Spera – re: process for Turkey Drive – TBD

SEARCH Institute survey (not this year) – 4 core measures will be discussing possible options TBD.

H.McNeil – want to continue to find out from student reps- “what’s important to you and your peers?” and “what can the commission do to help?”

Estuary Council looking for drivers for Meals on Wheels Tues/Thurs 10-12.

Currently YFS program coordinators B. Eckert & W. Mill driving. Would like to get 18-24 yrs. to assist.

L. Castro- college-students currently living at home? Need to get the word out via social media. OS does have the electronic signs -very informative.

	<p>H. McNeil asks how 1st day of school went for all?</p> <p>D. Plotkin- nice to be able to be back in the classroom. L. Castro- great to see them “smiles” behind the mask, remaining socially distanced, parents understandably a little anxious but most willing to help and be understanding.</p> <p>L. Stuart- teachers have communicated well. Will be good to have a routine again.</p> <p>J. Paradis (Parks & Rec) H. McNeil helped to find another staff member.</p> <p>No freshman retreat fall 2020; perhaps something in spring or fall 2021. Some disappointment but under the circumstances understandable.</p>
VII. Old Business	<p>M. Rafferty – Thank you to OS police for help during the storm @ OSHS.</p> <p>Discussion of possible subcommittees (grant \$, advocacy, publicity)</p> <p>Students, PTOs- other avenues to disseminate helpful YFS information, via Facebook pages, Central Office (homeschoolers).</p> <p>Publicity- community events. J. Paradis- billboards in Bristol.</p> <p>Chief Spera reiterated Director McNeil welcomes the suggestions but important to remember committee is here to help. Any outreach should come from H. McNeil with members assisting only upon her request.</p>
VIII. New Business	<p>Action steps and advocacy or report on initiatives by Commission members</p> <p>Next YFS Commission meeting October 6th.</p>
IX. Other Business	Nothing to report.
X. Adjournment	<p>Motion made by M. Spera to adjourn the meeting at 6:12 PM. The motion was seconded by J. Paradis and approved.</p>

Respectfully submitted,
Angela Gaidry, Recording Clerk