

AMHERST YOUTH BOARD

Meeting Minutes

January 11, 2024

1. Attendance/Introduction of Members and Guests

Members Present: Anagha Menon, Tiger Li, Susan McClary, Kristy Lindner, Ann Nichols

Excused: Dawn Cwierley, Krista Krause, Mark Forden

Absent: Hannah Joseph, Rose Mary Buscaglia

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

Guest: Kristine Arcadi

Shared that she is the Mom to a Sweet Home HS student and a college student who attends SUNY Binghamton. Kristine is a chief nurse at Veterans Hospital and teaches part-time at Niagara County Community College.

2. Public Comment/Presentations No presentation.

3. Meeting Minutes of October 11, 2023 and November 8, 2023.

Tabled.

4. Committee Reports:

➤ **Finance** No report.

➤ **Amherst Youth Consortium**

- Anagha reported that the AYC will be pinning Special Olympics placement ribbons in January.
- The 2023 Town of Amherst Warm Clothing Project for Children helped over 300 babies, children and youth. The full report is being compiled and will be presented at a future meeting.
- Kathy reported that 6 Amherst Youth Consortium members are set to attend the 2024 Albany Youth Leadership Forum taking place on Monday, February 5 and Tuesday, February 6. She thanked the Amherst Youth & Community Coalition for helping to fund the trip.

➤ **Family Room**

- Lead staff Kristen Norton retired in December. Full time staff, working with long term part-time staff, are continuing programming. Though there is a hiring freeze in the Town, permission has been given to hire a full time staff for the Family Room leadership position. Four candidates were interviewed and one was offered the position.
- Family Room winter programming is taking place at the Northwest Amherst Community Center.

➤ **Amherst Youth & Community Coalition** Susan reported.

- The Coalition met virtually on January 9.
- Dr. Dan Webb reviewed the results of the fall survey of high school students regarding their interest in community programming. 381 responses were received. Meetings and conversations regarding the data and next steps will be taking place by youth and adults.

5. Liaison Reports

➤ **A liaison from the Amherst Town Board has yet to be appointed.**

➤ **Amherst Youth Foundation** Mary-Diana Pouli

- The next Middle School Night at the Williamsville Youth & Family Center is scheduled for Saturday, January 20 at 7 PM.

6. Chairperson's Report

- Members whose terms have expired are Ann Nichols, Mark Forden, Jodi Benson and Priya Chaudhuri.
- Dawn Cwierley is eligible for another term.
- There are currently 10 adult slots open.
- There are 4 youth slots. Youth attending Amherst High School, Sweet Home High School, Williamsville North High School and private schools are needed.

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

➤ **2024 Resident ID Cards**

Cards are \$8 prior to May 13, 2024. Beginning May 13, 2024, card swill cost \$10. In addition to Monday through Friday office hours, the office is open for ID cards on Saturdays from 10 AM to 2 PM.

➤ **Winter-Spring 2024 Program Guide**

- Pages 4-7 list a variety of programs for children including sports, camping “survival”, culinary arts, painting and Family Fun Nights.
- On page 10 is a listing of Nature/Park Programs from January 1 through June 21.
- Family Wellness Walks are listed for April and May.

➤ **Summer Day Camps 2024**

- Summer camp registration was to take place on Monday, February 12. However, because of software challenges, registration will take place later in the month.

➤ **Asylum Seekers**

- The Buffalo Dream Center provided holiday food, treats and toys which Youth & Rec staff delivered.
- All children and adults received winter jackets, hats and gloves. 100 pair of boots were also provided.
- The Venezuelan families will be able to move out in June into permanent housing. Rent will be paid for one year by Jericho Road. Apartments are being sought in the Sweet Home CSD for families with children in order to provide continuity.

➤ **Staff Retirements**

- The Town of Amherst Retirement Incentive expired on December 21, 2023.
- Mary Beth Hopkins, Anne Marie Howard, Kristen Norton and Mike Fryszyk have retired.

➤ **Amherst Central Park**

A community meeting will take place in late February to share the initial playground design. This park will have a splash pad, a playground and landscape structures.

➤ **Harlem Road Community Center**

- All tenants renewed their leases.

➤ **Revenue Report (handout)**

- 2023 Revenue exceeded expectations by the end of November 2023.
- State aid for 2023 has been received.

➤ **Other**

- A fire at the Hopkins Road and N. French Senior Housing on New Year's Eve resulted in 6 units sustaining extensive damage. All power and gas was turned off. The Amherst Senior Center was opened to provide shelter and Youth & Rec and Senior staff were present. The U.B. Shuttle Bus provided transportation to 40 individuals to the shelter. Just before midnight, the American Red Cross was able to place those in need in hotels and the remaining residents were able to return home. The case workers at the Amherst Senior Center are doing follow up.
- The Be Consumer Smart flyer was distributed. The program is taking place on Saturday, February 3 at the Northwest Amherst Community Center. It is free and from 10 AM to Noon.

8. Old Business None

9. New Business None

Next meeting is Thursday, February 15 at the Williamsville Youth & Family Center at 7:00pm. Please note date change due to Valentine's Day.