

Holliston Youth and Family Services Advisory Council

Minutes of Meeting held on October 23, 2023 (Hybrid format)

Present: Matt Putvinski (chair), Kate Cunningham, John Drohan, Peggy Payne, Dee Phair, Alison Quinan, Jackie Winer, Emily Glass

Absent: Cat Correia, Kristen Haddad, Kirsten Rancourt, James Ryan

Opening Remarks:

Matt read the opening statement and rollcall attendance was called. Alison made a motion to open the meeting which was seconded by Dee. Having a motion and a second, Council members unanimously agreed to open this meeting.

Dee made a motion to accept the June 2023 meeting minutes which was seconded by John. The minutes were unanimously accepted.

Director's Report:

1. The office space has been reconfigured with suite-style space to be used for groups and programs, a multipurpose room, and office spaces for everyone.
2. The department is fully staffed with Emily Glass as the new intern. Kevin will be leaving in December when Kirsten returns from maternity leave. Additionally, Allegra's job will be re-addressed in regards to adding the position to the HYFS budget going forward.
3. HYFS staff have been working on community outreach, for example having a presence at the HHS Panthers football game. They are trying to make up for the lost opportunity of Celebrate Holliston which was cancelled due weather.
4. The Community Action Fund (CAF) will be holding a fundraiser at HYFS on October 25, 2023. There will be multiple community groups hosting and running activities.
5. Jackie was approached regarding taking over administration of the Holiday Dreams charitable gift drive. Erin Shea, one of the school guidance counselors has been facilitating the effort but is now asking Jackie to take it over.

6. Jackie will present at the next meeting some ideas for vetting requests from the community to decide if such requests or tasks align with the department's vision, mission, and goals, roles and responsibilities. (See discussion under EFH regarding community issues)

Other Business:

1. Community Action Fund (CAF) Update (John)
 - a. The Community Action Fund (CAF) will be holding a fundraiser at HYFS on October 25, 2023. There will be multiple community groups hosting and running activities.
 - b. There was a reunion meeting of the student division and there are 28 youth signed up as current members of the student division. They are working to do more of the community outreach.
2. HDAAC Update – Zoe will present an update at the November 2023 HYFS meeting.
3. Envisioning Future Holliston (EFH) Update (Dee)
 - a. The vision and mission statement are done and the 5 Year Strategic Plan is under development. The next step is the Priorities and Performance Measures. Draft measures are written but the Town Administrator is looking for department head input. There is concern about gaining input from the public regarding Performance Measures. John has experience with the Priorities and Performance Measures from the work he has been involved with on the Economic Development Committee. John suggested that two pillars of the strategic plan that best relate to HYFS and where this board can make an impact are: DEI and Thriving and Engaged Community.
 - b. Dee has been trying to push for more clarity around DEI objectives – inclusion helps mental health outcomes which is a direct link to HYFS. Jackie mentioned HYFS has been engaging with various stakeholders in town and that racism is a public health concern right now - it is not just a school issue, but a community issue and the question is how is the community responding. Jackie feels that folks are turning to HYFS to lead the DEI conversation, but department heads need direction and support from the Town on how to identify and be responsive to DEI concerns. Jackie is working with Travis to create pathways for people to get support as department heads.
 - c. John asks how do we measure progress on the issues and is the responsibility of HYFS Board or the Town to measure and create responses? Peggy stated her concern that if HYFS is expected to lead the conversation about racism/bias it might be considered a mental health issue and HYFS might be held solely

responsible for solving the problem but it is an issue that needs to be addressed by ALL departments.

- d. Jackie would like to discuss creating a systemic process within HYFS to identify where issues exist, how HYFS can help or provide support while aligning with the vision and mission of HYFS. HYFS cannot do everything and must take care to be doing work that supports the mission of the department
- e. Jackie was asked by Dr. Kustka and Travis Ahern to co-facilitate a coalition, but Jackie feels that the Town needs to create pathways and get to a place where infrastructure is in place and hard conversations are held before coalitions, forum, etc. are created.
- f. Matt recalled Select Board member John Cronin's comment at Town Meeting about the Town fully supporting HYFS and their initiatives and asked Jackie if she has felt that support. Matt suggests we report back to the Select Board to explain what support HYFS needs from the Town in order to help.
- g. Dee said that in the HPS Equity Audit Report it was stated that one of the things that supports equity is the positive partnership between HPS and HYFS. Jackie commented that the schools are under a lot of pressure to address DEI, racism, etc. issues, but HYFS has responsibility and accountability to the families and youth of Holliston and the needs that exist under mental health and social services. Jackie is trying to work with RAMS to be responsive around DEI and belonging to prevent mental health issues and substance use. But how various departments are working together is somewhat fragmented.
- h. Alison asked who is going to create a response to Travis regarding the Priorities and Performance Measures – Jackie or the Board or both? Jackie will follow up with Travis to clarify what he is looking for. Jackie will create some department goals for the Board to review about how HYFS will respond to incidents in town, what resources and supports they can lend but also what is outside HFYS purview.
- i. Alison asked if and how Jackie would like to Board to support her in making decisions about what and how much HYFS should be doing so that expectations about what HYFS and Jackie personally should be doing don't keep expanding and taking time and energy away from the core mission of HYFS. Jackie would like the Board's input in helping to determine how and how much to take on. She will create a flowchart to help with decision making about how HYFS responds or gets involved moving forward. Peggy suggests identifying types of requests and what HYFS should and shouldn't do.
- j. Matt and Kate will work on a statement to present to the Town regarding the roles and expectations of what HYFS and the Town should each do to help create clarity around HYFS's roles and responsibilities..

Closing Remarks:

Matt will send the draft of the Strategic Action Plan from Travis Ahern to the Board for review so that it can be discussed at the next meeting.

Matt remarked that there is still a vacancy on the HYFS Board. Kate suggested posting on FB and in the HYFS newsletter and on Diverse Holliston's FB page to try for a wider audience. Peggy suggested asking Dr. Kustka, HPS Superintendent, to put it forward to HPS school staff.

Kate made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Peggy and the meeting was adjourned at 8:40pm.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Youth and Family Advisory Council will be held on November 13, 2023 at 7pm by Zoom.

Respectfully Submitted By: Alison Quinan