

AMHERST YOUTH BOARD

Meeting Minutes

June 9, 2021 via Zoom

1. Attendance/Introduction of Members and Guests

Mark Forden, Chairperson

Members Present: Heather Toscano, Dr. Susan McClary, Dean Carroll, Josh Daniels, Iris Izydorczak
Jodi Benson, Angela Seo

Liaison: Councilmember Jacqui Berger

Excused: Priya Chaudhuri, Ariella Yonaty, Danielle Alba, Sharmista Bagchi-Sen, Tricia Dunne,
Rose Mary Buscaglia

Absent: Siddarth Suresh, Ann Nichols, Nora Robshaw

Staff Present: Mary-Diana Pouli, Kathy Mobarak-Miller

Guest: Dawn Cwierley, prospective member
Swaroop Singh, ex-officio member

2. Public Comment/Presentation

Dawn Cwierley, a prospective Amherst Youth Board member, introduced herself. She has a 5th grader who attends an Amherst Youth & Recreation Department afterschool program. She works at Kenmore Mercy Hospital.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes of May 12, 2021

Quorum not met. Tabled until July 2021 meeting.

4. Committee Reports:

➤ Finance

Dean reported that the afterschool fees have been the same for 4 years. A list of the proposed 2021-2022 Afterschool Program fees was sent by e-mail prior to the meeting.

- The average cost to send a child to an afterschool program in the private sector is \$20 per day.
- The average cost to send a child to a non-profit afterschool program is \$14-\$15 per day.
- Families currently receiving afterschool programming through the Town of Amherst Youth & Recreation Department were informed that prices may rise for the upcoming school year.
- Proposed: \$20 registration fee per family – no change
- Steps 1 & 2, lowest income levels, the cost would be \$10.50 per day for the first child.
- Step 3 income level, the cost would be \$12.50 per day for the first child.
- Step 5 income level, the cost would be \$14.25 per day for the first child.

The fees paid by families doesn't cover all costs of the programs, but it gets closer. The afterschool programs are viewed as an essential service.

➤ Amherst Youth Consortium

Iris reported

- Since the last AYB meeting, AYC members have helped Special Olympics, made cards for senior citizens, did cleanup the area in front of the Bassett Park Amphitheater, had 2 AYC Orientations and helped at the food pantry 4 times.
- On Sunday, June 6th, there was recognition of 26 AYC members who earned outstanding designation, even during the 2020 pandemic. Also, Supriya Pandit, an AYC member from February 2014 through December 2020, was honored for completing 500 volunteer hours.

Josh reported

- In mid-May, the AYC Vegetable Garden, consisting of 16 raised beds, was weeded, had soil added and now has 50+ tomato plants, 8 zucchini plants and over 100 garlic plants. Mrs. Miller's husband created 2 vinyl gates and installed them to facilitate easy access for AYC members to do garden care over the next 4 months. All produce from the garden will be donated to two local food pantries. This is year 7 of the garden. It is located at a side of the Amherst Senior Center building.

- The next AYC zoom meeting is on Sunday, June 13th.

Angela reported

- The AYC is supporting 7 year old JT's new toy and game collection drive taking place on Saturday, June 12th at the Williamsville Youth Center from 2:30-4:30 PM. JT is a first grader at Dodge Elementary School. AYC members and AYB members have been sent an e-mail encouraging their participation. JT's goal is 30 new toys and games.

➤ **Family Room**

Mark reported that the Family Room's June newsletter is out. On June 30th, Family Room members are invited to an outing at the Mississippi Mudds Restaurant and then a river walk.

➤ **Amherst Task Force for Healthy Community*Healthy Youth**

Kathy reported

- "Let's Talk – Prevent Underage Drinking" campaign will take place during the month of July and include banners, lawn signs, palm cards and ads in the Amherst Bee's June 23rd and June 30th issues.
- Members are monitoring the roll out of the legalization of marijuana in NYS and how this will impact our community.
- Work continues on expanding the membership of the Amherst Task Force. Contact Susan McClary, Mary-Diana or Kathy with the names of youth and adults who are interested.

➤ **Program Planning & Evaluation** No report

5. Liaison Reports

➤ **Amherst Town Board**

Councilmember Jacqui Berger reported:

- Working with a number of the sports leagues in regards to facilities, etc.
- Meeting with Highway Dept., Engineering Dept. and Youth & Recreation Department in regards to improving facilities.

➤ **Amherst Youth Foundation** No report

6. Chairperson's Report

Mark reported that the Wednesday, July 14th meeting will be remote. There isn't a meeting in August. Plans are in place to have the September meeting as an in-person meeting at the Harlem Road Community Center. Dean asked if there will be remote access too. Mary-Diana replied that perhaps not at the Harlem Road site but it may be possible if the meeting were at the Williamsville Youth Center.

7. Executive Director's Report – Mary-Diana Pouli

➤ **Program Updates**

- Most of the summer programs are full. There are waiting lists.
- The department has had a difficult time hiring staff.
- A bonus program was approved by the Amherst Town Board on June 7th. If a staff works all assigned child care shifts over the summer, they will receive a bonus between \$100 and \$500.
- Northwest Amherst Community Center
On June 15th, Supervisor Kulpa, Mary-Diana and others will be meeting with the Sweet Home CSD Board of Education regarding needed steps to take to get funding started.
- In regards to playgrounds:
It has been difficult to secure needed materials and people in order to do any playground builds. However, the Dana Heights Playground will receive some attention this summer. A new park is being planned between the Amherst Senior Center and the Audubon Library.

- The Splash Park is 99% complete. A few parts, not connected to safety issues, still need to come in.
- 10 non-resident pool passes have been sold to date.
- There will be a Summer Concert series.
7 weeks on Wednesday evenings at Bassett Park
- The Bassett Park Amphitheater has also been rented for dance recitals, yoga classes, an Indian Cultural Event and Williamsville East HS spring concerts.
Bassett Park is also the site of a Farmer's Market on the 2nd Sunday of June, July, August and September from 10 AM to 2 PM. There will be 30 vendors.
- Registration for Afterschool begins for current users on June 14th and for new users on June 21st.

➤ **Financial Report**

The April 2021 financial report was submitted and reviewed.

8. Old Business None

9. New Business None

10. Announcements None

11. Meeting ended

Next meeting is Wednesday, July 14, 2021 at 7:00 PM via Zoom.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Kathy Mobarak-Miller.