Substance Abuse Committee
October 21, 2020

Present: Brian Hart, Nicholas Moffe, Glenn Jarvis, Bailey O’Rourke, Desiree Rogers, Dayle Williams-Fedoriw, Jennifer Emery, Mary Vosburg, Stanley Newton

Excused: Erin Doyle

Minutes:
Approved without changes.

Director of Community Services Report – Brian Hart

➢ **Budget Withholds:** Brian had a phone conference with Albany and the Field Office and they seem to think their numbers are accurate and they think that we have more money than is actually there. These were 3rd Quarter withholds which were supposed to be 20% across the State, but ended up 20% for NYC and 31% for the remainder of the State. It was less than that for our County as they took all of what money we had left. They did end of making an adjustment and brought the rest of the state down to 20%. Remember a withhold it temporary and if they Federal Government comes through with some funding, then money will be reinstated. The only issue with that is that you will have two quarters of State Aid that will need to be spent in two months. If the Federal Government does not give any additional funding, then it will become a cut. This could become much larger in 2021, because it does not look like it is going to get better anytime in the near future. Brian is predicting that finances will continue to worsen and he thinks that we all need to be prepared for it.

➢ **Cancel November Meeting:** Brian will not be available for the November 18, 2020 meeting and stated that they could hold the meeting without him, or cancel the November meeting and have the next meeting on December 16, 2020. The Committee Members chose to cancel the November meeting with no objections.

➢ **CLMHD-Addiction Services:** The Conference of Local Mental Hygiene Directors is formally changing the name of their Substance Abuse Committee to “Addiction Services and Recovery Committee” (ASRC). Brian wanted to give everyone a heads up in case they start receiving correspondence from the committee.

➢ **Possible Merger:** The Commissioners of OMH and OASAS are conducting a listening tour and are encouraging feedback with any questions or concerns from anyone on the potential merger of the two organizations. This has been discussed before in 2015, and is most likely being looked into due to the financial stress created by the epidemic. Some concerns that have already been brought up are: Some are very sensitive as to what the new name will be once the merger takes place, and some fear that they will be left out.
Brian asks the committee members if they had any concerns. A committee member asked if there would be cost savings with the merger. Brian stated that they are not saying what the end result would be, but one would presume there would be cost savings by reducing duplications and finding efficiencies in the administrative staff. They cannot automatically eliminate positions that are Union, as there is a process for that to occur. Another committee member spoke about how everyone will be advocating for his or her own corner, and how treatment has been silo’ed. The two systems are drastically different, how will this impact us at the local level? How will the community respond to it? Brian does not envision merging licenses, because the regulations are so different between the two. He also stated that he does not think it will impact us locally, but it will at the State level. A committee member asked why this is possible merger might be happening. Brian stated that this is the perfect storm. Many staff retired/ left the State positions, and with that the knowledge has went with them. The financial impact that the Covid-19 pandemic has left on the State is huge.

These together made the two look into the possibility of the merger. A committee member asked what the time line is for this possible merger. Brian stated that right now, it is up in the air, but he thinks if it is going to happen it would be in 2021, and he does not think it would go beyond that. The advantage of this happening is that they could treat individuals as a whole instead of silo’ed. Having an individual go to one location for MH/Substance Abuse is on target. A committee member asked what other States have done and if they have been successful or not? Brian stated that some States combine services, and some States’ do not. He is not sure how successful the other States are with have combined or separate services. Brian’s opinion is that they have a fear that the Department of Health will take them over, and they are in survival mode.

Sharing by Community Members

- **Salvation Army** – Major Stanley Newton stated that they have had interviews for the new Director of Our House, and have offered it to Stanley Johns. They are still waiting for a waiver from the State. If the State does not grant a waiver then they will have to look at the other candidates that they interviewed. They are hoping that things go through and he will be able to start soon. Major Newton stated that they are glad to be in our Community and cannot wait to get out to introduce themselves.

- **Drug Court** – Wondering about the Covid-19 situation in the Chemung County Jail. They cannot get in, and they cannot get people out, because no one wants them due to the covid-19 situation in the jail. A committee member stated they still have people in quarantine. The jail has requested in person evaluation from Family Services, but the staff do not feel comfortable. The staff are continuing to push meds and have contact with the individuals over the phone. Trinity staff are being encouraged to contact individuals over the
phone. Drug Court does not want to send individuals into the jails for a sanction if there is still Covid-19 in the jail. They have individuals that have underlying conditions who should not be exposed to Covid-19.

The next meeting is scheduled for December 16, 2020