



Town of Richmond Wellness Committee
Zoom Virtual Meeting
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 2, 2022 | 6:00 PM

In Attendance: Pamela A. Rohland (Chair), Thea Brennan (Vice Chair), Daniel Fitzgerald (Clerk), Gary W. Kowalewski, Julie Leusner, Alison Croke, Jessica Wolke, Chief Elwood M. Johnson, Jr., Dr. Robert W. Harrison Jr., and Laura Kenyon

Excused: Adrienne Graffius

1. Call to Order

- Pamela Rohland called the meeting to order at 6:02pm

2. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

3. Moment of Silence

- Chief Johnson dedicated the moment of silence to the late Bob Christensen who previously served the Town of Richmond as a Police Captain.

4. Roll Call

5. Old Business - Approval of January 20, 2022 Meeting Minutes

- Elwood Johnson made a motion to approve the January 20, 2022 Meetings Minutes. Gary Kowalewski seconded the motion. Laura Kenyon abstained from the vote. All others were in favor.

6. New Business

- **Discussion about the Data Review Workgroup and Existing Facilities/Services Workgroup Progress**
 - Pamela Rohland led a discussion summarizing some of the general themes from the two workgroups. Her summary was as follows:
 - The Wellness Committee has identified many needs of residents based on a variety of data sources. The leading needs were identified as mental health services, substance use prevention and treatment services, transportation, recreation, and social connection across the lifespan.
 - The Wellness Committee did an assessment of current services and found that the Town of Richmond is extremely limited in its programs or services to meet those needs. People must go to other neighboring towns for many/most services.
 - The Wellness Committee noted that the current Community/Senior Center is not accessible, limited in scope and at times interferes with police operations.

- The group discussed the summary of the two working groups and expressed general support of the summarization of current work.
 - Dan Fitzgerald expressed support for the Community Center idea but challenged the Committee to think beyond the Community Center as the only recommendations related to health and wellness to come from this body. The group discussed that the data the group has gathered points to other immediate needs. Some of those immediate needs discussed were: additional mental health clinicians with the Police Departments, hazard pay/bonuses to current medical providers serving Richmond Residents, and funds to support other organizations currently working to meet the increased health and wellness needs of Richmond Residents during the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - The group discussed taking that suggestion into account through the creation of tiered recommendations that highlight current/immediate health and wellness needs as well as long term needs such as a Community/Senior Center. These recommendations would be given to the Richmond Town Council once finalized and intended to be used in their consideration of how current federal COVID Relief funds should be used and begin to assess additional funding needed to meet the long term needs identified by this Committee.
- Nell Carpenter expressed gratitude for the amount of work that the Wellness Committee has done to date and noted the amount of data gathering the committee completed before beginning to craft recommendations.
- **Review/discuss next steps**
 - Pamela Rohland began a discussion about next steps. The group agreed that a tiered approach to recommendations would be beneficial and that they still wanted to hear from another community that has recently created a community center to meet multiple needs related to health and wellness. Gary and Pamela will confirm that the guest speaker from Coventry Community Center can attend the next Wellness Committee meeting on February 17, 2022.
 - Dan Fitzgerald recommended that an ad hoc workgroup be formed to draft initial recommendations for short and long term health and wellness needs of the town. Gary Kowalewski, Alison Croke, Pamela Rohland, and Dan Fitzgerald volunteered to draft the recommendations for the full group to discuss on March 3, 2022.
 - Nell Carpenter informed the group that the Executive Order allowing for virtual meetings expires on February 4th and the Wellness Committee Members will need to meet in person moving forward unless anything changes. Pamela will work with the Town Clerk to secure meeting space for future meetings.
 - Rob Harrison volunteered to lead the moment of silence for the next meeting on February 17th.

7. Adjournment

- Elwood Johnson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:08. Julie Leusner seconded the motion. All were in favor.
- Next Meetings:
 - February 17, 2022 at 6pm, March 3, 2022 at 6pm and March 16, 2022 at 6pm