

Holliston Youth and Family Services Advisory Council

Minutes of Meeting held on April 10, 2023 (Remote via Zoom)

Present: Matt Putvinski (chair), Kate Cunningham, John Drohan, Katie Little, Alison Quinan, Kirsten Rancourt, Eva Stahl, Jackie Winer,

Absent: Kristen Haddad, Peggy Payne, Deola Phair, Cat Correia, James Ryan

Opening Remarks:

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

Kate made a motion to accept the March 2023 meeting minutes which was seconded by John. The minutes were unanimously accepted.

Director's Report:

1. Spring is a busy time for HYFS. Allegra is working on the April HYFS Newsletter which will focus on autism awareness and alcohol awareness month. Jackie reports that folks are reading it and the responses continue to be positive.
2. Due to the continued lack of a director for HDAAC, Jackie submitted the annual performance report as required for the Drug Free Community grant.
3. Jackie also spent a very informative week training with the Community Anti-Drug Coalition of America (CADCA) at the National Coalition Academy in Boston.
4. Interviews for MSW interns began in March for fall interns. In anticipation of Kirsten Rancourt's maternity leave in mid-September (*Congratulations to Kirsten and her family!*), Jackie is planning to take on a new MSW intern from BU who will work in the office from May to December which will cover Kirsten's leave of absence and provide continuity by overlapping with the fall interns. Jackie is currently working to assess how many interns she will be able to support and supervise while Kirsten is on leave.
5. The current interns are working on a Mental Health Awareness campaign for May and Liv surveyed 500 residents regarding their knowledge and understanding of, and access to HYFS. Jackie looks forward to reviewing the results of the survey.

6. Jackie is working on expanding the iDecide program to the middle school. Youth are really engaging with the curriculum and administrators at HHS are reporting positive results and positive behavior changes as a result of students participating in the program. They are hoping that the School Resource Officers will be joining the next iDecide training session.
7. Jackie is working on termination plans for clients of the interns whose terms will end on June 1st so they can best support the clients and plan for summer coverage.

Other Business:

1. HDAAC Report (Eva & Jackie)
 - a. Jackie reported that the second candidate they had hoped to hire decided not to relocate and thus declined the job offer of Coalition Director. They are still looking to hire a director and interviewed several candidates last week. They are gathering additional resumes and will call for second round interviews during the second week of April 17th. They are hoping to hire a director by June 1. There is a second CADCA Academy week in June so they are hoping to have a director in place by then.
 - b. In the meantime, Eva reports that the Coalition reports a growth in the coalition membership, especially in the faith sector. And their HHS intern is working on developing materials around alcohol awareness month and social media to grow their membership list and awareness of HDAAC and HYFS in the community.
 - c. They are hoping to do focus groups to work across departments (ie., Fire, Police) to gather data to better understand youth and substance use in the community and connect with the other departments. They hope to engage with Education Development Center (EDC), a consultant out of Newton on this effort to synthesize data etc. Jariel Vergne, HPS Director of Social Emotional Learning & Equity, is trying to set up a system to help understand how often community members, including parents, are being surveyed and how they are collecting data. Jariel will create a data calendar to see how often HDAAC is engaging with the community and gathering data on the community and then to be transparent about how they are using the data.
 - d. Jackie commented that 2021 data compared with the 2018 data from the MetroWest Adolescent Behavioral Health Survey does not paint an accurate picture. This is because youth were not in school due to COVID so it looks like there is a reduction in substance use data but the experience on the ground does not match up with the 2021 data.
 - e. HDAAC is trying to assess the community and look into root causes of substance use. They are endeavoring to re-establish connections with various stakeholder and sectors, including parents and youth in town, particularly parents of younger students, and are considering partnering with the Youth Police Academy this summer.
 - f. John asked about whether there is a HDAAC website for the purpose of the community learning about HDAAC – who they are and what they are doing. Eva

replied that there is a website (<https://sites.google.com/view/hdaacoalition/home>) which they are rebuilding. There is also an HDAAC page on the HYFS section of the Town's website. There is a communication subcommittee, but some of the specific updates/changes to the HDAAC website are waiting until there is a new director who will mold and shape the communication strategy, including printing materials, website, PSA's, etc.

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

- a. CAF gave out one grant in March.
- b. The Spring Downtown Marketplace & CAF Youth Art Fundraiser event will be held on May 12-13th at 747 Washington Street in collaboration with the Bird & Bear Collective and the HHS Art Department. HDAAC & HYFS plan to have a presence at the event.
- c. Alison asked if the youth from CAF would be providing childcare for the spring Town Meeting. John suggested that the Town could advertise it and he will contact the SelectBoard about it.

Closing Remarks:

There will be a Town Safety Day on May 6th (rain date May 13th) with "touch a truck" opportunities and HYFS will be present at the event to try to raise awareness among families with younger children.

Matt reminded the Board that the Commonwealth's new state budget extends the provision allowing remote meeting participation until 2025.

Matt suggested holding the June meeting in person to close out the year.

Alison made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Kate and the meeting was adjourned at 7:47pm.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Youth and Family Advisory Council will be held on May 8, 2023 at 7pm.

Respectfully Submitted By: Alison Quinan