**Community Advisory Board Meeting**

**Wednesday, November 16th, 2022 at 4:00 pm**

**VIA ZOOM**

**Board members present (via zoom): Harmony Bourgeois ; Jan Appel; Mareesa Miles; Ben Joseph; Kendra Wolfe ; Paul Talley (joined 4:30pm)**

**Board members absent: Greg Young; Paula Kane**

**Guests present: Nakuma, Douglas DiSabito (joined at 4:38pm)**

Meeting began at 4:07pm

1. Welcome– Check in

What is the most exciting part of the snow coming?

Board members took turns listing their favorite parts of October. A few highlights were watching dogs play in the snow, watching the snow fall. There was also talk about driving difficulties and the sun reflecting

2. Nakuma - Introductions

Introductions were done prior to the RJC updates since there were new participants to the meetings. The members went around and introduced themselves, how long they have been volunteering, and why they are a member of the board.

Nakuma is interested in joining the CAB and is attending to be able to ask questions and/or have questions asked of her.

3. RJC Updates from Harmony

Harmony informed the group that a circle process was done regarding an accident with death resulting. It turned out well with the affected parties possibly walking away with closure. There is another case possibly pending with death resulting. Kay Pranis and Sue Stacy were consulting.

It was asked if there are other material benefits in regards to sentencing after participation in the restorative panel. Harmony noted that usually the panel is part of the sentencing and that additional changes after participation hasn’t been seen up to this point.

It was asked if there was any follow up after the circle. Harmony answered in the affirmative. There isn’t a push to receive a response, but participants are communicated with and have the opportunity to give feedback on the process and the successes/failures of the process.

Paul Talley participated as a support person due to familiarity with the victim and their family. He was able to ask certain questions to gain the response that the family needed to hear.

4. Doug DiSabito

State’s Attorney Doug DiSabito introduced himself and the group went around introducing themselves again.

Doug DiSabito noted that the reparative board has been utilized a lot more . He feels that restorative justice is appropriate in certain cases and not appropriate in others. Retail theft and/or driving without a license are some of the examples of cases possibly benefiting from restorative justice. Some of the cases that would be deemed inappropriate would include cases with people who have an extensive record and/or imminent partner violence. There can be exceptions due to the case's specific details. A felony DUI is another example of one that is viewed as inappropriate.

Paul Talley asked if there was a possibility to have referrals directly to the restorative justice program instead of issuing a citation, especially in the case of juveniles. Doug DiSabito would rather them come across his desk as opposed to sending directly to the program to be able to view the details of the situation. Some of the situations involve needing conditions of release.

One of the issues lately has been court appearance. Participants aren’t showing up and it’s causing a backlog in the courts.

Doug DiSabito explained in more detail about his process of how the decision is made of whether a participant qualifies for restorative justice or not. He gave examples of intense records. He noted that he has used the Tamarack program but does not use it when the view is it would be a wasted time.

Doug DiSabito noted that restorative justice could have a place in cases involving domestic assaults but noted again that it is on a case by case basis.

Doug DiSabito left the meeting 5:15pm

The CAB noted a want to keep juveniles out of the justice system and create a system of consistency to use the restorative process.

5. RJC Updates from Harmony (continued)

Staff presentations will resume in January with Rebecca, the restorative employment guru. Corey will present in February. He participates in the Tamarack and pretrial services program.

Harmony has been working on the BARJ grant that is up for renewal with DCF. The RFP is due Nov 29th.

Brenda Gagne talked about the circle process with the Abenaki culture to share information including differences in the process.

There were questions about the process of people joining and with Nakuma’s interest, it was decided to invite her to join and participate in the January session.

Several staff members will be going to Judge Ben Joseph’s show taping on Friday.

There was a question of whether a CAB member would be able to provide a professional reference for the grant. It was suggested that it is not seen as a conflict of interest as all are community members on an advisory board.

The interest of the board is to be at full capacity.

There was a question of follow through for agenda items that involve action after the meeting. That is something the board is working on. Also questions of funding and how to accurately account for who is providing funds and/or how to financially provide independently for the RJC.

6. December Agenda

No meeting in December. Next meeting, January 18th.

Meeting adjourned at 5:44 pm.