



Town of Wilton, CT  
COMMISSION ON SOCIAL SERVICES  
Meeting Minutes  
March 10, 2016

Present: Judy Zucker, Phil Lauria, Deborah Low, Michael O'Connell, Cathy Pierce, Pam Kelley

Absent: Ann Mitrone, Danielle Mancuso, Christine Tenore

Special Guests: Chris Delmar, Stay at Home Wilton; Colleen Fawcett, Wilton Social Services; Jihan Hage, Wilton Youth Services Intern; and, Genevieve Eason, Wilton Youth Council.

Chairman Judy Zucker called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

The minutes from the February meeting were accepted as previously distributed via email.

#### Directors Report

Cathy briefly updated the Commissioners on the latest budget requests for additional cuts to the Selectman budget to support a proposed 0% mill-rate increase for 2016-2017. She did not anticipate any direct impact to the Social Services budget but will advise, as required.

Cathy reminded the Commissioners of an upcoming seminar, April 20, 2016 at the WHS Little Theatre, entitled "It Starts in the Medicine Cabinet – Protecting our Families from the Opioid / Heroin Epidemic".

#### Liaison Reports:

Wilton Commons – Phil Lauria. The certificate of occupancy for Phase II – Wilton Commons Congregate – is expected to be provided at the end of September 2016. Applications for Congregate Housing will be taken beginning May 1, 2016 and will be reviewed by Mutual Housing. A waiting list will be developed. Bidding is underway for a food services provider. Construction is going well, aided in-part by the milder winter than typical.

Trackside – Mike O'Connell. Mike reviewed his observations with the Commissioners after attending the January 2016 Trackside board meeting. Many commissioners were disturbed by his comments regarding the lack of interest in coordination and collaboration by the Trackside board between the organizations.

#### Committee Report (DRAFT) – Mental Health Needs Assessment

Deborah Low summarized the preliminary findings of the report, provided to the Commissioners, including the background on the establishment of the committee and the specific roles she and Pam Kelley, co-chair, played in developing the analysis, finding, and recommendations over the last six months. She thanked Colleen Fawcett from the Social Services / Youth Services department and her research assistant, Jihan Hage, from Western CT State University, for their detailed work reviewing the previous study and the results of the online survey completed as part of the data gathering for this study.

Cathy, Colleen, Debbie, and Pam reiterated their support for the long standing three-pronged approach taken by Wilton Youth Services (WYS), specifically: clinical services; community outreach and coordination; and youth programs. The capacity to fulfill the three-pronged approach is strained, particularly by the increased need for long-term mental health services for some clients.



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A long, intense discussion ensued among the Commissioners regarding the role of the Social Services and Youth Services organizations in best serving mental health needs. The Commissioners discussed the degree of adequacy and range of various efforts to support youth mental health needs, including: support in the schools, the HUSKY program, and partnerships with area organizations and providers.

One Commissioner raised the issue of liability regarding town-delivered mental health services. Committee members responded that WYS is covered by Town insurance and the WYS coordinator job position has been updated. Phil Lauria suggested the idea of a consortium of professional health care providers, modeled loosely on the Norwalk Hospital InReach Care program, be explored.

All the Commissioners thanked Deborah and Pam for driving the development of a tremendous report and look forward to finalizing the recommendations over the next few months.

Upon motion to adjourn made by Pam Kelley, seconded by Phil Lauria, and unanimously approved, the meeting ended at 7:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael O'Connell, Secretary