

# **Hilltop Mental Health and Wellness Commission Meeting**

Minutes from January 19, 2022

High School Library

In Attendance: Mayor Dana Hilliard, Superintendent Lori Lane, Todd Marsh, Maggie Larson, Mary Boisse-Barnes, Suzanne Weete, Ashley Wright, Don Austin, Arielle Marquis

## **1. Call to Order**

## **2. Approval of Minutes November 17, 2021**

- Don motioned to approve the minutes
- Maggie second
- All were in favor

## **3. Chair Reading of Commission Mission**

Mission/Objective: To examine, study and implement systems which foster, promote, and support mental health, wellness and recovery support to all city and school employees, students, and citizens of the Hilltop City. While creating a mental health, wellness, and substance recovery friendly Somersworth.

## **4. Welcome by Chair**

- Todd thanked participants for attending and turned the facilitation over to Mary, Suzanne and Ashley

## **5. Discussion and Activities (Meeting Facilitators) - Community Mental Health and Wellness Summit Planning**

- Suzanne and Mary began by discussing where we are in this process and what the work that has been done so far towards the Mission to:

### **i. Examine & study existing systems & identify opportunities to improve them**

- Our early discussions to create a shared understanding
- Reviewing and discussing data
- Completing an environmental scan of what resources do or do not exist within the community

### **ii. Implement systems that foster mental health and wellness**

- Identify the work that will come after the commission

- Direction now is to take a step back and then move forward so that we can get to the point where we're ready for implementation – the bulk of that work will be done by the Coalition that follows this Commission
- Maggie's prior meeting comment of "Stepping out of the darkness & into the light" which led us, at the previous meeting, to discussing how to bring people together and deciding that the best way to do that is to host a summit for people throughout the community to join in the discussion and the development of this work.

Ashley reviewed the 3 Goals agreed upon by the Commission in August:

1. Identify key community stakeholders that will contribute to the development of this group (future Coalition or Committee) and carry this work beyond the Commission
2. Create the parameters for mission/vision for a mission and vision statement that will guide the overall work of the group (future Coalition or Committee)
3. Identify the first "next steps" for the group (future Coalition or Committee) to take once the Commission has concluded

- Discussed the need to have a clear view of the direction we want to send this Coalition off into & we will aim to get this information from the Summit
- Discussed the importance of "sustainability of interest"
  - Meet short term goals that are attainable, but also having long-term goals that those short-term goals can help to make that overall change
  - This is a culture change –using a public health approach to address this over a longer period of time
- Discussed what it will look like when we "pass the torch"
  - Suzanne spoke about the Dover Mental Health Alliance steering committee structure, purpose, etc. and that the time for this to happen is after the Summit is held and when we accomplish those three goals.
- Discussed goals of Summit (which will be further developed at our next meeting):
  - To bring people together in order to gain better understanding of what community perceptions, beliefs and understanding of the issues at hand are surrounding mental health
  - Assess readiness of community members to address these issues and engage

Chair Todd posed a question to Mayor Hilliard: Is this on the right track of the intent of the mission?

- Everything is a step forward, but would like to be guided a bit more in regards to the purpose of the things that we're planning (i.e. the Summit) and making sure that we're

being intentional when deciding who's invited, identifying the "why" behind their involvement and understanding what are their stakes are in this community to ensure there are motivations that support this work and our community. Want to have clearly defined goals and desired outcomes.

- This is affecting our community and we want to have Hilltoppers on the ground.
- Want to be sure that we're thinking about next steps and building sustainability.
  - Need to always be moving forward and up to the next level
  - Moving forward with things like the fidelity committee to the next level
  - Something people can wrap their head around but can still envision
  - Building sustainable systems that work
- Government is a tool that keeps driving and keeps things operating
  - Are we moving in the right direction? Yes
  - Do I have some questions? Yes
- Question posed to Commission: Do you feel that we're at the point to bring in community input?
  - Don: Think if we don't do that we'll remain stagnant where we are.
  - Maggie: agreed – There are people ready to be given tasks and direction, who want to know how to be a part of it. Listening can be a very powerful thing to offer & advocate for. "We want to hear your thoughts" sometimes is a really strong first step – making sure that we're doing it openly & including community without that bias.
  - Chair Todd: When we hear the words "so now what?" at meetings it's time to make the next steps – we all want this to happen & we want to do this right – need good planning & coordination– when we move to the point of transition from this group to a steering committee, want to make sure that we're handing it over & not having them start from scratch. Want to give them a foundation and momentum.

#### Suggestions:

- Consider using the time between now and the Summit to incorporate an educational piece that is community-facing
- Dana discussed the communication tools that we can utilize as this Commission:
  - Public access TV
  - Channel 22 is public access
  - Channel 95 is a dedicated education channel in Somersworth
  - Alert Now system, newsletter, City website, etc.
  - February Newsletter goes out 1/31 – if we could come up with a summary & include the Summit & listening sessions.
- Use it as a tool to promote the Summit

- How to get involved – Here's the date of the Summit & here's how to get involved
- Do you have something to share?
- Could schedule Zoom meeting listening sessions
- Wellness Committee newsletter topic
- Need to be intentional about collectively reaching as many different people as possible – make sure that we're doing stuff to get young people involved, what if you don't have a phone, a TV, a house, etc.
- How are we reaching subpopulations of the community?

Keep going back to some of the initial conversations in this group:

- Normalizing these conversations
- How do we do that? Can't just be a flash in the pan
- There are elements of that that people should hear – we talk about things around this topic that would help some people
- Going to get the audience that we anticipate – how do we reach the audience that we don't anticipate? How do we bring in those other people?
- How do we reach employers about mental health concerns in the workforce?
- Building the connections and community supports around you with people in similar situations normalizes these conversations and creates a community that helps to support each other

Summit Planning:

- Date – later in the spring; thinking April or May
- Location/Setting – aim to have this in person
  - Legion is a possible location
- Goals of Summit:
  - Create a shared understanding of issues facing the City
  - Identify individuals who are interested in joining this Coalition

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

Next Steps:

- Suzanne will come up with summary for City Newsletter
- Next meeting:
  - Make plans for pre-Summit education and outreach
  - Map out series of educational pieces that shares language, information, definitions & basic information
  - TV Series Topics

- Listening Sessions – Need to identify the “Who?” and the “What?”
- What are ways that we’re being educated & outreached to that are different from what we’ve talked about so far?
- Need to develop and finalize the goals for the Summit

#### 7. Other

- Chair Todd mentioned current meeting days will be difficult for Nancy to attend in the future. Thursdays could be better. Meeting Survey Monkey to be sent to members.

#### 8. Public Input

#### 9. Adjournment

- Don motions to adjourn the meeting
- Maggie seconds
- The meeting is adjourned at 7:35p

Respectfully submitted,

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Ashley Wright