

Nassau Community Connections, Inc.

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday September 13th, 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	X	Lori Clark (LC), Treasurer	X
Joseph Gil (JG), Communications Officer	X	John Imhoff (JI), Secretary (via phone)	X
Jean Waggoner (JW), Volunteer Coordinator	X	Dana Salazar Esq. (DS), Legal Council	X
Carol Siver (CS), Grace United Methodist Church	E	Mary Scallon (MS), Grace United Methodist Church	A
Rev. Ed Van Kampen (EV), Nassau Resident	X	Rev. Dion Marquit (DM) – Grace United Methodist Church	A
Shaykha Sheila DS Foraker (SF), AQRT Sufi Order	A	Diana Murphy (DM), Nassau Resource Center	X
Zak Onkaya-Budak (ZO) – Nassau Resident	X	Dr. Michael O’Leary, Fmr Commissioner of Columbia County Department of Mental Health	X

X – Present E – Excused A - Absent

Guests

Janet Van Kampen - Nassau Resident

Ashley Strom, NCC Volunteer

Meeting Minutes:

Opening Reflection – EV

Quick round of introductions

Opening Discussions

- Note: Katherine Coons, Commissioner of Rensselaer County United Services – was unable to attend this evening.
- LC - Motion to approve July meeting minutes; seconded by ZO, and carried with no discussion by unanimous vote by committee members present

- The Town of Nassau Youth Committee will host the Nassau Family Festival on September 17 between 11AM and 2PM at Lyons Lake
- Life is for Service Award winners decided by committee members via Survey Monkey
 - 4 winners were chosen this year; Andrew Tillman, Pastor Dion Marquit, Michelle Boomhower and Chaplain Michael Needham
 - Awards will be made at Nassau Family Festival
- Survey created to ask poll the community about what they would like to see at the Community Center and how they would like to see the Center used
 - Handed out copies at the Nassau Music Festival last week
 - Initial response indicated games, speakers, etc.
 - Looking for another 30 or 40 responses
 - Modified and printed 100 copies to be handed out and returned
 - JG will create a survey monkey so people can submit ideas on-line
 - Once we gather information we can set up dates for events and speakers
- JI – Motion to approve Janet VanKampen as a Board/Committee Member
 - Seconded by ZO and carried unanimously with no discussion by committee members present. Welcome aboard Janet.
- Bylaws
 - MN working to finalize
 - Reminder that the membership is the Board of the organization who vote directors in to act on the organizations behalf
 - JI to stay on top of dates for Director elections at the end of the year
- HELP PROVIDED
 - MN – had an individual in need of help as they were being evicted
 - Took the individual to DSS but was told that help could not be provided until the person was on the street
 - Sheriff then locked the doors so that the person was technically “on the street”
 - Returned to DSS to find that the individual makes too much money to be eligible for assistance
 - MN was able to find someone to temporarily care for the individuals dog
 - Some financial support provided by NCC and through a catholic organization
 - Common, frustrating issue that there are many people from certain demographic groups that find it very difficult to find an appartment
 - LC – Individual in need of assistance with rent
 - NCC provided \$200 with understanding that individual would work with landlord
 - Landlord contacted LC and had not heard anything from the individual about plan forward
 - LC has reached out to the person a couple of times to encourage, but had not heard back from them yet.
 - DM – reported an individual who comes into the Nassau Resource Center 1-2 times a week for immediate needs.
 - Individual not homeless, but marginal home situation and seems to be intellectually or academically challenged
 - DSS pays rent, and the individual receives food stamps, but no cash for things beyond food so must rely on Resource Center or other organizations for that assistance.

- Should probably have someone responsible for the person's care to make sure their needs are taken care of, but there isn't anyone.
 - DS clarified that for an advocate to be assigned, the court has to find the person unable to make decisions, essentially incompetent, and that a medical person needs to testify in court that the individual is unable to take care of themselves.
 - DS believes that we will see a delay in eviction even though a COVID is over; a tenant just needs to sign a document saying that they were affected by COVID it puts a stay on the eviction process until document is reviewed and even if award is granted, the eviction is stopped because there is no funding to pay landlords
 - MO stressed that we need to hold the County departments accountable for the people who come to us or are referred to us.
- NCC Focus Discussion
 - Discussed the idea of approaching from a problem-focused and maybe work toward monthly gatherings that bring people together for cards or other gathering type events, interspersed with other topics such as food and nutrition.
 - General agreement that we do not want to limit our support to only one group of individuals with specific needs.
 - Specific to individuals who are lonely or isolated, MN raised the idea of creating a list of these individuals and having our committee members reach out periodically to see if they are ok.
 - Maybe we gather survey results and come up with a proposal to start organizing our events around some of these issues.
 - MN raised the concern around heating costs and individuals who may need to make the decision between heating their homes and buying food.
 - DM indicated that the food banks were well funded at this time and that they have the resources necessary to provide food to their customers.
 - Veteran's association approached MN asking what money we need and indicated that assistance is available if needed
 - LC indicated that we need to present our request as a list in the next 2 weeks, as the VA's funding needs to be submitted in October.
 - We will ask for funding for offsetting Community Center costs and to replenish our funding for providing support to those who need assistance.
 - JW made motion to approach Veteran's association for funding
 - Seconded by EV
 - Motion carried by unanimous vote by Committee with no further discussion
- Officers Reports
 - Secretary – JI
 - Asked for emails of volunteers so they can be included in meeting invitations and other committee notifications
 - Will focus on Google Groups for consistency in meeting notifications and emails
 - Communications Officer - JG
 - Prepared survey for dissemination
 - Will focus on reworking on that and getting the survey on-line
 - LC asked that he prepare a postcard with a link for people to go to on-line so they can complete the survey electronically.

- Treasurer - LC
 - \$4,539.24 in checking account
 - Posted survey to her Facebook page
- President - MN
 - Applauded the work done by Jean Waggoner and the volunteers on working toward a direction forward for the Community Center.
- Volunteer Coordinator - JW
 - Spoke with the social worker at Donald P Sutherland elementary school for a list of children's and their families needs.
 - Identified needs around transportation for doctors appointments and families who need progressive care.
 - JW reviewed some of the services provided by Community Caregivers which seem to address some of those needs and provided that information to her.
- Last Minute Thoughts
 - LC – Discussed the idea of trying to work with the municipalities to apply pressure on fuel companies advocating for lower fuel / heating pricing.
 - JW – suggested that we find another individual to be responsible for organizing events for the Center. Her skill set lends to coordinating volunteers, but it would be good to have someone skilled at event planning for that role.

Closing Reflection - DM

Next Meeting – 11Oct2022