

**Town of East Haven
Counseling & Community Services Commission
Regular Meeting – Minutes**

The East Haven Counseling & Community Services Commission held its Regular Meeting on Tuesday, September 18, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. at the Counseling & Community Services Office in the common room lower level at 595 Thompson Avenue, East Haven, CT 06512

Meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Chairman Mr. Matt Abbott

1. **Roll Call** – Chairman Mr. Matt Abbott – Present, Ms. Marianne Cesare – Present, Ms. Eileen DeMayo – Present, Ms. Cynthia Rojas – Absent. Also present were Ms. Beth Trotta, LCSW – BH Care Director, Town Councilman – Mr. Robert Parente.
2. **Introduction of Commission to Ms. Beth Trotta, LCSW and Vice Versa.** – Ms. Beth Trotta introduces herself – I was hired by BH Care to oversee the clinic, I have worked for BH Care for nine years and have managed a clinic for 7 years. Prior to that I have had 20 -25 years of experience in community mental health, I feel this is a really nice opportunity for me the clinic in Branford is really busy and crazy so that will be a nice change and challenge for me.

Each Commissioner introduced themselves to Ms. Beth Trotta and explained how the board works and welcomed her.

Ms. Beth Trotta states that if there is anything that the board needs from her not to hesitate to ask.

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**3. To Consider and approve minutes from last meeting (5/18/12).
June 19, 2012 meeting cancelled and no meetings for July &
August 2012.**

Chairman Mr. Matt Abbott makes a motion to accept the minutes.
Ms. Marianne Cesare seconds – All in Favor – None Opposed –
Motion Carries.

**4. Discussion of BH Care Management of EHC & CS (Frank
Gentile's letter)**

Mrs. Beth Trotta asks if there are any questions regarding the letter.
Mr. Matt Abbott asks when did the contract begin, when were you
selected. Ms. Beth Trotta stated that the contract begin September 1st,
and I started coming down once or twice a week and meeting with Paul
Scanlon, former clinic coordinator, and he was transferring me duties.
My job is different than that of Paul's, because I am the combination of
Peter and Paul; they essentially said we don't need a director and
coordinator so they combined both functions into one. I have been
since September 1st full time. I do know the town approached BH Care
and said they had stated that they were having some problems with the
way it was running and the finances. Mr. Abbott stated that prior to
the summer there were some concerns with finances and computer
programs that were

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starting to be put into place is that still continuing, I am just curious? Ms. Trotta states that the system that they (the town) signed the PO for ...they have the hardware but we do not have the software, and it is all dependent on the town paying the remainder of the bill. I spoke with Paul Rizza last week; he had been looking into if that would be the way to go. The senior management at BH Care was looking at if the town was going to manage the system with Accu-Med or if it would be under BH Care billing system. So it is very much in the air right now. I have asked that we make the decision quickly. The town owes \$20,000 currently. Mr. Matt Abbott states that they have already invested some in the hardware so all that is needed is software. Ms. Trotta states we are just waiting on the higher ups make a decision again I have stated the sooner the decision is made things will be much more efficient having electronic health records.

5. Commissioner Comments –

None

6. Old Business

Mr. Abbott states that they understand that there are a lot of staffing concerns and you are anticipating being down 4 staff member between retirements and medical leave etc. Ms. Trotta

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states Paul Scanlon retired, Susan Davis also retired, and so in essence the clinic is down one clinician. Paul Scanlon did not really do a full caseload. With my combined role I will not be seeing clients unless it is an emergency. For one, I am a BH employee and it would be a nightmare to credential me. The clinic is down 1 ½ counselors; however the productivity data at best is showing that the number of clients we have vs. clinicians will be doable. The clinicians are going to feel a little strain but we are not even up to 60% productivity. Currently we have 4 full - time clinicians. So right now we are going to see what we have and make that work. My first task is to –well we have a waiting list of people who have called in January and still have not been seen. We are handing out intakes one a week and we are looking at discharging people who are not compliant with their appointments etc. We are not looking at hiring someone else. First we need to get up to an acceptable productivity level.

Mr. Matt Abbott asks if there are any other comments or concerns. Councilman Mr. Robert Parente asked if they did not offer public comment – I do not see it on the agenda? Mr. Abbott states yes absolutely we accept public comment –honestly we have never had anyone here visiting for any public comment but we can add it to the agenda in case we get more visitors in the future.

Councilman Mr. Robert Parente states that regarding the Town Council and concerns over this particular commission, facility and staff. There were a lot of concern upon them approaching us regarding the budgetary process, monetary concerns as well as accountability, and as a council member and supporting the

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administrations changes for the department, I think we are truly on the right track, not only for the accountability, but the transparency that will be brought to the table with the additions that have been put in place the past couple of months, so I welcome it not only as a tax payer but an elected official. I welcome the opportunity of to see the transparency in this department as well as the accountability for the amount of funding that this department does get on a yearly basis, I hope the people do get involved as far as public comment is concerned because this business is a vital part of community and this administration sees the benefit of this particular building and what it does offer our citizens of this town so welcome aboard.

Mr. Matt Abbott states that he agrees – it's been a struggle since I have been on this board and I read the letter about BH Care and I really hope it brings a lot of support that this building actually needs, a wait list since January is something that we have been struggling with and we have been hearing about for a long time – I know it's difficult but it's really unacceptable and we've talked about that forever, so we are really optimistic that this is a good move. Ms. Trotta states that we cannot blow anyone out of the water with changes but we are moving forward in just the couple of weeks I have been here. Is there any type of particular information that I could report on. I could not tell from Peter's minutes what is given because they were never the same. Mr. Abbott states I think what would be helpful would be what your struggles are, what feedback we can support within these meeting or outside these meetings, we have consistently discussed the wait list, productivity of staff, struggles

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etc. and tried to come up with different ways to support Peter with that and that is something he struggled with that as well. Hopefully now with BH Care having the experience to deal with facilities like ours this can get resolved.

Ms. Trotta states just to clarify, that the town and BH Care have not merged – town employees are still town employees, and BH Care is just managing it. It's a contract management. That means that some things will be easy to do where other things will be harder to do.

7. To discuss and approve any other matters that may come before the Commission.

Mr. Matt Abbott states that he is concerned about Ms. Cynthia Rojas not attending meetings and Ms. Eileen DeMayo looking to end her term that we need commissioners especially 3 to have a quorum. Ms. Trotta states that she will reach out to Ms. Rojas to see what her intentions are. Ms. Marianne Cesare states that if a commissioner consistently does not show can we replace them?

Mr. Abbott states that he thinks so, let's reach out to her to see if she still wants or can attend the meetings.

Adjournment – Mr. Matt Abbott made a motion to call the meeting adjournment at 7:34 pm. Ms. Marianne Cesar seconds. All in Favor. None Opposed. Motion Carries

Temple Smith

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