

Minutes
TOWN OF COLUMBIA
Youth Services Committee
Wednesday, May 10, 2017– 5:30 pm.
Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room

Present: Alyssa Gwinnell, Dan Leavitt, Bill O’Brien, Melissa Petrone, Mark Walter and Carol Wiggins, Marc Volza.

Absent: Greg DiCarli

1. **CALL TO ORDER** Meeting called to order at 5:30pm
2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF January 11, 2017 MEETING**
Approved 6-0-0
3. **AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS**
None
4. **NEW BUSINESS**

Discussion of Drug Concern in Columbia with Community. Audience members present: Peter Starkel, Columbia Fire Chief; Barbara Wilson, Special Education Director in Columbia; Chris Tolsdorf, Retired Psychologist; Kathy Tolsdorf, BOE member; Dick Szegda, Retired from DCF; Rob Hellstrom, Selectman; Brenna Crooks, NJHS; Payton Lussen, NJHS; Brendan Grimm, AHM Prevention Coordinator; Carman Vance, First Selectman.

Many of the overdoses that Columbia deals with are transient. However, there are a significant number in private residencies in town as well. There have been a significant increase over the past two years.

What are some suggestions or thoughts on how we can address this in our community?

- Parents/community have to be educated about the situation, how to intervene, how to not be in denial. We also have an agency that does a great job who deals with this as they are not only youth services, but also family services and we should be sitting down with them on how we identify these issues and educate the community. There is no magic pill. We need to have programs in place to identify and deal with the concerns.
- School is responsible for educating all employees in mandate training and share out when we find out about other concerns they are shared with staff and parents as appropriate.
- Seeing a combination of over the counter misuse and cocaine or meth. WE have not encountered anyone as young as 13, but have seen most in the mid-twenties and as old as in the 50s.

- In the field seeing kids as young as 14 coming in with Narciane prescriptions because of addictions.
- There does seem to have a clear connection with drug use increasing in severity as people become addicted.
- AHM working with schools to educate students through the school. Social norming campaign next week to make people aware of what is actually going on in school – not what they think is going on. Changing the culture is an important aspect. Health care providers will do a lunch and learn about tips for prescribing.
- Columbia is a direct route between Hartford and Providence. So there are many things that happen just off of route 6.
- From student in audience: Bring awareness that town of Columbia has people over doses. Bringing more awareness to all middle school through health programs in school. We know it exists because of TV, but don't see it in the school.
- SBIRT – AHM is looking to get into all of the schools. Counselor sits down with each student and has a conversation and builds rapport and assesses risks.
- It is important to continue to support families through the school and the local agencies. Is there a brochure that can be provided to families that give suggestions on where they can refer them for help and assistance?

In Summation:

- Creation of brochure to support families of need
- Bringing the idea of drug problems in Columbia to youth
- Working with AHM about programs in place and how to make them available when needed

Next meeting June 14.

5. **ADJOURNMENT** Meeting adjourned at 6:38 pm.