

Holliston Youth and Family Services Advisory Council

Minutes of Meeting held on March 14, 2022

Present: Jen Liebermann (Chair), Kathy Cumming, Kate Cunningham, John Drohan, Matt Putvinski, Alison Quinan, Lynne Rahim, Kirsten Rancourt, Jackie Winer, Brian Sahagian, Stephanie Farrell

Absent: Kristen Haddad, 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 Matt. Having a motion and a second, Council members unanimously agreed to open this meeting at 7:05pm.

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

Director's Report:

1. Jackie apprised the council about February events and engagements (see Director's Report)
2. Jackie reported that HYFS was approved by the Town's ARPA steering group to have a part-time social worker – someone who could help run groups, be an outreach worker, and hopefully create some templates & outlines which can stay with HYFS after their tenure. Jackie is looking to hire someone in July. The job posting will go up after the April HYFS Board meeting. Jackie will be working with the Town's HR staff will help to post the job and collect resumes. Jackie is also re-thinking the interview practice to make it a more interactive process. Jackie expects that the job will be a Step 500 and a grade 3 or 4.
3. Jackie will be on a panel with the School's DEI specialist on March 22 over Zoom.
4. Jackie met with the Town Administrator and subsequently with the Selectboard and Finance Committee next Monday regarding the HYFS department budget. The Feedback from the Selectboard and Finance Committee was concerning what HYFS is doing to reduce mental health and substance abuse issues in the community.

Prior to the pandemic HYFS had been meeting with the Police and Fire Chiefs & the HPS superintendent. They are considering re-establishing the working group including the court diversion officer and making it more about prevention and not just run from the

schools. With the Drug Free Community grant the idea was to align the money behind the purpose of prevention and educations. And they are looking to apply the same approach to mental health.

5. The Drug Free Community Request for Application was released after the last HYFS Board meeting. The grant would provide \$125K for the first year. Jackie reviewed the budget with Ken Szeda of the Finance Committee and Chief Cassidy because the grant application requires a detailed budget proposal. The idea is that after 5 years the funded items would be sustainable which will require commitment on the part of the Town and other community constituents. One consideration is whether the DFC program coordinator would be under HYFS or would it be its own department (as a director or department head).

The deadline for submission of the grant application is April 1- 4, 2022 with the grant to be awarded in August/September. If the Town is awarded the grant, the money would be received in October/November timeframe. Jackie understands that the grants will be awarded differently this year – only 50 grants will be awarded versus 100 given out last year – and she is already thinking about the next steps if they town is not awarded one of the grants. This could include using ARPA monies, downscaling the position, or applying for smaller grants. It is not unreasonable that the Town may have to apply more than once (some towns are applying for their second time). The process is time consuming but so important especially as the funds would be put toward prevention efforts.

6. HYFS has seen a large number of referrals this month (11 in February, 4 so far in March). Some have been quite complex and Jackie has had to refer out to emergency services. Some issues they are seeing are re-entry issues among students with anxiety and depression. HYFS might end up with a waiting list. They have seen 4/5-year olds; some cases were not appropriate for HYFS because they required specialized care. Kerry's cases were moved to Kirsten or Jackie with some being terminated because the case was concluded.

Lynne asked what “insurance-based referrals” means. Jackie answered that if the client has insurance, they try to help get a referral to a provider through the client’s insurance.

7. Upcoming events: April 14th – Understanding Teen Depression at HPL; April – Journaling group for adults; April 1st – Sue Stone at HHS will be running a career fair at HHS for mental health and human services careers and Jackie and Kirsten will attend.

New Business:

1. HDAC Report –
 - a. Jackie told HDAC committee that she cannot continue to support HDAC as chair so HDAC decided to split the component roles of the chair among the members of the HDAC Board.

2. Community Action Fund (CAF) Update –
 - a. Upcoming events include:
 - 3/15/22 - Board meeting: they might add more people to expand the Board from 7 to 10 people and they will be interviewing potential board candidates.
 - 4/2 or 4/9/22 - CAF awareness event for students where they will be handing out flyers at strategic locations.
 - 5/4/22 - there will be a student fundraiser
 - 6/3/22 - there will be a year-end party at Goodwill Park where they hope to recruit students to replace the graduating seniors what are currently a large part of the group.
 - b. Emergency Action Grants have slowed down a bit but some recipients have helped a second time.
 - c. There will be a fall fundraiser for adults
 - d. CAF students are working to coordinate a child care event at Town Meeting in May.
3. “Envisioning Future Holliston” –
 - a. Matt reported that the committee will be meeting on March 16 to go over the presentations to Town Meeting in May. The committee is still working on a second survey.
4. Student updates –
 - a. Senior Showcase was on March 9th and felt like a return to normalcy. The 3rd term ends in 3 weeks and spring sports are starting.
 - b. Jackie asked how things are at HHS: Brian and Stephanie reported that more than half of students are not wearing masks but that they are mask friendly – no one is criticizing anyone else for wearing masks, it is an individual choice.

Closing Remarks:

Jen remarked that she and Lynne will be stepping down after this year and the Board will need a new chair and co-chair. Jen will review the by-laws to confirm the number of members required for the Board.

Jen remarked that she believes that in the future there will be one annual evaluation and the mid-year evaluation will be dropped.

Lynne moved to adjourn the meeting and Kate seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:07pm.

Next Meeting:

The next HYFS board meeting will be held on Monday, April 11, 2022 at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted By: Alison Quinan