

Minutes of the Bernards Township Municipal Alliance /Youth Services Commission  
February 4, 2020

**Mayoral-Appointed Members Attending**

Joan Harris, Chair, Township Committee Representative  
Kaitlin Cartoccio, Vice Chair, Health Department Representative  
Jennifer Korn, BOE Representative  
MJ Postal, Senior Citizen Representative  
Cathy Phillips, Substance Abuse Representative  
Audrey West, Student Representative  
Ellen Houlihan, Civic Group Representative  
Tracy Baldassare, Bernards Township Police Department  
Johnny Graves, Clergy  
Cindy Fleischer, Citizen Representative (BRMA)  
Violet Sharpe, RAAD  
Abigail Philips, RAAD  
Catherine Santaiti, PTO

**Other Attendees**

Lucy Forgione, Bernards Township Health Department  
Meg Isbitski, Somerset County Dept of Human Services  
Todd Edelstein, Member of the Public

**Members Not Attending**

Swapna Uradi, PTO Representative  
Monica Sprague, Youth Services Commission  
Amy Stem, William Annin Middle School SAC, School Representative  
Alex Timoney, Student Representative  
Jennifer Sorenson, Somerset County Alliance Coordinator

**Call to Order**

Joan Harris called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM. All attendees stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Mission Statement**

The Mission Statement was read by Joan Harris. The mission of the Bernards Township Municipal Alliance Against Substance Abuse is to provide consultation , programs, training, and resources to members of the Bernards Township community with the goal of preventing and reducing the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

Three goals of the Alliance: ESP!

1. To **Educate** about the damaging effects of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs,
2. To **Support** events & programs that provide healthy alternatives to substance abuse, and

3. To create community wide **Presence** in the identification of problems and in designing effective measurable solutions.

### **Public Comment**

Todd Edelstein was commenting on the young man from town who passed away, he said we could use more suicide prevention training sessions to know what to look for if a kid is troubled but you can't tell outwardly.

He is a crossing guard at RHS. Speaks to all the kids and can see from day to day if some are not acting the same.

He thinks the "Help Desk" should be re-implemented because children in trouble might talk to a friendly Mom before a teacher or counselor.

He has been e-mailing clips of old (retro) movies to Kaitlin from TCM dealing with driving safety, drugs, etc) He thought they would prompt more discussion because the are old and different.

### **Minutes Approval**

Dec 3, 2019

Motion 1: Ellen Houlihan

Seconded: MJ Postal

Jan. 7, 2020

Motion1: Kathy Phillips

Seconded: Jen Korn

### **Reports**

#### **Somerset County Alliance Coordinator**

- Networking Meeting – Looking for new Members

#### **Youth Services Commission**

- 2/28 – Community Workshop on Teen Dating

#### **Community Program Coordinator**

- No Update

### **Agenda Items**

#### **1. Meg Isbitski, LSW, DRCC – Asst Mental Health Administrator, AFN Coordinator-Somerset County Department of Human Services.**

- Ms. Isbitski oversees the Mental Health Board services as they relate Somerset County. They hear grievances related to mental health services (or lack thereof). Help people connect to resources and services.

- Trying to push more education and collaboration with communities. The program with kids taking to kids about mental health had 55 kids in attendance.
- Build a connection with communities: Starting a county wide Stigma Free presentation. How stigma can effect people and keep them from getting the help they need.
- People who have suffered from mental health issues and family members give the presentations. Discussing how they overcame the stigma and how the stigma affected them.
- Rolling this program out now, the county wants to partner with local community stigma groups. Perhaps have some of the presenters come to our May event.
- There is a website being developed. (co.somerset.nj.us) The website can consolidate information regarding stigma and mental health services.
- Ms. Isbitski met with Ms. Harris, trying to sync the Bernards and Somerset Stigma programs.
- Friday February 7 at 2PM , there is meeting of Stigma Free Somerset County at the Bridgewater Library, room C

## **2. Nominations**

- Vice Chair: Kaitlin Cartoccio  
Nominated by Joan Harris  
Seconded by Cathy Phillips
- Secretary: Jen Korn  
Nominated by Kaitlin Cartoccio  
Seconded by MJ Postal
- RHS Booth: MJ Postal and Johnny Graves  
Nominated by Joan Harris  
Seconded by Cathy Phillips
- Fundraising/Twilight Challenge: Swapna Uradi  
Nominated by Joan Harris  
Seconded by Cathy Phillips
- Mental Health: Joan Harris  
Nominated by Kaitlin Cartoccio  
Seconded by Cathy Phillips

## **3. Grant Coordinator Update**

- No updates on the Vape grant yet, still up in the air , spring is the best time to do anything
- Municipal Alliance T-Shirts are navy blue with the MA Logo. Good to wear to MA event to be more visible.
- RAAD will be manning a table for National School Counselors Month (working with Stephanie Smith). They invite kids to write nice messages about their counselors and post them to their doors with

small treats. The table will have bubbles, stress balls , Hershey kisses as well as information on stress.

- RISE –They have a Red ipad touch to play music and had a successful pilot during the morning holding period and surveyed the student to add to a playlist.

#### **4. Upcoming Events – Save the Date**

- The Fentanyl Factor – Showing at the Ridge PAC March 31, 2020. Partnering with the Somerset Hills Municipal Alliance and the Safe Community Coalition. 15 minute documentary screening and Narcan Training. The Narcan training is limited to 30 people. Therefore they want to keep track of attendees through registration. A flyer is in development.
- Not Just for the Likes – Presentation on effects of social media on mental health. Thursday, April 30 6-8:30 at the Bernards Municipal Building. Presented by Olamide Margarucci. Ms. Margarucci would like to keep a head count through registrations. There is a flyer available. 2.5 hours might hinder some attendance, Kaitlin will ask if the presentation can be shortened at all.
- Screenagers Recap: 100 people in attendance. More solutions were offered in this version than the first screenager movie. Offerd more tool for parents to use. After the movie there was a preview of Not Just For the Likes

#### **5. Subcommittees Update**

- RHS Booth – Mr. Graves had a cool idea after seeing a commercial about how to show kids the dangers of vaping (essentially showing how a vape can be turned into 5 cigarettes with magic) knowing how kids hate cigarettes, equating Cigs with Vapes might have more of a impact. It was suggested to make a huge vape out of cigarette boxes. It was also mentioned that kids are watching '80'shows where smoking is glamorized. Also that kids are using after market pods to save money.
- Twilight Challenge – Sunday June 7, 2020. Link is live for sign ups. New donation flyer, only handing out cinch bags. New t-shirt sponsor format: Bronze, Silver and Gold levels for sponsors. Logos must be formatted and handed in by a certain date. A fundraising letter is in the works. Wegmans was asked to be a donor (Kaitlin applied) waiting to hear back.
- Charter Day: May 16
- Mental Health - Stigma Free Concert Ross Farms, May 8<sup>th</sup>. Jesse Rubins will be performing, he has been on the Today Show <https://www.jesseruben.com/>. Jesse had undiagnosed Lyme Disease and that put him into a depression that he will talk about as well as songs he wrote about it. Ross Farms is helping with the marketing. The Minuteman Food Truck will be there. Hoping to get some RHS kids to perform as an opening act and have some speakers talk about

their mental health experiences. Ross Farm is voting to approve the event on Feb. 12. Will be asking a \$10 donation.

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**Local Events/Municipal Alliance Member Comment**

MJ Postal said it was a privilege to serve with Meg Isbitski on the Mental Health Board. That Somerset County has an amazing list of Mental Health Services and thanks to all those who serve on the Mental Health Board. She watched a interview with Kevin Hines (jumped off the Golden Gate), said it was very good <http://www.kevinhinesstory.com/>. Also Breakthrough the movie, to show how amazing it is when people come together to support one another through hard times. That no one has to suffer alone.

We talked about a symbol for the Stigma Free, green ribbon (mental health) and purple (suicide prevention)

Abigail spoke about HS student s having services about staying off substances but that middle school students could use more mental health services. The shock of going to middle school after grammar school is hard.

Teachers in the elementary schools could use more mental health first aid training. There are lots of kids that need attention and the teachers would like more training to help them.

Cindy from the Basking Ridge Business Alliance, they support the businesses of people who reside in BR or have a business in or around BR. Is there a way to tap into this group to help spread awareness of Mental Health Education. Perhaps Kaitlin could present to their group.

Happy Birthday To MJ!

**Adjournment – 7:12**

Motion            1-MJ Postal  
                         2-Kaitlin Cartoccio

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jen Korn