

# Holliston Youth and Family Services Advisory Council

Minutes of Meeting held on September 12, 2022

Present: Matt Putvinski (chair), Olivia Columbo, Kathy Cumming, Kate Cunningham, John Drohan, Katie Little, Peggy Payne, Deola Phair, Alison Quinan, Kirsten Rancourt, Jackie Winer

Absent: Caitlin Correia

## Opening Remarks:

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

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

Jackie opened the meeting by starting introductions of those in attendance.

## Director's Report:

1. Jackie described the history and mission of the Youth and Family Services (YFS) department. These departments have generally been in existence since the early 1990's. Out of hundreds of municipalities in Massachusetts, only 20 have departments similar to Holliston's. The work of Holliston's Youth and Family Services is about 90% clinical with preventive and educational work included. They take a holistic approach, participating in forums with the school and community, running groups, including interdepartmental groups. They also support the work of the Holliston Drug and Alcohol Coalition (HDAAC) and work with Holliston Public Schools. The services provided are free to Holliston residents and Jackie is the third director in the history of the department.

The mission of the YFS department is to assess the needs of the community and, through a collaborative approach, provide mental health resources to the town of Holliston. HDAAC was originally overseen by YFS with YFS acting as the fiscal agent of the coalition. YFS also administers grants for the Community Action Fund (CAF), which was started in 2010 by the Holliston Business Association and in 2018 became its own independent nonprofit. CAF is mainly a prevention program, helping to prevent crises by

helping and supporting members of the community via financial assistance. CAF provides emergency grants to members of the community, typically up to \$500, on a confidential and case by case basis. Grant money comes from online donations and fundraisers. Additionally, CAF sponsors a student division whose theme for the year is “Everybody’s Included”.

2. As Jackie starts her fifth year as Director of YFS, she reports that after the last year with no interns and two maternity leaves of absence, YFS has two new interns who working 24 hrs/week for 3 days per week and are in their second week of training. YFS received a grant which will pay for a third part-time position. The part-time Program Assistant job was posted and Jackie and Kirsten are in the final round of interviews with the expectation that the new hire will start in early October. Jackie is grateful for a \$5K grant from the MetroWest Health Foundation which will provide a stipend for the current interns.
3. Jackie announced that HDAAC has been awarded a \$625K Drug Free Community grant from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts which will allow HDAAC to hire a director for the coalition. Eva Stahl and Karen Jewett are the current co-chairs for HDAAC. Jackie will work with Kathleen Buckley at Town Hall for market for the position.
4. Holliston Public Schools (HPS) has moved away from William James Interface services and will be using Care Solace going forward which will allow for more tracking by YFS and HPS. Care Solace will serve students, families and staff of HPS only and the website just went live.
5. Jackie reported the summer was quiet and that current caseloads are 8 for Jackie and 13 for Kirsten. There have been 3 new referrals in September and they anticipate more as school starts up. There are no drug awareness or court diversion cases yet. Jackie and Kirsten are working to transition to the addition of an MGH program called “iDecide” and use their curriculum in the YFS drug awareness groups. These programs are typically 4 sessions and use a restorative justice (non-punitive) model which aims to reduce social suspensions (ie., loss of participation in sports, clubs, etc.) which have been shown not to work.
6. YFS has received 1 CAF request in August but that request is pending.
7. Upcoming events include: Celebrate Holliston (with booths for both YFS and HDAAC); Fall Town Meeting (10/17/22); and the monthly HDAAC meeting in October.

## New Business:

1. HDAAC Report (Jackie)
  - a. Eva Stahl and Karen Jewett are the current co-chairs of HDAAC.
  - b. HDAAC has received a \$25K legislative earmark from the Commonwealth. This earmark varies as to when the funds are received but the funds must be used by June 30<sup>th</sup>.
  - c. HDAAC has been awarded a \$625K Drug Free Community grant by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This award will allow HDAAC to hire a director who will attend YFS meetings.
2. Community Action Fund (CAF) Update (John)

John reported 23 students have signed up for the CAF student division and they have had two meetings so far. They anticipate holding a Fall fundraiser – perhaps a Halloween event, and an art show.
3. “Envisioning Future Holliston” (Matt)

Matt reported that 1100 responses were received for the second survey and the data will be presented at the Fall Town Meeting on October 17<sup>th</sup>.
4. Student Advisory Board updates  
Caitlin Correia, a rising junior at HHS, will be a new student representative to the Board and there is currently one additional open position for a student representative.

## Closing Remarks:

Matt reported that the MA Legislature voted to extend the order allowing virtual meetings until March 2023.

Dee made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Kate and the meeting was adjourned at 8:03pm.

## Next Meeting:

The next HYFS board meeting will be held in October on the first or second Monday of the month with the date to be announced.

Respectfully Submitted By: Alison Quinan