

CONNECTICUT VALLEY HOSPITAL
ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE TOGETHER

Mental Health and Addiction Services



CVH Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

Date: March 14, 2025

Time: 8:00 am – 9:00 am

Location: Page Hall, AV Room, 365

Chair: Larry McHugh,

Secretary: Marguerite Griffin

Attendees:

Larry McHugh, Chairperson	Ben Florsheim, Mayor of Middletown, CT
Lakisha Hyatt, CEO of Connecticut Valley Hospital	Kevin Elak, Director of Health, City of Middletown, CT
Rick Bush, COO, Connecticut Valley Hospital	Harry Burr, Community Member
Cynthia Clegg, Community Member	Eric Costa, Chief of Police – Middletown, CT
Sarah Gadsby, CEO, River Valley Services	Richard Davis, Deputy Chief of Police- Middletown, CT
Nancy Navarretta, Commissioner, DMHAS	Dr. Kichul Pak, CMO, Connecticut Valley Hospital
Justin Sleeper, CQO – Connecticut Valley Hospital	Nancy LaMonica, CNO, Connecticut Valley Hospital
Phillip Pessina, Community Member (Virtual)	James Trzaski, Community Member
Chidozie Obuekwe, CFO- Connecticut Valley Hospital	Dr. James Poling - Connecticut Valley Hospital
Stacy DeMarco, Director of Social Work, Connecticut Valley Hospital	

Apologies:

Emilio Magano – Detective – City of Middletown Police	Dane Semper – Police, City of Middletown
Paul Schoening, Director of Plant Facilities, Connecticut Valley Hospital	Dr. Edwin Renaud, General Psychiatry Division Director Connecticut Valley Hospital
Maria LaPorto, Addiction Services Division Director, Connecticut Valley Hospital	Chris Iovene, Police, City of Middletown

1. Opening and Positive Reflections

- The meeting was called to order at 8:02 am by Chair Larry McHugh
- The Chair welcomed all attendees.

2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

- The minutes of the Advisory Council meeting held on December 13, 2024, were reviewed and approved as presented.

Motion: Phillip Pessina

Seconded by: Harry Burr

Vote: Unanimously approved

The chairperson acknowledged that the Advisory Council has two new members. All members introduced themselves and welcomed new members Cynthia Clegg and James Trzaski.

3. Commissioner's Report: (Nancy Navarretta)

- The governor's budget was released and included federal funding. Discussed DMHAS overtime and budget
- Flu shots are available via the United Way
- Free COVID testing kits are no longer available via the federal government

Questions: Chief Costa – are there any Police resources that can support 211?

Commissioner Response: 988 is more of a federal number for mental health and substance abuse. 211 is a Connecticut state number that assists with housing, entitlement resources, addiction services, and mental health crises. We could connect you with Sarju Shah, MPH, the Director, who can assist with training and support services.

- 4. Safety and Security Subcommittee / AWOLS Report GPD (Justin Sleeper)** Report from January 1st through November 30th. In that time, we had 14 events, two true elopements, which are defined as unauthorized leave, one of which the patient was returned to us, and one remains at large. In May, we had three events, as we have seen historically, spring is usually a problematic time. When the warmer weather is here, clients want to go outside.
- We recently had an elopement for which we were in collaboration and communication with the Middletown Police as well as the Middletown Mayor's office.

- Teletype communication went out to agencies, State Police, and other towns. Currently, we continue to track the individual. We believe the client has left the state and is heading to Texas

Questions: Phillip Pessina: Have you reached out to warming centers? Homeless centers? Yes

Detective Davis: Were photos disseminated? Yes

Responses: Mayor Florsheim - Communication to our office was effective and received smoothly.

5. **Chief Executive Officer's Report** (Lakisha Hyatt)

- Mentioned the great work that is taking place at the Connecticut Valley Hospital greenhouse. We are registered in-state as a greenhouse grower.
- The board was invited to spread the word of the growth of the hospital, the greenhouse, and Valley View Café.
- When speaking of the hospital, we refer to it by its full name. Why, CVH is the hospital of the past with the connotations of the past, and using the name Connecticut Valley Hospital reiterates the purpose and growth of the future.
- Due to strong Fall prevention efforts, Restraints and Seclusions rates are going down, lower than the national rate. These are examples of the hospital's Quality of Care.
- Two seats on the Advisory Council have opened. Mayor Florsheim and Mr. McHugh have discussed Cynthia Clegg from the Community Foundation and Middletown South Fire Chief Trzaski joining us.
- Two Opioid surveys were conducted, one here on campus and one at the Blue Hills campus; both did very well.
- We are very excited about strong, sustainable strategies for 2025, building supervision throughout the hospital to sustain growth.

Questions: Mr. Burr, regarding the greenhouse and the restaurant, is there any way through social media or the DMHAS website that we can get the word out to the community?

Responses: Yes, we use social media that can then be shared on the Middletown websites. Pictures will be sent to the Commissioner's office, which can go on the DMHAS website.

Kevin Elak – can the café participate in off-site catering?

Mayor Florsheim– utilize the café for lunch and learn? Ms. Hyatt will take the idea to the Food Services Director for discussion.

Closing Remarks

Mr. McHugh thanked all members for their contributions and adjourned the meeting at 8:45 am.

Motioned by Phillip Pessina, seconded by Mayor Florsheim

Minutes Prepared By:

Marguerite Griffin / Executive Secretary
2024

Date of Preparation: December 19,

Next Meeting: June 13, 2025