



State of New Jersey

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG ABUSE
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Governor

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Lt. Governor

NEIL VAN ESS
Acting Chairman
CELINA LEVY
Executive Director

MINUTES

Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse

December 15, 2020

Attendance: Neil Van Ess (Chairman), Celina Levy (Executive Director), Gregg Benson (Public Member), Betty Ann Cowling-Carson (Public Member), Donna DeStefano (Public Member), Frank Greenagel (Public Member), Jeff Carrick (DCF), Adam Cortes (DOC), Luiz Pereira (DOE), Natassia Rozario (DOH), Annette Riordan (DHS), Holly Low (DOL), Craig Sashihara (LPS), Liz Schofield (DMAVA)

Call to Order

The three hundred and forty third regular meeting of the Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Acting Chairman Neil Van Ess.

Open Public Meetings Act Statement

Chairman Van Ess announced that notice of this meeting was provided in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 – 10:4-21). In addition, Mr. Van Ess stated that public comments were to be provided electronically, through the GCADA website contact portal between the hours of 10am and 1pm on the day of the meeting.

Roll Call

Katelyn Assenheimer called the roll. Members present and absent were noted for the record.

Approval of Minutes

After a brief discussion, the minutes for October and November were approved.

October (Y-12; N-0; ABS-2)

November (Y-10; N-0; ABS-5)

Chairman's Report

Chairman Van Ess welcomed everyone to the meeting and said that the Volunteer of the Year Awards has always been his favorite meetings and was glad that GCADA had the option of Zoom to honor the work all the important work that the municipal alliance volunteers do.

Presentation: "2020 Volunteer of the Year Award Ceremony"

Sara Thode, Director of Prevention and Planning shared with everyone that the Alliances represent the largest network of community-based anti-drug coalitions in the nation with over 320 Alliances encompassing over 425 municipalities statewide. Ms. Thode stated that these volunteers being honored today have worked to change and save lives within their communities and throughout New Jersey and have tirelessly worked to make their programs meet the challenges of this difficult year. Ms. Thode introduced the County Volunteers of the Year and each volunteer will be mailed a framed certificate in recognition of their service.

Ms. Thode announced that John M. Grabowski, Sr. had been posthumously awarded as the 2020 W. Cary Edwards Statewide Volunteer of the Year. In 1991, John M. Grabowski, Sr. was instrumental in the founding of the Colts Neck Municipal Alliance in Monmouth County. He served as the Treasurer of the Municipal Alliance for 20 years and also served on the Alliance Fund-Raising Committee. John's enthusiasm for prevention made him a force in the Colts Neck community. He was always ready to roll up his sleeves to help with all Alliance programs and projects. His most distinguished roll was as the caretaker of the bonfire at the Municipal Alliance Candlelight Vigil each year. Sadly, John passed on April 22, 2020 of cancer. His fellow Alliance members stated that "he will be missed but Alliance members take solace in remembering his passion and love of helping people." John's commitment to the health and resilience of the Colts Neck community made him a deserving recipient of the W. Cary Edwards Statewide Volunteer of the Year Award.

Anita Dedalis, Colts Neck Municipal Chair accepted the award on behalf of Mr. Grabowski's family. Michael Viola, Deputy Mayor of Colts Neck and Susan Kiley, Monmouth County Freeholder also read proclamations honoring Mr. Grabowski's service to the Alliance.

Ms. Thode acknowledged Monmouth County Coordinator, Joanne Schuh who will be retiring in March after 22 years in prevention. She also thanked all the volunteers for their dedication and commitment to the Alliance Program.

After the awards presentation, Deputy Director Rebecca Alfaro introduced the First Place Winner of the New Jersey Shouts Down Drugs Prevention Concert (held virtually for 2020), Shannon Harrington to share a video performance of her song "Gonna Be Drug Free".

Executive Director's Report

Ms. Levy shared that GCADA is continuing to navigate the DEDR fund fluctuation, with focus being both on short-term challenges and long-term sustainability of the program.

She shared that she participated in the NJ ACEs Collaborative meeting and that she and Ms. Alfaro had also spoken with the Burke foundation, who will be creating the campaign for the NJ ACEs Collaborative.

Ms. Levy thanked all the Coordinators and Volunteers for their good work in a challenging year. She also expressed her gratitude to the Council Members, the GCADA staff, and to Chairman Van Ess for his guidance and leadership.

Adjournment

Mr. Van Ess adjourned the meeting at 11:27.