

Holliston Youth and Family Services Advisory Council

Minutes of Meeting held on January 9, 2023 (Remote via Zoom)

Present: Matt Putvinski (chair), Olivia Columbo, Kate Cunningham, John Drohan, Kristen Haddad, Katie Little, Peggy Payne, Deola Phair, Alison Quinan, Kirsten Rancourt, Eva Stahl, Jackie Winer, Cat Correia, James Ryan

Opening Remarks:

Matt read the opening statement and rollcall attendance was called. Kristen 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.

Kate made a motion to accept the December meeting minutes which was seconded by John. The minutes were unanimously accepted.

Director's Report:

1. Jackie shared that she has been meeting and discussing with the Town the issue of needing more space at the location at 1750 Washington Street for the department. HYFS staff includes Drug Free Community (DFC) Coordinator, Program Assistant, interns, etc. and currently interns are sharing an office space. For now Allegra is using an office in the MetroWest Veteran's Department and interns will use 2 open office spaces in the Parks & Recreation Department to demonstrate need and maybe in the future spaces could be flipped or redesigned to keep HYFS in one space.
2. The first round of interviews for the DFC Coordinator will finish this week. They will then move to a second round with a panel comprised of HDAAC Chairs and members, Chief Cassidy, a police officer, and an HPS representative and anticipate a three-week timeline to finish the process.
3. HYFS has reactivated their newsletter. Allegra will be building out a monthly newsletter which was something the department had done pre-Covid. The January issue is expected to go out at the end of the month.
4. Budget season is in full swing and Jackie will meet on 2/6 and 2/7/23 at 7pm with the Select Board and the Finance Committee. Jackie noted that Allegra's position is funded through the ARPA grant and is not reflected in the budget. Kate asked if additional space would increase the department's costs (i.e., rent). Jackie replied that the Town covers rent so it doesn't appear in the budget. Jackie suggested that it is always helpful to have the representation and support of Board members at the budget meetings. **Alison made a motion to approve the budget which was seconded by Kristen. The budget was approved by unanimous vote.**

5. Clinical Report: Jackie is trying a different approach to reporting the department's workload on a monthly basis per the suggestion of the Board. The overview of the department's counseling activity for December: 105.75 hours of direct service was provided to 36 clients; 11.5 hours of group counseling to 3 iDECIDE* clients and 1 court diversion client; 41.5 hours was devoted to community outreach. In December there were 3 individual therapy referrals, 2 CAF referrals. So far in January there has been 1 CAF referral and 1 individual therapy referral.
6. Matt asked if the workload was manageable and Jackie responded that due to the holiday break (interns are on vacation) December/January is lighter although the budgeting work took time and direct service hours have increased.

* For more information about the iDECIDE program: <https://www.idecidemymyfuture.org>

7. They continue to build out Allegra's role for direct service (i.e., Program Navigator tasks and responsibilities). In December/January Allegra handled 3 Community Action Fund (CAF) referrals, 2 were approved with over \$1000 distributed on behalf of families in need, and 1 was referred to the Senior Center. Jackie is also able to shift some responsibilities to Allegra such as community outreach, building groups, doing research, and coordinating with other Town departments (ie., Library), in addition to marketing and PR.

Other Business:

1. HDAAC Report (Eva)
 - a. Eva reported the goal is to make an offer within the next 3 weeks for the DFC Coordinator position.
 - b. They are working to launch the Communication Committee with the goal of building visibility and engagement with the community with messaging to reach and resonate with different age groups.
 - c. They are hoping to go live with the Youth-led Community Calendar later this month.
 - d. They are working on recruitment and are hoping to coordinate with HYFS regarding outreach – they need more volunteers to do the work and sit on subcommittees - and they will work with Sue Stone and students at HHS to create social media marketing. Jackie will highlight HDAAC in HYFS communications around the concept of “dry January”. Matt suggested including HDAAC in Town Administrator's newsletter as a way to reach the community.
 - e. They are also hoping to grow the HDAAC Youth Action Team and are considering reaching out to iDECIDE program graduates who could speak to lived experience.
 - f. Jackie attended the Board of Health public hearing on 12/13/22. The proposed 2023 Tobacco sale regulations contain increased fines for violations and will keep the reducing tobacco permit cap.

2. Community Action Fund (CAF) Update (John)
 - a. CAF Youth Division is kicking off their 2nd semester activities with a youth meeting on January 23rd. They anticipate meeting monthly with a theme of “Everybody Matters” for this year. The Youth Division is currently 38 members strong.
 - b. They are looking for 1-2 more adults to join the CAF Board.
 - c. They are working on planning a spring fundraiser – Art Auction with HHS Artwork (this did not happen in November as planned). They are also considering an additional spring event.
 - d. There is currently a balance of around \$52K and they have given out a couple of grants in December/January.
3. Envisioning Future Holliston (Dee)
 - a. The Committee met last week and are still in the process of hiring a consultant. They will be meeting again on January 18th at Town Hall.
4. Student Report (Cat)
 - a. Welcome to Jimmy Ryan!
 - b. Now that students are back to school after the holiday break, exams are coming up and AP Tests will be happening in the spring.

Closing Remarks:

Kate suggested that if there are any comments or questions about Jackie’s evaluation to please let her know and she can add them on as an addendum to the evaluation which was submitted to the Town Administrator on January 6th.

There followed discussion regarding the Department feedback portion of the evaluation which had previously been part of the Board’s director evaluation prior to the changes/streamlining of the process by the Town Administrator. It was generally agreed that soliciting and including feedback from other Town Departments highlights the usefulness, importance, relevance, etc. of HYFS within the greater Holliston community. It was suggested that a “Stakeholder Survey” could be done by the HYFS Board to be included in the HYFS Director’s annual department report. It was also suggested that perhaps the feedback or survey results could be utilized as part of the Town’s Strategic Master Plan. HYFS has been serving Holliston for 29 years.

Alison made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Peggy and the meeting was adjourned at 8:27pm.

Next Meeting:

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

Respectfully Submitted By: Alison Quinan