

**East Lyme Board of Selectmen
Special Meeting of April 7th, 2021
Minutes**

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Meeting ID: 846 9475 4394 Passcode: 06357

Present: Mark Nickerson
Kevin Seery
Marc Salerno
Dan Cunningham
Paul Dagle
Rose Ann Hardy

FILED

April 12, 2021 AT 9 AM PM
Branke Strou ATC
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK

Also Present: Anna Johnson, Finance Director
Dave Putnam, Director of Parks & Rec
David Fasulo, Assistant Principal of East Lyme High School
Jeffrey Newton, Superintendent of Schools
Ann Dagle, The Brian Dagle Foundation
Christopher Mountain, East Lyme Psychologist
Dan Walsh, Niantic Main Street
Sue Kumro, Niantic Main Street
Michelle Williams, Planning Commission Member

The Special Meeting of the East Lyme Board of Selectmen was held on Wednesday, April 7th, 2021, at 7:00 p.m., via Zoom; this teleconference was recorded in its entirety and in accordance with the requirements of executive order 7B, issued by Governor Lamont, which allows for public meetings to be held over teleconference.

Mr. Nickerson called the Special Board of Selectmen Meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

I. Pledge

Mr. Nickerson led the Pledge. He noted tonight starts a series of various groups coming before the BOS to discuss possible plans for the American Rescue Plan funds. He added that this is more of a fact finding mission since we've yet to be given parameters and the fund rules by the U.S. Treasury. Mr. Nickerson said we don't expect to have this information until the middle of May, at the earliest but the BOS wants to get the momentum going by checking in with various groups.

II. American Rescue Plan & Possible Uses

A. Town of East Lyme Youth Services

Dave Putnam, Director of Parks & Rec, said they're concerned about mental health support in our community and have been discussing it for several years with the East Lyme Youth Coalition

as well as with the schools; they've been looking for a way to upgrade the services they provide as a youth services bureau. He said the coalition as part of the Youth Services Bureau, consists of himself, Mr. Newton, Ms. Dagle, Mr. Fasulo and Mr. Mountain, all of who are in attendance this evening. Mr. Putnam gave some highlights while Mr. Fasulo gave their power point presentation, and some of the following was noted:

- A greater focus on family and youth services is required in East Lyme.
- A significant community and family need is present to support adults and children through mental health challenges and substance abuse issues, especially during and after the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The Town is lacking a robust Youth Services Bureau that can provide needed support to families and loved ones.
- Direct and comprehensive oversight by a full-time Director or Coordinator of Wellness, Prevention, and Mentoring would bring an increased focus and improved attention to the devastating issues of suicide, substance abuse, and mental health across our community.
- A full-time Clinical Therapist or Counselor working with a Director or Coordinator within the Youth Services Bureau would become a key asset in supporting community members and families with needs, assessments, counseling, treatment plans, and connecting with outside agencies and resources.
- A more robust East Lyme Youth Services Bureau with appropriate staffing could improve connections and support with other towns and programs such as the Dagle Foundation, while also focusing on grant opportunities and funding sources.
- A Wellness/Prevention/Mentoring Coordinator would address the social and emotional needs of the youth in our community.
- The current pandemic has resulted in increased anxiety levels in our youth that has adversely affected our community.
- We need to hit hard with the prevention side of things.
- The Coordinator would also Chair the East Lyme Youth Coalition.
- We previously began the Viking Mentoring Program which well up until Covid-19 hit.

Chris Mountain briefly shared the importance of implementing a Clinical Therapist or Counselor who would;

- conduct intakes & assessments
- schedule clients
- provide counseling therapy
- create treatment plans
- work with outside agencies to provide resources & referrals
- participate in regularly scheduled individual & group supervision
- work with the Connecticut DCF & court systems, and so forth.

He stressed the importance of employing someone who is licensed for these two positions and how the positions go hand in hand.

David Fasulo briefly discussed some of the services going on in our schools:

1. Universal Supports-

- Social and Emotional Learning
- School Counselors Support
- Advisory Lessons
- Social-Emotional Learning Assessments
- Positive Behavioral Intervention Support (PBIS) Program
- Staff QPR Gatekeeper Training (emergency mental health intervention)

2. Specialized Supports-

- School Psychologists
- School Social Workers
- Crisis Intervention Teams
- Therapeutic Crisis Intervention
- Training/Certification
- Therapeutic Speciality Programs
- Drug & Alcohol Counseling
- Collaboration with 211 Mobile Crisis Intervention
- Collaboration with DCF Emergent & Non-Emergent Referrals
- Collaboration with Outside Therapists
- Collaboration with Partial Hospitalization Programs

Mr. Mountain summarized support staff roles to illustrate how the two new positions would complete the picture.

a. School Counselor-

- Individual Social/Emotional Support
- Small Group Social/Emotional Support
- Crisis Intervention
- Classroom Curriculum
- Job specific roles include academics, post-secondary planning, and developmental curriculum.

b. School Psychologist-

- Individual Social/Emotional Support
- Small Group Social/Emotional Support
- Crisis Intervention
- Job specific roles include consultation regarding mental health, disabilities, behavioral & educational concerns, counseling for students with IEPs and 504, assessment interpretation & administration, identifying special education needs.

c. School Social Worker-

- Individual Social/Emotional Support
- Small Group Social/Emotional Support
- Crisis Intervention
- Job specific roles include family/sibling, case management services, drop-in services, and outside agency referrals.

d. Substance Abuse Counselor-

- Individual Social/Emotional Support
- Crisis Intervention
- Job specific roles include student addiction, families with addiction, and outside agency referrals.

Mr. Mountain noted the hours for the new positions would be hours outside of the school day as well as during summers; the idea is to work collaboratively with the schools.

Mr. Newton stressed the need for assistance outside of school hours and during the summer months; they don't have enough support in the schools themselves, nevermind outside of them.

Ann Dagle briefly highlighted local comparisons of Youth Service Bureau's staffing and servicing:

a. Montville

- Director- full time
- Program Coordinators- full time
- Administrative Staff- full time
- Counseling- per diem

b. Waterford

- Director- full time
- (2) Program Coordinators- full time
- Administrative Staff- full time
- Counseling- 3 part time

c. Colchester

- Director- full time
- (2) Program Coordinators- full time
- Prevention Counselor- full time
- Counseling- part time

d. Old Lyme

- Director- full time
- (2) Program Coordinators- full time (one early childhood)
- Prevention Counselor- full time
- Administrative Staff- full time
- Counseling- contractual

e. East Lyme

- Director- shared position with Parks & Rec
- Program Coordinator- shared position with Parks & Rec
- Administrative Staff- shared position with Parks & Rec
- Counseling- none

Ms. Dagle noted the Brian Dagle Foundation will be able to assist with these services and Mr. Newton observed this is something the Town is lacking.

Mr. Nickerson observed the importance for mental health services noting the need doesn't stop when one reaches the age of 18. He explained that the funding would allow for a period of 3 or 4 years and they're not suggesting indefinite positions or to grow government. Mr. Nickerson said these services would also be an advantage for Town Police when difficult situations arise after school hours.

Mr. Salerno asked if these positions are for Youth Services only or for townwide use and any age and Mr. Putnam confirmed it would be for town wide use and for any age.

Mr. Salerno said he liked the idea of having monthly public speakers as opposed to once or twice a year, and asked if the Prevention Coordinator would be responsible for scheduling those, and Mr. Putam replied in the affirmative.

Mr. Salerno asked if there has been any thought to having participation from Salem since we're tied highschool wise and Mr. Newton said they hadn't considered that but it will be a good discussion topic as they move forward.

Mr. Salerno asked what the homebase would be and Mr. Newton said the Youth Center. Mr. Salerno said a few office hours in Salem also might be helpful and noted the Board will need more particulars in regards to cost, in the future.

Mr. Cunningham said the need is apparent to him and noted the service will probably be sorely missed once the contract ends; he'd like to see some kind of commitment for sustaining this program further into the future, by looking for grants and items of that nature.

Mr. Dagle said he agrees with Mr. Cunningham, and this is a significant need, which is long overdue. He added that the Town should look at this as a pilot program and act accordingly going forward.

Mr. Nickerson said they don't expect to see funding until June and noted further details for this project will be needed once they know the parameters of the funding.

B. Niantic Main Street

Dan Walsh and Sue Kumro were present to discuss Niantic Main Street as well as what they may be able to accomplish with aid from the American Rescue Plan. Mr. Walsh shared some of the following:

- They're a nonprofit organization.
- They've been around since 2001 and consist entirely of volunteers.
- Although they do some beautification such as the planters downtown, they're not part of the Beautification Committee.
- Currently they consist of 8 active volunteers.

- One of their biggest accomplishments was receiving the STEAP Grant, which led to the pavers, streetlights, trees, and curbing downtown.
- They brought on a marketing coordinator which was one of the items the Charrette Report recommended.
- Ms. Kumro said Michelle Williams kindly acknowledged all the work Niantic Main Street has done, in the 10 year update to the POCD (East Lyme Plan of Conservation and Development.)
- Mr. Walsh said they've been productive and have used the Charrette Report to guide them in a lot of ways.
- They're coming off of Restaurant Week which was an investment of \$5,000 for Niantic Main Street.
- It was a resounding success for getting people back out- at least for takeout.
- They have a vintage market coming up on May 15th.
- They also do the Holiday Stroll and the First Selectman lights the Christmas Tree on the Green, which has become a fan favorite.
- They also do Bargains By the Bay, the Farmers Market and the Boardwalk 5K.
- This year they did "Feeding Our Friends," where they bought meals for Ahepa and Nursing home residents.
- They think they're a group that can use funds efficiently, wisely, and make a difference.
- Because the Charrette Report has been such a compass for them, they thought it might make sense to revisit it.
- The report was initially done in 1997 and revisiting it would probably be a great starting point.
- They have ideas but certainly aren't married to the concepts.
- They would also like to do a Veterans Park facelift and bring more Art to Town, so that people continue to see Niantic as a designation for more reasons than being a seaside village with a few good restaurants, and some recreation possibilities.
- They're open to input and suggestions.

Mr. Nickerson asked Mr. Walsh to clarify what businesses they represent, and Mr. Walsh replied that their mission statement is to make Niantic a better place to live, work, and play; this doesn't restrict them to Main Street and they're concerned with all of East Lyme. Ms. Kumro explained that Main Street is a national movement and although the main focus is on Main Street, they include everyone in Town.

Mr. Nickerson said he thought it would be better to hear from the business community how they're going to support each other, as opposed to having the government dictate it.

Ms. Kumro noted they often raise a lot of money on their own from different events and were very involved in the new park; they sold the bricks there and gave the Town back \$40,000. She said there is a lot of behind the scenes work with Niantic Main Street and many of them aren't business owners. Ms. Kumro added that they're people who really care about the Town.

Mr. Walsh briefly discussed the importance of focusing on Flanders Village as well and treating both villages as one town.

Mr. Nickerson suggested having the group meet further with members of the Board for brainstorming and more discussion.

Mr. Seery said he thinks a new Charrette Report would be a great launching point.

Mr. Nickerson suggested they make note of everything successfully completed from the Charrette Report; doing so may illustrate the need for a new one.

III. Public Comment

Michelle Williams said she is really excited that they have the opportunity to have these conversations, and it was exciting to listen for the last hour and be reminded of how many people are out there thinking about the welfare of our community members, and how to make our Town better. She said she would be remiss if she didn't say that she would appreciate it if the Plan of Conservation and Development was considered as we make decisions about how to spend this money.

Mr. Nickerson said he will reach out to Ms. Williams so that they can discuss incorporating the POCD when considering these projects.

IV. Selectman's Response

Mr. Nickerson said they can save any responses for the regular meeting.

V. Adjourn

MOTION (1)

Mr. Seery moved to adjourn the April 7th, 2021 Special Board of Selectmen meeting at 7:58 p.m.

Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 6-0-0.

Respectfully Submitted,
Brooke Stevens, Substitute Recording Secretary