

Holliston Youth and Family Services Advisory Council
Minutes of Meeting held on November 15, 2021

Holliston Youth and Family Services Advisory Council

Present: Jen Liebermann (Chair), Kathy Cumming, Kate Cunningham, John Drohan, Kristen Haddad, Keri Norris, Matt Putvinski, Alison Quinan, Lynne Rahim, Kirsten Rancourt, Melissa Stacy; Students: Brian Sahagian, Stephanie Farrell.

Absent: Peggy Payne

Opening Remarks:

Jen read the opening statement and rollcall attendance was called. Alison made a motion to open the meeting which was seconded by Lynne. Having a motion and a second, Council members unanimously agreed to open this meeting at 7:05pm.

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

Director's Report:

1. Kirsten Rancourt is acting as interim director whilst Jackie is out on her maternity leave. Kristen apprised the council about October events and engagements (see Director's Report)
2. Kirsten added that on 11/10 she attended the kickoff call for the "I Decide" program. She explained that the "I Decide" campaign replaces the current drug awareness program for Holliston High School. The Town of Holliston had applied to be a pilot school district and was randomly selected to roll out the program at the High School. There are 111 high schools participating and the program will be activated at 8-10 schools at a time. When the Town of Holliston is up, staff will be trained up on the program. Students can self-refer to the program or be recommended to participate in place of other punishments. This program is evidence-based with a more treatment-based approach and provides access to materials produced by MGH.
3. Kirsten stated that "COVID-related need" was added as a reason for referral. This category could include reasons such as vaccine assistance, rent/mortgage relief, etc. There are no COVID-related reasons in this month's report. Kirsten explained that currently HYFS only tracks one reason for referral but she will look into the possibility of tracking multiple reasons.
4. Kate asked for the gender tracking data to include a non-binary option for inclusivity.
5. Mission Moments – Kirsten reported that Rona meets every other week with Kirsten and Kerri and meets weekly with Kirsten.

6. In response to Jen's question, Kirsten replied that the caseload since the return to school had been slow to start, but that 4 of the 6 referrals came in just last week. They still have availability of caseloads so Kirsten feels that they are in good shape. Rona is helping out as well. Kirsten is currently able to get back to families with a plan by the end of the week.
7. Keri complimented Kirsten for her support and welcome as she acclimates to HYFS.

New Business:

1. HDAAC Report – Melissa Stacy provided an update on recent HDAAC activity:
 - a. HDAAC participated in a retreat earlier this year.
 - b. Work toward the Drug Free Community (DFC) grant continues. The 250-page grant application is due in February. The Federally funded grant provides \$125K per year for 5 years with a goal of sustainability. The funds would be used to hire a DFC coordinator for youth education and prevention.
 - c. Holliston received a \$25K earmark from the State budget (for the State's fiscal year) and the DFC grant work contributed to the Town receiving the funds. The funds will be used for: training youth leaders, bringing in speakers, etc. HDAAC has gained new members because of the process of applying for the grant.
 - d. In response to Jen's question, Melissa stated that notices of HDAAC meetings are posted at least one week in advance of the meetings per the by-laws.
 - e. Melissa reported that long time coalition members are excited and hopeful about securing the DFC funding.
 - f. Melissa shared that Kirsten and Keri have stepped in for Jackie in her absence and said they have been incredible to work with and she is grateful for their support.
2. Rent and Mortgage Relief – Kirsten reported that \$22,491.97 was given out to 11 families in October. (There was an October 31st deadline to spend the previously requested \$25,000.) Jackie had submitted a written request for ARPA monies as she could not attend in person.
3. Community Action Fund (CAF) Update – John Drohan reported that CAF has given out emergency grants for rent and mortgage relief with help from Kirsten (see above). John announced that CAF will sponsor its first annual Holiday Student Art Festival at Kamala Boutique on December 9th. They are working with the HHS Art department and there will be a silent auction and Festival atmosphere with food and music. There will be prizes awarded and the event will be weather dependent (there is a rain date of 12/10). As the traditional downtown Holiday Stroll will not be happening this year due to COVID concerns, this is a student driven idea and effort to keep the holiday spirit alive!
4. "Envisioning Future Holliston" – Matt explained that this is the new name of the Town's long-range planning committee. Matt is the co-chair for the committee and is the chair of the outreach committee. They are trying to accumulate names and email addresses for a survey to be sent to areas of Holliston which do not often provide input. Responses to the survey will be anonymous. Matt provided the link to the survey which can be found at: <https://www.townofholliston.us/envisioning-future-holliston-clrpc>

5. Student Board members update – Stephanie and Brian reported that the HHS new term started today. The High School held talks in all classes regarding hate speech due to the recent incidents at the schools. There have been no new incidents to date and Stephanie felt that the school handled the response pretty well.

6. Alison Quinan has agreed to act as Secretary for the Board.

7. Lynne mentioned that there will be a fundraising event for the HHS Class of 2022. The “Blue Jeans & Bling” event will be held at Anthony’s on the Green on 12/2/21 at 7pm. Volunteers and donations are need and appreciated!

Closing Remarks:

Matt motioned to adjourn the meeting and Lynne seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 7:44pm.

Next Meeting:

The next YFS board meeting will be held on Monday, December 13, 2021 at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted By: Alison Quinan