

Holliston Youth and Family Services Advisory Council

Minutes of Meeting held on October 3, 2022

Present: Matt Putvinski (chair), Kate Cunningham, John Drohan, Kristin Haddad, Deola Phair, Alison Quinan, Jackie Winer, Caitlin Correia

Absent: Peggy Payne, Alison Quinan, Kirsten Rancourt

Opening Remarks:

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

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

Director's Report:

1. Jackie described a busy September and shared a Mission Moment saying that the Drop-in Art group at the High School has restarted. Katie will be running the groups on Thursdays after school. Jackie stated that re-establishing groups such as these are a focus and a priority now.
2. Jackie and Kirsten attended iDecide training to facilitate drug and alcohol awareness programs for high school students who have had chemical health violations. HYFS has four drug and alcohol awareness groups using the evidence-based MGH curriculum.
3. Jackie and Kirsten also attended training for the new Care Solace program which replaces William James Interface. Jackie is looking for HYFS to utilize the dashboard component which will allow them to make and track their own referrals in real time.
4. Jackie and Kirsten have been meeting with counselors and staff at each school building. During Covid there were restrictions on outside groups being in the school buildings but this year HYFS has a space once again to meeting with students and groups. The interns have been meeting with students and hearing about their needs.

5. Jackie announced that Allegra Denehy has been hired as the new part-time Program Assistant for HYFS. Allegra is a resident of Holliston, a social worker and is currently co-chair of SEPAC. She is expected to start at HYFS in October.
6. Jackie reports that she has been tracking data in a new way recently to get a sense of what the department is doing and how much time is spent and on what areas, and how it meets the mission. She will be tracking their work which includes: direct service work with clients (including meetings with schools, IEP meetings, parent sessions, etc.); other services (i.e., HDAAC, Drug Awareness groups, court diversion program, supervision); training for interns; referrals; and more.
7. Jackie reports that caseloads are steady so far this month, with a few referrals and 2 pending CAF requests in October. Jackie anticipates more referrals in the coming weeks as needs become more apparent.

Other Business:

1. HDAAC Report (Eva)
 - a. Eva Stahl introduced herself as a co-chair of HDAAC along with Karen Jewett. Eva's background is in health policy and healthcare advocacy campaigns.
 - b. Together with Karen, she has been mapping out the deliverables and creating a plan of activities month by month. Much of what they are planning relies on federal funding which can often be delayed and therefore may stall some of the deliverables. For example, the posting and hiring for the coordinator position has been delayed while HDAAC is awaiting the funding.
 - c. In an effort to increase visibility of the coalition Eva and Karen staffed a booth at Celebrate Holliston in September. They are also building a contact list and developing a communication plan. They hope to leverage the knowledge and skills of HHS (i.e., students) to help improve their social media presence.
 - d. One October deliverable goal is to create a survey of the 12 sectors according to the grant to build a baseline of expectations. They are hoping to build a leadership group around HDAAC but are currently waiting on funding.
 - e. Eva reported that the Holliston Board of Health, as part of an effort to align with changes at the state level around fees and fines for permit infractions, has decided to revisit tobacco permitting. This concerns HDAAC due to several issues included in the permitting review: the possibility of a restoration of the 10-permit cap for retail licenses, possible permitting of smoking bars or lounges, and allowing for the sale of blunt wraps. In 2018 HDAAC worked to reshape the permitting and regulatory structure in Holliston with the goal of reducing the impact of smoking and vaping on residents of Holliston.

Jackie and Eva participated in public comment at the Board of Health meetings and are keeping an eye on this issue. Together they submitted a Citizens' petition at Town Meeting to ask for discussion, especially on policies and zoning concerns regarding the tobacco permitting issue. It is their opinion that the items under consideration by the Board of Health do not seem to align with the Drug Free Community grant recently received by Holliston.

2. Community Action Fund (CAF) Update (John)

- a. CAF will present a Halloween Extravaganza fundraiser and community event on October 28 for families and children in Holliston to help build awareness of the CAF Youth Division. The event will be held outdoors at 747 Washington Street and will include a costume party for kids with trick-or-treating stations.
- b. On December 3 CAF will hold the second annual Holiday Art Auction.
- c. CAF distributed 3 grant awards in September and there are currently 2 pending grant requests in October.
- d. The CAF student division held its initial meeting and are working with a theme of inclusivity for this year with a possible slogan of "Everybody In" (to be finalized at a future meeting). The students hope to create a culture of inclusivity at HHS, and then take the message to RAMS and the lower schools as well. The next student division meeting will take place on October 19th at HHS.
- e. In November CAF will run a direct solicitation fundraising campaign to support the Emergency Assistance Grant program.

3. Envisioning Future Holliston (John)

- a. John reported that over 1000 responses were received for the second survey and the Committee will present at the Fall Town Meeting on October 17th.
- b. On October 12 MAPC will be holding an open forum to solicit public input on economic development for Holliston. This will help to drive the priority list for the downtown and overall development in Holliston.

4. Student Advisory Board update (Caitlin)

- a. Caitlin reported that the Homecoming Dance was good.
- b. Caitlin also stated that there was a recent hate speech incident at HHS. Jackie shared that she understands from the School Committee that cameras will be installed on the outside of the building at HHS. Discussion followed about how HHS responds to hate speech and whether the YFS Board should issue a statement regarding hate speech and offering to partner with the schools to address the issue. Jackie agreed that staying silent isn't helpful and shared her concern about how this is impacting students, especially minority students at HHS. Jackie suggested that YFS can voice support for change and that the schools would benefit from culturally competent support. Kate suggested that Board members email her with thoughts or ideas so that Matt and Kate can create a letter in an effort to partner with the school to take actionable steps.

- c. Jackie asked Caitlin to be sure to share any concerns or observations about issues at HHS with YFS and said that she will follow up with Jariel at HHS to see what is being done to address the recent hate speech incidents.

Closing Remarks:

Kristin made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Dee and the meeting was adjourned at 7:55pm.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Youth and Family Advisory Council will be held on November 14, 2022.

Respectfully Submitted By: Alison Quinan