

BOAT meeting minutes – August 1, 2019



Present: Kim Dion, Judy Metcalf, Gail Gramarossa, Jill Panto, Kevin Pacunas, Nehr Jenkins (QHSUA), arriving later – Jay Krol

Nehr shared the Quaboag Hills Substance Use Alliance handouts summarizing the composite of results for the most recent Prevention Needs Assessment Survey for the region. Overall results show that the region is at the national average of substance use by 8<sup>th</sup> graders, and above the national average by 12<sup>th</sup> graders. The survey is performed in 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

A question was posed about what messaging might be most appropriate with regard to marijuana use, given that it is now legal in Massachusetts.

1. Negative effects on brain development for those under 25. (Brain is not fully developed until that age.)
2. Safe storage, where kids and pets cannot access it.
3. Marijuana use and driving do not mix. The effects of marijuana can be delayed and/or sudden, making driving under the influence dangerous.

The Partnership for Youth has a “marijuana talk kit” available.

The Mass. Department of Public Health advises parents that “this is not the marijuana of your youth.” They also advise the edibles will affect a person more slowly, but are potentially more potent.

DART report. Sgt. Lozier was not present with the data, but Lt. Pacunas shared that two overdoses were responded to at the same address during July, one resulting in a death.

August 6 is public safety night. QHSUA will be there and is willing to have handouts for BOAT and SOAAR at their table, if we wish.

Gail talked to the group about the possibility of Belchertown applying for its own Drug Free Communities Grant. The Quaboag Hills region is going into its 4<sup>th</sup> year of their DFC grant. Having Belchertown apply independently would allow us to be certain that work would continue here, and be focused in our community in the future. The grant period is 5 years, at \$125,000 per year, with a possibility of an extension for an additional 5 years thereafter.

Gail estimates that it would take about a year to get ready to apply (March application date for Sept. start) The school department of the town could be the lead agency. General consensus was that it would be best to have the Town be the lead, with the school department as a partner. BOAT could be part of the coalition with expanded representation from other organizations and sectors. DFC is a prevention grant. Full time staff would be required in order to carry it out. Up to 4 substances of focus can be chosen, and the prevention must be aimed at 6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> graders.

Potentially: nicotine, alcohol, marijuana & prescription drugs

Funds to be used for full time coordinator, training, annual conferences, evaluation, supplies, curriculum. Matching funds/in kind services required.

It was suggested that we meet with the Town Administrator, the Town Administrator in September to discuss and see if there's buy in from all parties.

We discussed renaming the committee to cover all substances, and expand/firm up the mission statement.

Jill will email the new Superintendent of Schools to try to get a few potential dates for the Drug Use Recognition presentation by Peter Buck. The local PNAS results could be presented, as well. Hidden in Plain Sight to be set up at the event.

Next meeting, August 27<sup>th</sup> at 9am.

Minutes accepted 1/24/2020

Vote: 5-0-4

Pante