

Nov 8, 2023

TO: Administrative Committee/Town Council

From: Karen Parkinson, 55 Rose Hill Road. Ledyard

RE: Follow-up / Job Description proposed change Youth Service
Director/Coordinator

Thank you for the opportunity to provide additional comments to the discussion of changes to the above. I appreciate the Town Council's review and motion to send this matter back to the administrative committee for further discussion and recommendations.

1) There appears to be miscommunication and misinformation combined with misunderstanding of the scope of service and the required licensure. Without licensure, there is the red flag word called liability, which has not been mentioned.

Let me explain.....This position REQUIRES a Masters Degree. WHY? Because the position requires that "Appropriate candidates must also have a professional license in their professional field. In addition, candidate must have completed the Supervisor Education and Training required by their profession to provide supervision toward licensing of unlicensed staff and students."

To be eligible for this type license, one MUST have a Masters Degree followed by supervised practice and exams. So it is totally in error that you can change the wording to "preferred."

Without a "license" or working under "licensed supervision" there could be no direct counseling of youth or families, one of the major functions of the youth services. To provide these services without appropriate licensure, the red flag word LIABILITY would appear!

Licensure is there to protect the consumer.....licensed plumber. licensed electrician, licensed real estate agent, licensed nurse, licensed veterinarian. And licensed mental health practitioners

2) To clarify a comment by the Mayor about supervision "after hours". The current supervisor is available by phone in the evenings and even on her vacations for any


Local News

East Lyme one step closer to establishing Youth and Family Services Department



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By **Elizabeth Regan**
Day Staff Writer

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East Lyme — In a move described by many as long overdue, the Board of Selectmen is calling for the public to weigh in on the creation of a Youth and Family Services department.

Selectmen recently voted unanimously to set a public hearing on an ordinance to replace the current Youth Services Commission with a Youth, Family and Human Services Commission.

Finance Director Kevin Gervais estimated the cost in the upcoming budget would be \$179,955. New expenses include a department director and two part-time therapists in addition to an existing prevention coordinator position.

There's currently one part-time clinical therapist hired by youth services with federal pandemic-relief funds who is available to meet with individuals, couples and families. A social worker at the senior center is expected to be funded by pandemic-relief funds through most of the next budget year.

Based on the proposal drafted by several members of the town's Youth Services Coalition, the new department would grow over five years to include a case worker and an administrative assistant.

First Selectman Kevin Seery at the selectmen's meeting characterized the move as a matter of public safety in a town that has shown enough support over the past five years to grow its fledgling independent police force from four officers to 30.

He argued helping people find mental health support and financial assistance up front makes it less likely that police will have to get involved.

"Public safety is a big concern for all of us," he said. "This is definitely part of that public safety because you're being proactive versus reactive."

Selectman Bill Weber put it this way: "Prevention's worth a pound of cure, for sure."

Officials expect Sarah Firmin, the current full-time prevention coordinator working with youth to address mental health and substance use issues, will be promoted to director of the new department.

Firmin said expanding the focus on youth to include residents of all ages will open up grant opportunities not now available to the town. She pointed to a Strategic Prevention grant and a Free Communities grant with a \$175,000 ceiling.



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