

**Tioga County Department of Human Services
Advisory Board
June 14, 2023
12:00 noon**

Board Attendance: Commissioner Roger Bunn, Commissioner Erick Coolidge, Holly Lamonski, Ben Largey, Katlyn Lutchko, Seth Watkins

Guest Attendance: SueAnne Carson, Janice Chamberlain, Jenny Farrer, Christa Hilfiger, Marc Rice, Laurie Roof, Trisha Tanner, Diane Weed, Brett Weiskopff, Mary Wilson

Remote Attendance: Lisa Alcaro

Call to Order: Holly called the meeting to order at 12:07 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and a Moment of Silence.

Secretary's Report: Holly advised the board members that we do not have a quorum so we will approve March's meeting minutes at the August board meeting.

Treasurer's Report: Christa informed the board that the advisory board balance is \$3,763.88 as of May 31, 2023. We have a child that is receiving services that had a lapse in insurance and we had a request to cover the cost of his medication so that he did not have to go without. Due to the lack of quorum, we will not vote to approve the report until the August board meeting.

Agenda Items:

Mary Wilson presented to the Advisory Board regarding AMP(Adventure Motorbike Program). When Honda dissolved their NYPUM program, the County was able to acquire the mini bikes with significant help from Marc Rice. We are excited to run the program this summer. We currently have 42 bikes in our fleet. Two of them were stolen from the Elkland location however both have been recovered. The bikes are running and ready to go. We've hired an AMP Specialist to oversee the program and maintain all the documentation required around safety and the insurance requirements. The program began last Monday. Any questions? Marc- How many kids are in the program? 30 kids this year. Due to transportation and lack of staff we do not have the capability to take more than 30. Commissioner Bunn- What does the program entail? There is a curriculum that weaves in character building traits. They learn about the bikes, how they are built, how to maintain them, and safety rules. They must complete curriculum before they get on the bike. Within the curriculum there are character skills like patience, delayed gratification, and responsibilities. It is an incentive-based program so the kids earn their way. Christa mentions that there is a waiting list of 4 kids to join the program.

Trisha informs the board that the foster care program hosted a Child Abuse Awareness/Foster Care Program in May on the Green. At the event there were activity tables set up, inflatables, and food.

Trisha mentions that we've also hosted speaker, Ashley Rhodes-Courter on May 10th. She has been in foster care for 12 years. She has been through numerous homes including kinship homes where she was physically assaulted. She has been an inspiration to a lot of youth and how she overcame obstacles.

Christa mentions to the board that we are beginning the process of our children and youth needs-base plan. We must write for the next 2 years. At our August meeting, we will be discussing some of the



things that we have written for and what services. We've conducted a meeting at DEC(Drug Endangered Children) and discussed what community members are seeing. We also wanted input from the Advisory Board today and what you are seeing out in the field to make sure we are meeting the needs of the county.

Brett gives an overview of trends that the children and youth department has seen in the past year. We have been receiving a lot of reports for drug and alcohol use in kids and parents, domestic violence, mental health for parents and kids, inadequate housing, inappropriate discipline reports, and inappropriate social media posts by children. A lot of reports are from repeating families and multi-generational families. Truancy is an on-going concern. Our CPS reports are at about 200, which is a slight increase. We have received about 600 GPS reports which is consistent with the prior year.

Jenny states at the DEC meeting we discussed strengths, concerns, and needs for the county within the schools and mental health providers. There are long wait lists for services that people need due to staff shortages.

Regarding drug & alcohol- this is the first year that alcohol isn't the number one drug of choice, it's now methamphetamine. We are seeing the effects due to increase of methamphetamine use with our domestic violence cases. There has been severe domestic violence that includes strangulation, guns, and use of weapons. Question- what do you contribute reasons for methamphetamine being the number one drug choice? Availability, accessibility, affordability, and the effects that methamphetamine has. People get addicted to methamphetamine quicker than alcohol and it's due to the impact the drug has on the brain. Question- how do we get the message across emotionally, physically, and mentally in the schools? Marketing campaigns like to enhance the positives and not so much scare tactics of not using drugs. Question- the average of methamphetamine users, how do they start? The individuals that have come through the SCA(Single County Authority) have used other substances prior.

There has been a need for a community-based parenting program where you don't have to be open for services with CYS. This is a preventative measure or it could be a step-down after being involved in our services. Ben suggests partnering with the schools for the parenting program. There has been an increase with parents providing marijuana to their children in the past year. They are actively pursuing medical marijuana cards for their children.

Mary discusses TBRI (Trust-Based Relational Intervention) program that was established to support foster families. We are looking to incorporate this program into Tioga County. The foundation of this program is how to approach these kids from a trauma-informed perspective and the way to reach them is motivational.

Christa had asked if the advisory board had any input of what they are seeing in their fields. Open to any suggestions. Grandparents raising grandchildren is a concern. They have been out of parenting for quite some time, so not knowing how to work with behaviors and limited resources out there for the grandparents. There have been times when grandchildren have been overpowering the grandparents.

SueAnne mentions Grandsavers as a good resource for grandparents.

Commissioner Coolidge commends all the workers for the work they do.

Ben made a motioned to close the TCDHS Advisory Board Meeting, Holly seconded. Meeting Adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Submitted by:

Holly Lamonski
Secretary

Sara J. Rice
Administrator of TCDHS

