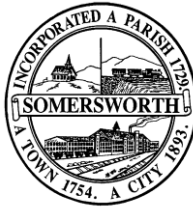


# SOMERSWORTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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## HILLTOP MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS COMMISSION

Wednesday, July 13, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

SAU Office

51 W High Street, Somersworth, N.H.

### MINUTES

**Attendees:** Todd Marsh, Maggie Larson, Arielle Marquis, Don Austin, Lori Lane, Mayor Hilliard, Supt. Lane, Bob Belmore, Dina Gagnon, Ashley Wright, Suzanne Weete, Mary Boisse-Barnes, Spencer Barnes, Chief McLin (tardy)

#### 1. Call to Order

- Chair called meeting to order at 6:03pm

#### 2. Approval of Minutes, June 20, 2022

- Don moves to approve
- Spencer seconds
- All in favor
- Bob & Maggie abstained

#### 3. Chair Reading of Commission Mission

#### 4. Welcome by Chair

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month is planning board meeting – City Manager Belmore is required to be present, but would like to remind us that he is open to sending designee and is able to prioritize attending this meeting upon request
- Mayor Hilliard:
  - Refocus and rally forward with this group
  - Commissions & committees – do not attend unless asked to be present so that presence does not affect the discussion – available for resources and to attend when requested
  - When Summit was starting to be discussed, was able to connect with Frisbie Memorial Hospital (FMH) to attempt to tap those resources for funding
  - Would like to join today to re-circle on the purpose of the Summit
  - Approach in Somersworth is unique as we started with City Hall rather than the community, whereas DMHA began in the community
  - What are the overarching goals of the Summit?

Proud past, bright future

- Mary was brought in to present Recovery Friendly Workplace initiative into Somersworth via City-Council & School-Board Committee to support the City and school dept. to become RFW-designated
  - Would like this Commission to consider supporting that initiative
- The goal from our last Commission meeting was that we build the next steps to exploring & establishing Somersworth Mental Health Coalition
  - Not necessarily something that is under the City Commission
  - Could be as the Vision 2020 or Eyes on '30 where it is supported by the City
  - Something to consider as a City Commission continuing forward
- Get a couple things out:
  - Leave to this commission to plan the event
  - Outreach
    - Presentations & sharing information out to community for building awareness of mental health and recovery (i.e. RFW presentations, DMHA presentation, etc.)
  - Map-out 3 things that can reasonably be accomplished between now & December
  - Launch RFW as part of this Commission
- Bob: someone was going to get the itemized invoice from NH Listens:
  - City Manager was never asked to find money to support this but has spending authority up to \$25K
  - Commission Chair & other members were going to identify other sponsors for anything
  - No one reached out directly to City Manager for funding request or to invite to a meeting
  - Plan was to utilize FMH funds to support speaker series or other events and activities
- Todd: clarifying that the request made to the City Manager was for potential funding on the grounds that if FMH funds fell through & the response was to keep updated on the FMH funding status, and not a yes or no
- Superintendent Lane: Where is this group at? The last meeting minutes seemed like there wasn't a clear understanding of where the City's support was even though this is a City-Commission
  - Don: I think we were all a little disappointed because the plans we laid had fallen through
    - Don't believe we need to build community-support to then engage City or School support – the whole thing makes better sense that we don't need to go through developing support, but working to engage
  - Todd – sense of disappointment & frustration & questions about the various types of commitment
    - FMH funding was (and still is) pending
- Last Commission meeting ended with the Commission coming to consensus on the decision to continue pursuing the Summit in order to meet one of the deliverables from our previous meetings to be able to move from this Commission into a Community Coalition
  - Suzanne – one goal of the "Summit" is to gauge community readiness

- Mary – not necessarily only gauge whether they’re ready to take steps forward or not, but to gauge where people are in their understanding of and capacity to address issues in the community – the answers to those questions will help develop what the first steps would be – where are we starting? Do we start by building awareness and acceptance, or are we at an actionable step?
- Normalizing the conversation around mental health and SUD – how are we helping to normalize those conversations so that it helps to grow this in various ways
  - Not just the City & School, but building that language and modeling that behavior throughout the community through things like RFW
- Dina – some people may not be interested because they don’t have enough information or they don’t feel it’s geared towards them (*i.e. elderly community talking about mental health or business outreach*) and talking with them about what their needs are and what will help them to be better supported – then invite them to the Summit as a way to continue that conversation
  - Need to do some identified outreach and engagement in order to tie people into the conversation – we had conversations about this at previous meetings but ran out of time before previously-scheduled Summit
  - To get the impact that we want & the community deserves, we need to do some smaller outreach efforts before-hand
- Maggie – had a lot of tough conversations with people when the Summit was cancelled both with community members & with partners/supporters; built that trust that it was important and it was difficult to postpone
  - Unfortunately, there’s going to be a little bit of fall-out to be like “what is happening” – people are looking to be included and it’s so needed here in this community and that sometimes when people are invited in, it grows (hopefully) within the community; community-voice; some people are open and advocating
- We originally planned to host 3 community-listening sessions before the Summit to engage some targeted populations and to use to begin the conversation that would be continued at the Summit
  - I think if we would like to re-visit these community listening sessions, we need to commit to the Summit, and the first step is to nail down the funding, a date & a plan
- Dana – our approach is an upside-down approach because the funding is available through the City and the City has embraced it and the message is already being shared that this is a priority for the community
  - Would like to get actionable items out of the Commission
- Inside-out approach that it’s not people yelling from the outside at the Govt. – but it comes from different challenges in the approach
- Encourage to use the City or School locations whenever possible
  - We discussed not using the School or City Hall so that we could create a more welcoming space for everyone as City Hall can feel intimidating and schools might have other barriers
  - City Manager Belmore & Mayor Hilliard felt that using City and School buildings would be the most welcoming and would show the commitment that City and School both have for this

- Don: do we want the Coalition to host the Summit rather than this Commission? The Summit might be a logical first step for a more community-based coalition rather than the Commission
  - Could get more people involved in planning and outreach
- Mayor Hilliard: Still unsure of the goals of the Summit
  - Facilitators: the Summit is more focused on the discussion between community members, stakeholders and the Commission; doing outreach would be an additional step to engage and build awareness and support
  - The goal is not for this to be the basis of whether or not we continue & is not based on how many people show up – we want to allow for a facilitated discussion to get feedback and input from the community
- Don't feel a one-time event is an accurate way to gauge where the community is at; Summit should be something that we push via public access channels and doing some panels and speakers and outreach rather than a 1-time event
  - Don't think it's an answer, it's a starting-off point; where is the data, where is what we're working with?
    - We need to have some type of evidence to find a starting point and then we move forward
- Maggie: The power of listening to start with the intent of listening is powerful; how do we get that information without that community conversation to start or without our own subjectivity about what we think is needed without community support?
- Would it be more beneficial to have a community-wide survey that has questions related to mental health and substance use?
- Is the role of this Commission now to complete this deeper analysis of mental health in the community to begin that strategic planning process?
- Todd: can see the value of giving people the option to sharing their thoughts and opinions; but also agree that it's not a representation of the community's desire because the entire community isn't represented; see the value in gauging where those who attend are
- Mayor Hilliard: Feels like a "charrette" rather than "Summit"; feels like an opportunity for people to come and give their input and discuss rather than a Summit where there are presentations and panels
- Commission Members: Yes, that is the goal. If we need to change the title from a "Summit" to something that better describes this as a "charrette" would be ok, but from Mayor Hilliard's description, that is the goal is for this to be an opportunity for community members to come together to share and discuss
- Don't have to come to a conclusion now, but need to get on the same page as to the direction in which we're going; if we're changing the direction entirely, the facilitator role might be different
- Community Discussion on Mental Health & Substance Use
- Mayor Hilliard: Where do we go on the end of the day once we do it?
  - Let's get some stuff done in the community around community conversations & outreach & normalizing the conversation
  - Feels like we're on the fast track to get things done because we're starting with the City's commitment
- Maggie – feel it would be more effective the opposite direction with community to government
- Business community outreach:
  - Because this is a City Commission, we have the leverage to invite the businesses

- RFW outreach could also help with that
- Important to give community members the opportunity to share, have a voice and be heard

## 5. Discussion and Activities (Meeting Facilitators)

### A.) August City Council Meeting Presentation Planning

- Who would be presenting – Todd &
- Are we ready for this? Postponing to Sept. meeting
- Goals – what we’ve done to date; how the commission was formed; goals; educational piece of educating the Commission; steps that have been planned; our tangible things attached to the goals

### B.) Community Mental Health and Wellness Summit Discussion, Funding Status & Planning

- Invoice breakdown to Bob Belmore for NH Listens & other pieces for charrette
- Identify dates for Summit via email?

### C.) Public Engagement/Media Outreach Efforts

- Will re-visit plans that were set previously & facilitators will create plans for tackling these pieces

## 6. Next Steps/Future Meeting Dates/Suggested Agenda Items

- RFW – next steps: letter of interest from the City
- Maggie, Don, Bob, Dana, Mary & Lori – Recovery Friendly Workplace meeting

How can we keep our facilitator-Supt./Mayor/City Manager communication more fluid and efficient?

- Streamline next steps from Commission meetings to
- Schedule regular discussions

For next Commission Agenda:

- Planning Community Listening Sessions
- Outreach & marketing efforts
- Planning community-wide event (“charrette”)

## 7. Other

## 8. Public Input

## 9. Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn Maggie
- Don seconds
- All in favor – meeting adjourned at 7:36

Respectfully submitted,

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*Ashley Wright*