

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL FOR HUMAN SERVICES (CHS)

MINUTES – APRIL 5, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 pm

Present were Council members: Claudia Valle, Brooke Mohr, Sindy Rivera, Vanessa Rendeiro, Joseline Ramirez, Athalyn Sweeney

Absent: Daryl Westbrook

Staff Present: Rachel Day, Jerico Mele, Ann Medina

Member of Public: Heather Francis, Deb Dubois

This meeting is being held remotely via ZOOM because of COVID-19 and the suspension of all public gatherings. All members of the public are encouraged to watch the video conference.

Brooke confirmed that all were present and that they could hear her. Each vote will be done by a roll call. If any members of the public are present who would like to participate please state name.

A quorum was established. A motion to approve the minutes of January 4th and February 1st was made and seconded. Claudia, Brooke, Sindy, Vanessa, Joseline and Athalyn, yes.

Motion to approve agenda: Claudia, Brooke, Sindy, Vanessa, Joseline, Athalyn, yes.

An update from Human Services Director Jerico Mele: A quick rundown on the COVID vaccine, operations at the VFW have been extended, more categories on how to get into the system have been opened. We are addressing vaccine hesitancy issues and misinformation about the vaccine, doing direct outreach to businesses, improve access to workers. The town has hired a public health nurse, Heather Francis, she will be doing

volunteer coordination at the VFW. There is a need for interpreters, someone on site or someone that can be called, try to get volunteer support that speak Portuguese, Spanish and Bulgarian. Vanessa went to the food pantry to do Q&A there. Sindy: what type of volunteers do you need? Certified and non-clinical greeters for flow control, patient relations and hopefully translation. Athalyn: Is there any other way people can make an appointment? Jerico: We have spent time on this topic with the hospital, carve out an analog program for analog enrollment for specific time and place and go there. This would be easy to be tailored to people, location and language. On April 19th enrollment goes general, you won't have to verify information to make an appointment, it makes it easier for everyone, people would sign up through their employer. Small scale launches in case it falls through, could be a phone tree or in person enrollment system. Sindy: Is there any way the hospital would make available the number of appointments there are? Jerico: Right now, there is a strict allotment from the state, we could vaccinate more people, but we do not have enough vaccines, not too much variation on the hospital's model until we get a larger supply of vaccines. Vanessa: She has heard from the Brazilian community that they have been having problems scheduling through link, is there a number they can call? NCH realized they didn't have the resources to take the volume of calls, there were a couple of different numbers to call, they can call 508-825-1000. Day to day the phone staffing changes, the only thing to do is keep trying.

COVID Response Team: Deb Dubois worked for two weeks at the Stop & Shop AND Brooke was at the dump, the logo gets you almost to the right spot. This weekend we had additional people, Elise Norton, and two Spanish speaking high school students. We set up a couple of computers and asked if they needed help to sign up, if they spoke English we would help them if they needed it. We spent the rest of the time handing out cards. The team will be there again this weekend, we have five high school volunteers. We are limited by the number of appointments that are available. A couple of changes have been made to the card, card used to ask for home phone, but most people do not have a home phone, changed

the opening times for Sunday to call later in the day. Spoke to the Social Services Dept. (health care access) at the hospital, and we will continue to work to fill in the gaps to people vaccinated.

Zoom meeting, conversation with Portuguese and Spanish speaking community, talked about vaccine, put it out on social media in Portuguese and Spanish, get it done in 15 – 20 minutes. If any CHS members have any questions from the community A) know if anyone is willing to participate, B) What are the concerns. Claudia: would like to be part of this, folks are not afraid of getting the vaccine, they just don't know how to get an appointment. Sindy: are there any conversations with NCH about having appointments on Sundays and longer on Saturdays? Jerico: they are extending hours this week, in some ways it is limited as to when we can operate at the VFW, if we are looking to move into more weekend time or evening time. We are trying to work directly with businesses, so employees can go and get vaccine. Sindy: are you working with NCTV for this video? Jerico will share anything this committee want him to. This will get passed around to as many people through the town's social media, the best way is to do it and get it out. Trying to have questions in advance so that it is almost scripted, those who participate can guide us. Sindy: if that were to happen are we going to supply e-mail? Jerico: ideally, we would direct them to a webinar, a dialog is the optimal way to do it, the hesitancy thing is going to last a few months. The hospital email address (NCHvax@partners.org) is taking questions in any language and you get answers back in that language. You can send any question to Jerico and he will do his best to get answers. Jerico: the town has hired a public health nurse, this is something Health Director Roberto Santamaria has wanted for a long time. Heather Francis RN, came from Our Island Home and has been active at clinics, she is here to make a change, that we all have equal access. Updates for Contract Review Committee (CRC): CRC has made recommendations to fund Human Services agencies, the budget for FY22 was \$650,000. The CRC met frequently and had to make difficult calls. After making the recommendations, the new Marijuana tax provided an additional \$97,000 in revenue to be used for programs addressing the use

and misuse of substances. The town received two proposals, one from NAMI/ASAP and the other from Fairwinds. ASAP/NAMI was awarded the grant that will be used for an 11-week program for in-patient help to those returning home. They are trying to hire a clinician on island. They are committed to having a clinician here or do telemedicine. They are looking to hire locally, good to have someone here for meetings and telemedicine if boats are cancelled. Athalyn: can we find out more about this program?

Rooke: this process happened very quickly, they only had a very short window to apply. The second cannabis outlet just opened.

Recap of forum: any comments about experience? Claudia: I think people really liked it. The translation part should be on time, translated right away, it was challenging. People in non-English speaking community, this was the first time that there was something for them. Vanessa: the forum was great, many people that watched it, loved it, it was a nice experience.

There are lots of lessons to learn and improvements to be made, when you watch it on YouTube there is a way to get subtitles in the language of your choice. NCTV has a better way to do this but the part of translating is not in the town's contract, hopefully this will change. Post COVID technology should improve, things the town is doing on You Tube can be available to all.

Originally, Athalyn and Brooke talked about CHS future, what do we prioritize. Any ideas for the next agenda? Athalyn: this has been on her mind, in the I&M there is a police report that lists people's names that have been arrested, she sees how damaging this is to the people involved.

Athalyn knows this is public record but she doesn't think it should be broadcast, she knows this hurts people, she would like to ask the paper to stop it. Claudia: there is a lot of bullying in the middle school, maybe

Joseline and Athalyn can help us figure something out, she is very concerned for the kids. What is the role of CHS and School Committee concerning this? The kids don't want the parents to go to school to complain, the stories she hears are awful. Athalyn: She agrees, the middle school has always been a prime area for bullying, there is a dual use in this, 1) What is CHS's role in this, 2) the lack of social skills and how not

knowing how to work through things.

Booke: is this a racist thing on top of bullying? We should add this to our next meeting. Brooke and Athalyn can discuss who to invite to the next meeting. Anything else members have in mind? Brooke has begun to have conversations about one thing the community needs, a Human Services building with a welcome desk with receptionist that speaks different languages. People can come in and nobody knows what they are there for. A multi-layered building with several agencies working independently. A conversation is starting to happen, CHS can be a liaison with town agencies and Community Foundation for Nantucket (CFAN). CFAN is organizing a meeting for a community center, trying to see how these talks parallel each other. It is 8:05 pm, is there anything else to discuss? Vanessa: do you think providing that educational forum again about what agencies do? Brooke: is it necessary to do it again? We could do it differently to provide the community where to go for what, you can always refer them to the Family Resource Center. See agencies as more of a mosaic, do a modular introduction to various human services agencies, look at the Network of Care site, you can click on a person's face and it will explain what each person does, and it won't get dated because you can add or subtract information to keep it current. Sindy: a general comment, put out there that the pandemic meetings are 100% in Portuguese and Spanish. Choose a topic families can come to, people will feel comfortable to speak in focus groups in their own language. Athalyn: Just a thought, not if we did that if we start with information you have runners in the audience, what is your question, give information, say who they are, hear what the community hears from us.

The next meeting is Monday May 3rd at 7:00 pm. A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. All agreed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15.

Respectfully submitted by,

Ann Medina