

Nassau Community Connections, Inc.

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday November 8th, 2022, 7:00 PM

Grace United Methodist Church House/Community Center

Our grassroots organization builds community, inspires hope, and networks for equity by raising awareness and connecting essential resources

Attendance

Members

Chaplain Michael Needham (MN), President	E	Lori Clark (LC), Treasurer	X
Joseph Gil (JG), Communications Officer	X	John Imhoff (JI), Secretary	X
Jean Waggoner (JW), Community Member	X	Dana Salazar Esq. (DS), Legal Council	E
Carol Siver (CS), Grace United Methodist Church	E	Mary Scallon (MS), Grace United Methodist Church	E
Rev. Ed Van Kampen (EV), Community Member	X	Diana Murphy (DM), Nassau Resource Center	A
Zak Onkaya-Budak (ZO) – Nassau Resident	A	Dr. Michael O’Leary (MO), Fmr Commissioner of Columbia County Department of Mental Health	X
Janet Van Kampen (JV) – Community Member	X	Ken Scallon (KS), St. Mary’s Church	E

X – Present E – Excused A - Absent

Guests –

Mary Allen, Nassau Resident

Cathy Coons – Guest Speaker – Commissioner of Rensselaer Co. Department of Mental Health

Meeting Minutes:

Opening Reflection – EV

Opening Discussions

- EV - Motion to approve September meeting minutes; seconded by EV, and carried by unanimous vote by committee members present.
- Upcoming elections
 - Treasurer and Communications Officer positions are up for election in December. If interested in being nominated for one of these positions please let JI know so we can add your name to the ballot.

- Jean Waggoner has decided to step down from her officer position as Volunteer Coordinator. If anyone is interested in a position focused on coordinating volunteers when necessary or coordinating events here at the NCC Community Center, please let JI know.
- JG announced that he would run again for the Communications Officer position and would commit to the next 2-year term if re-elected and if no one else was interested in the position at this point.
- Sign for Community Center
 - JG – is looking into a sign for the Community Center. Looking at options, Aluminum may be best choice.

Featured Guest – Cathy Coons, Commissioner of Rensselaer Co. Department of Mental Health – some of the topics covered are summarized below.

- Responsible for network of care focused on mental health, addiction, and developmental disabilities.
- Diverse programs and resources available
 - Problems with the programs include loss of Human Services staff due to retirement, people leaving the profession, burnout during and post pandemic as well as reductions in grants available.
 - Challenges to recruit new staff due to variety of reasons. Few people getting degrees in human services.
 - Since pandemic the economy has become challenging
 - No more eviction moratorium
 - Increase in homeless population
 - Increased encampments on sidewalks in Troy (and at Collar City Bridge).
 - Very difficult to staff Human Service personnel for the need.
 - Not enough crisis services in the County
- Law enforcement (Troy Police) are the front line in dealings with emotionally disturbed persons
 - October 31st Troy launched 2 officer response team to respond to emotional/mental health calls.
- Samaritan Hospital has three in-patient psychiatric wards
 - One only for geriatric
 - One for addiction and mental health issues
 - One general psychiatric unit
 - >50% of the patients treated are from outside of Rensselaer County.
 - None of these accepts children or adolescents.
- County operates several outpatient clinics
 - Samaritan Hospital
 - Large outpatient clinic at County office building
 - Child psychiatrist
 - Second psychiatrist
 - 2 nurse practitioners
 - 14 therapists
 - Hoosic Falls
 - Small clinic with psychiatry services
 - Adult care

- Works with high risk adults perceived as danger to themselves
 - Children and youth.
- The Rensselaer County Department of Mental Health is a hub for resources.
 - Cathy indicated that we can contact her office for referrals.
 - The contract out for housing for folks with mental health and addiction issues
 - Offer specialty services such as Joseph's house for psychosocial services
 - Have an outreach social worker who goes anywhere in Rensselaer Co. and will assess for mental health, addiction and/or developmental disabilities.
 - Addiction resources – Cathy indicated that additional programs for assistance might include
 - Naloxone (narcain) Now program
 - Heroin Coalition
 - Stop Heroin Now
 - We can get more info (and get the word out by promoting) via County Facebook Pages
 - Health and Human Services Facebook page
 - Rensselaer County Facebook Page
 - Cathy will email us their resource guide and sheet providing emotional support hotline information.
 - The Rensselaer County website has link to resources and resource inquiries
- MO suggested “Gold Card” access for being able to reach out when NCC have situations where assistance is needed. Cathy indicated that we could reach out to her office for resources and guidance.
- Cathy also suggested some other resources/groups that we could get involved with for assistance
 - Healthy Alliance – network of providers (500 currently) linked via electronic platform where assistance can be solicited, and services can be offered to those in need. Cathy will pass along our contact information to them to contact us.
 - Heroin Coalition

Closing Reflection - EV

Next Meeting – 13Dec2022 at 6PM