



Fairfield CARES Community Coalition Minutes

February 17, 2021

View a recording of the meeting on our [YouTube channel](#)

Welcome Call to Order: Cristin McCarthy Vahey welcomed all to the meeting at 8:35am

Attendance:

Co-chair Cristin McCarthy Vahey (Government/State Rep, Parent), **Michael Cummings** (Superintendent)

Members: Wendy Bentivenga (Parent, Community Member), Philip Dwyer (Civic/Volunteer Org), Donna Fletcher (Health Care), Cathy Hazlett (Staff), Emily Melnick (Evaluator), Alison Seyal (Government/Social Services, Parent), Margaret Watt (Substance Misuse Prevention Org), Nicole Wichowski (Substance Misuse Prevention Org), Coreen Ahmad (Youth Serving Org/Gov), Noreen Wilpiseski (Youth Serving Org/Gov), Vicki Gustafson (Kiwanis Club), Giovanna Mozzo (The Hub), Leonora Campbell (parent, Community member), Beverly Balaz (Fairfield Chamber of Commerce), Tim Morris (Student, Assistant Counselor FLH School), William Hass (Rotary, SHU), Matt Danzar (treatment center), Virginia Paules, Maureen (YMCA), Diana Lytec (YMCA) Tom Lawless (SHU, intern with CMV), Dana Bassio (Livy Shah (youth), Alida Ward (Co-Pastor Greenfield Hill Church), Steven Baker (PTA Council, Parent and Community member), Steve Bogan (parent, Community member), Kelsey Ciarlegio (Community youth prevention), Michael Patota (Community prevention guidance center), Jana Tvedt (parent) (() indicates community sector.

Introductions

Approval of Minutes: Philip Dwyer made the motion to approve the January 20th Coalition Minutes and Wendy Bentivenga seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Co-Chair Update: Mike Cummings – working to still support the students social and emotional needs and for the community. Will be announcing soon about the students returning to school full-time. Cristin McCarthy-Vahey provided an update legislative update and discussion of advocacy for the Coalition and what role that will be specifically.

FCYC Video for 8th Grade Health Classes Cathy shared that this was an effort last semester, and it is a focus on peer-to-peer prevention modeling to 8th graders from high schoolers on the youth committee – it is 9 minutes long -Cameron Lynch produced it. It has 3 parts-where three students talk about a myth and debunks that myth that young people might have about alcohol, drug use - talked about reasons not to use and their own reasons – why they choose not to use - also addressed how to deal with peer pressure and importance to surround themselves with positive and good people who are like

themselves – and the same values don't need to use to have a good time. Very impressive from the students. Question about making the video publicized – need permission.

Mission & Vision Statement Phil shared the process of what has been done, screen shared the Mission & Vision changes to be updated. Vision – statement – What does FCC do? and the Mission – Why we are we here and How do we do it. Phil Dwyer made the motion to adopt the revision of the Mission and Vision statement that was presented, and Mike Cummings seconded. Building capacity – of the community to respond to the issues of prevention of substance misuse – capacity of children, parents the community. A vocal vote of approval from all and unanimous.

Fairfield County Giving Day Margaret shared that the FCC will be participating on February 25th. Valid place for community dollars to be raised to support FCC. Will help with sustainability and provide for more diverse and discretionary funding sources. FCC has been funded by the CDC grant – LPC grant – will need to allocate more monies and this could support that efforts. Specific hours set aside to get more money Health and Wellness power hour 12-1.

Further discussion about a Fundraising and Development committee. The Resource committee will focus on Financial Resources, grants and opportunities for other new initiatives, review of the By-laws and creating and developing the Volunteer recruitment and efforts. Michael Patota has expressed interest in the development of the committee.

Focus Group Findings – Emily provided a PowerPoint regarding these results. The results were from HS/MS students and MS/HS parents. Specific with Fairfield. PowerPoint was made available and discussion ensued. The following points and information were noted and shared: alcohol use up by youth, drinking alone in bedroom; drinking out of boredom, kids notice parents drinking more - vaping seems to be less popular, "not as cool"; health messages may be resonating, or kids are feeling the effects of the vapes and do not like it. - marijuana being used primarily to cope with stress and anxiety - using someone else's Rx not really on the radar, so little of that happening in comparison to other substances - youth expressed that they struggle with how to talk to their friends about not using - youth and parents need to be taught healthy coping skills, particularly true for youth

Committee Time – No reports were provided due to the time spent on the extremely informative and important presentation from the focus groups.

Hub Update – we have weekly Narcan Education / Administration trainings to everyone in the region. -- you can find the flyer on our website www.thehubct.org

Announcements from Coalition Members: Programming Plans: Postcard being sent to parents April social hosts – Webinar with CFJ – Healthy Relationships and the role alcohol plays in that for parents and teens – Mental Health Awareness Month - May 19th annual meeting that is in the evening - to have a speaker and looking into a larger scale program. Author – A Better High – and Resilient presenter - Smart Groups 6:00pm Monday – for parents meeting Feeling Smart – Wednesday's 4:00pm for students is just uploaded a flyer for everyone to share - drop in options our TurningPointCT.org project and our SMART Recovery Teen group are providing BY and FOR teens - great for those who are disconnected.

Adjournment - Meeting adjourned at 10:08am