Town of Norwich Childcare Committee
May 10, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Persons present: Rebecca Holcombe, Brian Loeb, Jamie Rosenfeld, Mary Layton, Neil Odell, Brie Swenson, Lucinda Walker

The Agenda was approved by consensus.

The Draft Minutes of 4/5/21 were approved unanimously, moved by Layton, second by Loeb.

Public Comments:

Lucinda Walker, Director of the Norwich Public Library attended to become more informed about what the Childcare Committee focus is and to ask if the library is able to help in certain ways, particularly as they are thinking about reconfiguring space.. Both Brie Swenson and Lucinda wanted to know if the charge for the Childcare Committee includes school age children aged 5 to 12. Although the Committee has been mainly focused on infants and children up to age 5 it was agreed to spend some time thinking about childcare for older kids.

Correspondence: Correspondence from Reeva Murphy was approved by consensus.

Parent Survey Review:
Brian stated that the basis for income questions is modeled on the American Community Survey. Brie and Lucinda wanted to know if the survey could be expanded to include school age children. The Committee considered that this could be helpful, that we consider an age range capped at sixth grade, and that it would have to be a different section based on needs, funding, and regulatory frameworks. Brie agreed to help provide background information. We will "bookmark" this idea and come back to it. Rebecca noted that pending legislative changes could affect the income response to a survey. Neil asked about the income gradations on the last page and their utility. He also noted that 66% of households state wide receive income sensitivity tax payments and that the need in Norwich is not insignificant. Rebecca noted that the "income cliff" issue is very difficult for families in certain income brackets. Brian wondered how to distribute the surveys. Neil asked that the committee allow Brian and Jamie to make a few edits and then to start distribution. The committee agreed to this by consensus. Rebecca suggested a method to avoid multiple sign ins.

Structured Interviews with Providers:
Jamie conducted phone interviews based on a Provider Survey with The Childcare Center in Norwich and The Family Place. Brian conducted phone interviews with Emerging Montessori, Toddlers Morning Out, and Hampshire Cooperative Nursery School.
 In terms of feedback, the Family Place does not offer a Part Day option. Both centers rely on grant funding. The Family Place at present serves non Norwich residents who receive state child care subsidies. The Family Place also provides a range of family support services. The Childcare Center serves Norwich residents and those of other towns and charges tuition based on a

sliding income scale. It was apparent that the question on the provider survey regarding wait lists should be dropped. Barriers to retaining staff are related to "burn out" as well as income. The "Special Needs" section needs to include behavioral needs. A question might be, is the child receiving "Specialized Services?" Add space for other responses. Rebecca wondered where are Norwich special needs students being cared for as they are generally placed in a program. Neil said numbers of Special Education students could be ascertained. It was decided to limit future interviews by Brian and Jamie to two more providers, then send out the Provider survey to providers within reasonable commuting distance of Norwich.

Costs of Pre-K

We did not get to this agenda item due to time constraints.

Case Studies

Bob Haynes was unable to attend and so could not present additional case studies.

Next Action Steps/Future Agenda Items:

1. **Plan Interim Report to Selectboard due July 28**
2. **Review pending legislation**
3. **Discuss results of Provider Survey**
4. **Discuss Special Education population numbers**
5. **Discuss Cost of Pre-K**
6. **Decide how to distribute the Parent Survey**
7. **Review case studies.**
8. **Change date of July meeting to July 12th**

Adjourn
Moved by Loeb, second by Odell, Unanimous.