Present: Brian Hart, Bailey O’Rourke, Nicholas Moffe, Glenn Jarvis, Jennifer Emery, Denne Santacroce, Desiree Rogers, Regan Parshall

Excused: Erin Doyle

Minutes:

Approved without changes.

**Director of Community Services Report – Brian Hart**

- **Commissioner Cunningham:** Dr. Chinazo O. Cunningham has been appointed as the new Commissioner of NYS Office of Addiction Services and Supports. She is from NYC where she most recently served as the Executive Deputy Commissioner of Mental Hygiene at the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. She has twenty plus years of experience and hope this change is for the better.

- **MAT in Jail:** OASAS has more money to expand services in the jails. This access will get CASA Trinity services to those in the jail who need it. Brian said he is not sure if we have a need for the additional funding. This is due to the States Bail Reform and there are not a lot of inmates. We will take the funds and try and put them to good use, without having to return any of it. A Committee member asked what the recent Census was in the jail. Brian said that he has not heard anything recently, but it has been low in the past. Occasionally there are some that come into the jail for something they have done criminally, but then become psychotic. The jail has also had some transfers from other Counties due to COVID.

Brian stated that this year there have been 98 overdoses. Last year we had 96, so we are about the same as last year. There was one fatality in November, and they are seeing an increase of people refusing care (5 people). Other Counties are seeing an increase in suicide/attempted suicide/overdoses, but we have not seen that in Chemung County.

- **Trauma Informed Care Training 1/11/22 and 1/12/22:** Brian was looking on the OASAS website and saw that on January 11th and 12th they are offering the Trauma Informed Care Training. It is worth six OASAS clock hours to attend. He does not see a cost a cost associated to sign up. Applications are due today.

- **“Recovery” Tax Credit – 1/15/2022:** Brian also found information on the OASAS website for people who are in recovery for substance abuse. They are now offering a tax credit to Employers. Go to the OASAS website, if you would like more information.

- **Local Plan:** Doing an overview of our local plan, it looks like housing continues to be an issue. CASA Trinity will be breaking ground on housing by the Dandy Mini Mart on Church Street as you enter the City of Elmira. They will work on this project once the
Stoll Street project is done. CASA Trinity purchased the old Red Cross building on Stoll Street last year and will be moving the Outpatient Clinic there once they are finished with construction. They will then add methadone as a treatment. CASA Trinity is outgrowing their current space. Their future plan is not to have any services in the current building they are renting, but they have a couple more years left on a lease and will keep the Mental Health Services in that space until the lease ends.

Workforce continues to be another issue. Everyone is having problems finding and retaining employees. There are vacancies everywhere and in every aspect of life. It is hard to understand because DSS is not seeing an increase in people applying for benefits, so how are people surviving? Has anyone found a solution? On the County level, they are having issues with having civil service exams. Employees need to pass these exams to hold a permanent position. Some employees have been waiting for the State Civil Service to give their exam for 2 to 3 years.

We have not done much with engaging with those who have a duel diagnosis. There is a push for training with law enforcement, emergency room personnel, and first responders. There is no simple solution, as we have some that are chronic in nature. It is difficult when the hospital says they person does not meet the criteria for admission. A committee member stated that she sent to Brian from a mother that had her son in the ER and was given Narcan and then discharged, instead of being admitted for treatment. There are any individuals that being screened out. The hospitals are also struggling with workforce issues, and are limiting available beds for treatment. What needs to happen is if they don’t have any available beds then they need to be transported to another facility that has an opening. We do not have a true detox unit in Chemung County. They are learning that they receive more help if they scream mental health issues than for detox because of substance abuse issues. We have been seeing all these ads on TV about all the help out there for substance abuse, but in reality, there is no help. They would have to go to Binghamton or Rochester for a true detox program.

Brian stated that he is concerned about the workforce shortages and the demand for treatment has increased. This is the perfect storm for a disaster. He does not see this getting better any time soon. It is beginning to look like the new norm. It looks like individuals will be triaged and only the worst of the worst will receive services, while the other will not receive any services. Those who don’t receive services will find other ways to get through life. The current demand supersedes the supply.

A committee member stated that they had a mass exit of retirees and now they don’t have a large enough pool to hire for all the vacancies. It is very frustrating. Another committee member stated that lost 8 or 9 from the vaccine mandate. We are not meeting the demand for services. A committee member did say that their agency was able to hire three new employees in the past couple of weeks.

➢ **Sharing by Community Members:** Nothing to Share

The next meeting is scheduled for **February 16, 2021** via ZOOM.