

AMHERST YOUTH BOARD

Meeting Minutes

March 9, 2022 via Zoom

1. Attendance/Introduction of Members and Guests

Mark Forden, Chairperson

Members Present: Dawn Cwierley, Susan McClary, Priya Chaudhuri, Danielle Alba, Krista Krause

Excused: Angela Seo, Josh Daniels, Ariella Yonaty, Rose Mary Buscaglia, Dean Carroll

Absent: Ann Nichols, Nora Robshaw, Jodi Benson, Heather Toscano, Siddarth Suresh

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

Guests: Asher Yonaty – W. East HS student

Amherst Youth Consortium Members: Tiger Li–W. South HS, Rishab Manjunatha–W. East HS

2. Public Comment/Presentation

3. Approval of February 9, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Tabled – no quorum was present

4. Committee Reports:

➤ **Finance** No report

➤ **Amherst Youth Consortium**

Tiger reported that 12 youth and 11 parents attended the March 7th AYC Orientation.

He also reported that during the department's Spring Recess camps, AYC members will be teaching and playing card games and board games with the children during a set time rotation.

Rishab reported that Megan Dudziak of the Child Advocacy Center will be providing an in-person presentation for AYC members, "It's Not Just Jenna". The focus is being educated regarding child sexual abuse and to help prevent it. 19 AYC members have already signed up to participate.

He also reported that AYC members will be assisting during the free Spring Fling community event taking place on Saturday, April 23rd at the Amherst Town Complex on JJ Audubon. Additionally, the AYC will do a book give away for children. The Amherst YES Volunteer members will also be providing activities. The Spring Fling community event is a collaborative endeavor between the Amherst Youth & Recreation Department, the Amherst Senior Center, Amherst Public Libraries and the Amherst Police Department.

➤ **Family Room**

Mark reported that the Family Room is holding a workshop on Friday, March 11th titled "Sleep Tips For Kids." It is free. During Spring Recess, there will be activities for younger children, Tuesday through Thursday at the Clearfield Community Center, titled "Little Sprouts". The Family Room March Newsletter is now available.

➤ **Amherst Youth & Community Coalition**

(Formerly known as the Amherst Task Force for Healthy Community*Healthy Youth.)

Susan reported that the new name was voted on in February. The new name is the Amherst Youth & Community Coalition. The new logo looks celebratory. A committee continues to work with Dr. Dan Webb on an adult survey regarding perceptions on alcohol and marijuana.

Susan asked members to read youth and adult comments on current topics which appear monthly in the Amherst Bee. She reported the comments are very informative.

5. Liaison Reports

- **Councilmember Shawn Lavin** Excused
- **Amherst Youth Foundation** No report

6. Chairperson's Report

Mark reported that Krista Krause offered to take the position of Vice Chairperson of the Amherst Youth Board. A vote is tabled until the next meeting due to lack of a quorum.

The Wednesday, April 20th meeting will be an in-person meeting at the Harlem Road Community Center. Voting members are required to meet in person. A zoom hybrid option will not be available at the April meeting. Mary-Diana is working on this.

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

➤ **COVID Update**

The indoor mask mandate is now optional for all programs; however, if a staff person is working closely with a child or youth, staff will wear a mask. All staff are asked to keep a mask in one's pocket. Social distancing continues.

➤ **Personnel Updates**

- Mike Frysz's office is now at the Amherst Senior Center. He continues to do work for Youth & Recreation Department and will give general support to Amherst Senior Center programs including their gardening program and billiards activity.
- Angelo Lorenzo will be transitioning to give leadership to some Amherst Senior Center programming including Adult Tennis, Adult Archery, Football 101 and the Fitness Center.
- A new Program Leader position needs to be filled. Going forward, future positions will be hybrid with staff working both with children/youth and adults.
- Elizabeth Graczyk now has her office at the Northtown Center. Her work includes nature programming in the parks, farmers' markets in the Town of Amherst and food truck rodeos.
- Working on hiring two full-time laborers, one full time social worker for the Amherst Senior Center and dozens of seasonal staff for summer programming and facilities.

➤ **Program Updates**

- 2022 Summer Day Camps
Registration on Monday, March 7th resulted in the 200 camp slots filling quickly. There is limit to registration numbers as Erie County Health Department rules are being followed. There isn't a wait list. Residents have been guided to frequently visit the website for openings that may occur.
The Department is aggressively pursuing staff for the camps, pools, summer programming and facilities. The residency requirement has been dropped and wages have increased.
- Lease agreement with Daemen College has been approved by the Amherst Town Board. Daemen College secured \$2.3 million from NYS for a soccer field and other items at Royal Park.
- Spring Recess camp continues to have some openings at the Northtown Youth Center site. The Clearfield site is full.
- The Spring Fling Community Event on Saturday, April 23rd is free and open. No registration.
- Jurek Post – a formal purchase order for the land and building will be made on March 15th. Currently the town has a long term lease for this location where the Williamsville Junior Football League will be operating in 2022.
- Willow Ridge Neighborhood/Parkview Neighborhood – the planning process will begin through a zoom meeting taking place on Tuesday, March 15th. Mary-Diana will send out the link.
- Dana Heights Playground zoom meeting is taking place on Wednesday, March 23rd.
- Amherst Teen Idol is making a comeback on Thursday, May 19th at the Eastern Hills Mall.

- **Jolly Boys Meat Raffle Fundraiser** is taking place on Friday, May 6th at the Main-Transit Fire Hall. Volunteers and attendees are needed. Funds raised will go into the scholarship fund for camps.

➤ **Finance Report** No report

8. Old Business None

9. New Business None

10. Announcements/Adjournment

Next meeting is Wednesday, April 20, 2022 at 7:00 PM in person at the Harlem Road Community Center.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Kathy Mobarak-Miller.