



Community ReStart Annual Members Meeting

Pittsfield Library Atheneum Room

March 27, 2017 from 5 to 8 pm

Board Members Present: Paul Deslaurier, Jim Conroy, Bill Schaepe, Pat Neri, Jack Henderson, Jane Reusche

Members Present: Joanne Conroy, Owen de Ris, Joe Jackson, Barbra Wampler, Belle O'Brien, John Root Jr, Ben Schawinsky

Agenda

Short history – Paul Deslauriers
Financials – Bill Shaepe
Current issues – Bill Shaepe
Potential solutions – Bill Shaepe

Presentation/Discussion

Discussion of bylaws requiring 1/3 of the board need to resign each year and agreed to retain this by law. Bill Shaepe and Pat Neri both resigned as board members and were re-nominated and unanimously voted in to a new three year term although Bill indicated he would only stay on until we resolved our financial issues and repay our creditors.

We noted the need for new Board members and asked for recommendations from the membership.

See Paul's Power Point Report http://communityrestart.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/March2017_annual_meeting_Paul.pdf

Feb 3, 2016 we reconstitute the Board

At that time our 501-c (3) had lapsed and we had not made the required filings with AG's office and we had uncontrolled alcohol and drug abuse among residences of the houses.

Since then we have re-established our status as a 501 3 (c) and refiled all necessary documents with the AG's office and have made great strides to developing a clean sober after care program complete with Handbook, intake requirements and admission process.

We have made significant repairs to the houses and have nicely furnished all the rooms from private donations especially from Kripalu.

By July we had almost all the rooms filled and were conducting weekly house meetings and personal growth workshops.

Due to problems with our intake process, we had many problems with recidivism which led to our partnering with CSS and DOC. Co-Act would get recommendations from CSS and DOC for participants in their programs who would be most likely to succeed in our aftercare program. Graduates from their programs were to have established case workers from the Brien Center and be actively involved in a 12 step program. CSS and DOC agreed to take back anyone from their programs that started using again.

We added 211 B to the program

The FoodNet Gardens were very productive this year and we delivered over 5 tons of produce to The Redfield House for unwed mothers and infants and other food pantries.

In October Kate Porier stopped paying rent, refused drug test so we said she had to leave but she refused and asked for a public attorney to fight her removal from our aftercare program. The police and her lawyer informed us that we had no right to enforce our sobriety agreements or remove someone who was using from our residential aftercare program. We are not considered a program facility but rather are considered a rooming house. Therefore we must go through housing court eviction process for anyone who breaks the rules for a clean/sober aftercare program. The eviction process takes 6-9 months and \$4-5k plus loss of income.

Still have McGregor and Michelle S. eviction procedures on progress

On Friday we are meeting with Sen Adam Hinds to see if he can help us change our status as rooming house to an aftercare program so we can enforce the program requirements

We are in the process of getting MASH certification and we should lobby MASH to help change rules so all Sober Housing can remove people from their programs who do not abide by the rules they agree to.

Jack invited Trish Farley-Bouvier, Shannon McCarthy, Frank Busener, Jennifer Michaels, Joe Jackson and Jennifer Sachson to join us at our meeting with Sen. Hinds to try to discuss and address this issue on Friday, March 31, but have not heard yet who will attend.

Jim talked about drug court program and the possibility of using a restraining order to remove people from the program who threaten the health and safety of other program participants.

Berkshire Regional Housing Authority can go to RAFT Rental Assistance run by Bruce Gordon but we cannot count on any help from them since he has it in for Co-Act due to our acknowledgement and recognition of the homelessness problem in the region.

Paul Malloy of Oxford house is interested in looking at our houses and wants to meet with us

We need to explore Delancey Street and the Elizabeth Freeman Center as other possible partners or recipients of the housing stock that will allow us to improve our fiscal issues and improve our aftercare program.

Paul's Summary:

- Need to address revenue shortfall by improving our cash flow and/or reducing our liabilities and expenses
- Need to reestablish our partnership with CSS and DOC and fulfill our commitment to developing a model residential aftercare program
- Need to get MASH Certification
- Sell Faulkner and reduce the program housing to 3 Francis St properties
- Restructure our loans and/or pay down/forgive our debt
- Reduce FoodNet to Linden St and Dalton St Gardens
- Get a live in program manager for Francis St (Paul wishes to transition out of program management duties by July if possible)

See Bill's Power Point http://communityrestart.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/March2017_annual_meeting_Bill.pdf

Can't evict

Program participants don't/can't pay fees

Not enough focus on testing

No full time aftercare Program Manager

Therefore people are still using

CSS said they would take people back who relapse. CSS will no longer refer people to us unless we are certified as a program. We have our paper work into MASH for certification even though certification will not resolve our eviction problems?

We owe creditors \$17k in debt and we don't generate enough revenue to pay them back

Possible solutions:

- Explore if Oxford House may be interested in leasing the properties from Co-Act and oversee their Oxford House Clean and Sober Program
- Explore if Delancey Street may be interested in taking the properties and operate their Clean and Sober Program
- Explore if Drug Court may be interested in at least one of our houses which would eliminate eviction issues for that house.

- Explore if Elizabeth Freeman Center may be interested in taking the houses for use in their programs
- Explore selling 11 and 19-21 Faulkner to pay creditors; retire mortgage on 19-21 Faulkner, retire \$60K of mortgage on Francis Street and provide \$26K of operating expenses to get us through June of 2018
- Continue discussions with Mike Fitzgerald of Berkshire Bank on possible loan forgiveness and/or loan restructuring.
- Continue seeking benefactors who could retire our mortgage and provide additional operating support. Barb mentioned Joe Rodriguez as a possible benefactor who could help us retire our mortgages. Bill, Jack, Paul and Jim will prepare a letter requesting assistance for Joe.

We also spoke with Peter Lafayette who provided little assistance

The membership voted unanimously to:

- direct the Board to take any and all steps to sell Faulkner and explore options discussed above of how to best use the properties to support and develop a model residential aftercare program
- if all efforts fail to achieve a model residential aftercare program then sell all remaining properties or return the deeds to the bank in lieu of foreclosure
- Re-elect Bill and Pat to the Board
- Change fiscal year to July 1 to June 30