

**Minutes of the Bernards Township  
Municipal Alliance /Youth Services Commission  
Zoom Video Conference**

**October 6, 2020**

**Mayoral-Appointed Members Attending**

Kaitlin Cartoccio, Vice Chair, Health Department Representative  
Joan Harris, Chair, Township Committee Representative  
Jennifer Korn, BOE Representative  
MJ Postal, Senior Citizen Representative  
Cathy Phillips, Substance Abuse Representative  
Johnny Graves, Clergy Representative  
Catherine Santaiti, PTO

**Other Attendees**

Lucy Forgione, Bernards Township Health Department  
Jennifer Sorenson, Somerset County Alliance Coordinator

**Members Not Attending**

Tracy Baldassare, Bernards Township Police Department  
Swapna Uradi, Citizen Representative  
Alex Timoney, Student Representative  
Madison Clowes, Student Representative  
Cindy Fleischer, Citizen Representative  
Amy Stem, William Annin Middle School SAC, School Representative  
Ellen Houlihan, Civic Group Representative  
Laurie Albee, Community Representative

**Call to Order**

Kaitlin Cartoccio called the meeting to order at 6:01 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.

### **Staff Comment**

None

### **Minutes Approval**

Tabled to the next meeting

### **Reports**

#### **Somerset County Alliance Coordinator (Jennifer Sorenson)**

- Ms. Sorenson reminded us that the Board of County Freeholders had changed to the Board of County Commissioners and if we had any stationary with Freeholders to try to use it by the end of the year.
- The 5<sup>th</sup> Quarter report is coming out on October 13, 2020. Ms. Sorenson said Funding for 2022 is staying the same as 2021. Kaitlin questioned that stat and it pointed out that 2021 is 3Q (\$6000) and we are getting \$8,000 with more quarters that the funding is actually going down.
- RFA timeline is TBD, need something in writing

#### **Youth Services Commission (Monica Sprague)**

- Monica was not in attendance

#### **Community Program Coordinator**

- Youth Services Commission grant for REACH and Viking Yoga
- Still doing Viking Yoga – safely in person or virtual
- Did not apply for the \$6,000 competitive grant. No RISE this year, it is represented by the iPod for music in the mornings at WAMS and can set up a area in the corner of the media room

#### **Municipal Alliance News:**

- Because there are no in-person events, there will be a push to promote awareness days and programs on Facebook.
  - Mental Health and Substance Abuse Awareness in October. Knock Out Opioid Abuse Day and other online programs.
  - Awareness Days: World Mental Health Day; OCD 10/11/20; Bully Prevention and Awareness
  - Try to post 2-3 days online per week and have programs wherever possible
- Quarterly Coordinator Meetings; try to run one big program with other Alliances.
  - ie: Angst was well liked, try to coordinate online screenings and presentations.

- Somerset County Documentary Series. Invite all members coordinate times and dates to gauge the best accessibility
  - Try to have a longer window of time for people to view
- Start of the next fiscal year (10/1/20-6/30/21).
- Questions of any in-person programming is a wait and see.
- Trying to come up with ideas and share with all Somerset County Coordinators

## **Agenda Items**

### **1. REACH (Ridge Education Action and Community Health)**

- \$7,000 grant for RHS Vape programming
- Support without Stigma.

### **2. Fall Program Ideas**

- Ms. Harris wanted to know the best way the group could help Ms. Cartoccio with the process so she is not overwhelmed considering her work at the health department and the pandemic.
- Ms. Cartoccio wanted to know if any one had any ideas for programming. Right now, all is consumed with COVID-19 and we need a push for other ideas. (ie: opioids and depression)
- With the ideas Ms. Cartoccio can help coordinate publicity such as scheduled Facebook posts and resources.
- Mental Health ideas for kids were popular:
  - Helping kids in transition grades (K-6-9) connect to community and each other, especially if they are remote learning only.
  - Perhaps Alliance members could send uplifting messages to the kids weekly
  - Ms. Korn mentioned that the school counseling department also has many resources for the children, and we would not want to recreate what is already being done.
- At the County meeting on 10/19 they are getting federal money for mental health to hire people to form support groups. All ages and ideas welcome.
- Outreach to those on the outskirts was mentioned – perhaps a company can be used that already creates and sends quick contacts.
- Constant Contact was suggested and also teaming with Community in Crisis. Perhaps online Narcan training.
- Rachael Talbert - The young adult librarian from the Bernards Township Library was mentioned as a resource
- Looking at mental health programs and substance free activities for those in the community

### **3. Subcommittees Update**

- RHS Booth – MJ Postal/Johnny Graves – No report.
- Fundraising/Twilight Challenge – Swapna Uradi – No report.
- Mental Health – Joan Harris – No report.

### **Public Comment**

No comments.

### **Local Events/Municipal Alliance Member Comment**

- Ms. Cartoccio and Rachel Talbert from the Bernards Township Library will be working to try and do a “Teen Volunteer Fair” virtually if possible.
- October 24<sup>th</sup> is the National DEA Takeback Day at dropboxes around the Country. Bernards Township’s drop box will be open, same as others from 10am-2pm for drop off. There will not be a drive thru drop off this year.
- Ms. Phillips thanked Ms. Cartoccio and Ms. Forgione for all their work during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Ms. Harris asked the Municipal Alliance to send ideas for upcoming programs to be sent to her and Ms. Cartoccio via email.

### **Adjournment –**

Catherine Santaiti made a motion to adjourn at 7:05 pm and Ms. Cartoccio seconded.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jen Korn  
*Secretary*