

AMHERST YOUTH BOARD

Zoom Meeting Minutes

February 12, 2025

1. Attendance/Introduction of Members and Guests

Chairperson: Krista Krause

Members Present:

Rose Mary Buscaglia, Kristine Arcadi, Indraja Sujith, Salil Karkhanis, Dawn Cwierley, Kristy Lindner

Excused: Anagha Menon

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

Guests: Abe Joseph, AYC member and 8th grader at Transit MS

Liya Kassa, AYC member and freshman at Williamsville North HS

Vedant Mohan, AYC member and junior at Williamsville North HS

Paul Pfordresher, AYC member and junior at Amherst HS

Lily Zhang, AYC member and junior at Nichols HS

2. Public Comment/Presentations No presentations or public comment.

3. Meeting Minutes of November 13, 2024 and January 8, 2025

MM/SC Dawn Cwierley/Kristy Lindner

4. Committee Reports

• Finance

- Discussion of raising price for preschool took place. Children who attend are 3 and 4 years old. The current cost is \$140 for 2 days a week from September through May. The preschool is located at the Clearfield Community Center. There is a current wait list. Staff suggested that cost be increased to \$150. *MM/SC Kristy Lindner/Rose Mary Buscaglia.*

• Amherst Youth Consortium

- Indraja reported that AYC members will be playing chess, checkers, mancala, Guess Who? and the spoons card game with children attending the February Recess camps at the Clearfield Youth Center and the Harlem Road Youth Center.
- Lily and Abe reported on the 2025 Albany Youth Leadership Forum which took place on February 3 & 4. Youth and adults from WNY were from Clarence, Hamburg, Lancaster, Niagara Falls, the Town of Tonawanda and Wyoming County. 10 AYC members attended. The keynote speaker was Mr. Jeremy Butler, Chief Innovation Officer of ICAN. The topic was "Empowering Tomorrow: The Critical Role of Youth Voice and Engagement." The story of Malala Yousafzai and others were told. At a table discussion, AYC members identified what they cared most about: Human Rights (locally & globally), Sustainability (environment) Poverty (locally & globally), Mental Health and Peer Pressure.

Workshops AYC members attended included:

Test Your Knowledge with Kahoot-Gain the Latest Information & Research regarding alcohol, vaping and other drugs

Question/Persuade/Refer – Suicide Prevention

Empowering Tomorrow: The Critical Role of Youth Voice & Engagement Part II

New York State Youth Council

On February 4, AYC members met with New York Assembly Member Karen McMahon in her office. She knew of AYC members' volunteer work at a food pantry. She asked about NY legislation that may ban cell phones from classrooms. Most AYC members gave comment. Afterwards, AYC members toured the Capitol building, went up the elevator of the Corning Tower and spent some time at the 911 Exhibit at the NYS Museum.

- Salil announced that there will be an AYC Orientation on Wednesday, February 26 in the evening. He asked Amherst Youth Board members to spread the word.

- **Family Room**

Dawn reported that Family Room has an open door program on Saturday.

- **Amherst Youth & Community Coalition**

- Kathy reported that Williamsville CSD was set to have students, with parent permission, complete the Search Institute's DAP, Developmental Assets Profile, survey the week of February 26. Amherst CSD students will have the opportunity to complete the survey in late February or early March. Sweet Home CSD has yet to confirm date(s).
- Two members of the Coalition, Mr. Endell Osuna and Mrs. Anne Rohrer, attended the CADCA, Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America, in Washington, DC in early February.

5. Liaison Reports

- **Councilmember Angela Marinucci**

Excused

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

- Middle School Night is on Saturday, March 15 from 7:00-9:30 PM.
- A basket raffle fundraiser is planned for the Spring of 2025.

6. Chairperson's Report

No report.

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

Program Updates

- The new registration program was launched. It is going well. Staff continue to learn it and tweak it.
- The April Spring Recess camps for elementary school children were filled in 10 minutes.
- On-line registration for Summer Explorers camp for middle school youth is set for Wednesday, February 28 at 6 PM.
- On-line registration for the 5 summer camps for elementary school children is set for Tuesday, March 4.
- New programs this session includes expanded teen programming with cooking and fitness in the training room at the Northwest Amherst Community Center. There are also more programs for persons with a disability.

Personnel Update

- The new clerical staff, Rita, is a great addition.
- The new accountant, Andrews, has begun at the Northtown Center at Amherst. He is originally from Ghana and a graduate of Canisius University. He brings a sense of calm to the department. No financial report yet as he is learning our system.
- This summer, staff Sue Mohny will be Program Leader Emeritus giving support to staff in new positions.
- Jared Burns will be lead staff for Summer Explorers.
- Nick Lisman will be lead staff for Sports Camp.
- Alan Laudico will take over Marcy Simpson's duties when she is on maternity leave this summer.

Asylum Seekers

- As of today, all asylum seekers are in more permanent housing and out of the hotels.
- Some did move to Rochester.
- Only 1 family was able to stay in the Sweet Home CSD. Others found housing in the City of Buffalo and the Town of Cheektowaga.

Facilities

- Royal Park is very near completion. Last work will be the paving of the parking lot and the placement of fencing.

- Amherst Central Park is ongoing. Still being planned is an inclusive playground and a Winter Market space.
- The once proposed Splash Park for the Amherst Central Park site will now be installed at the North Forest pool. The Jolly Boys of Williamsville, Inc. is committed to funding a new playground at the North Forest pool area. A grant application to New York State is in the process to have funds to redo the pool and make it a rectangular shape with 3 lanes. The building also needs attention as do the tennis courts.
- The Town of Amherst Planning Board approved the building of a permanent restroom at Paradise Park. This will be funded by a grant secured by Erie County Legislator Chris Greene.
- The golf course driving range will receive updates this spring.
- Bathrooms will be built at the North French Soccer Fields with state funds secured by New York State Assembly Member Karen McMahon.
- The Audubon Library Playground is still moving forward.

8. Old Business No old business.

9. New Business No new business.

10. Adjournment

MM/SC Kristy Lindner/Dawn Cwierley to adjourn the meeting.

Next meeting is Wednesday, March 12 at the Williamsville Youth & Family Center at 7:00 PM.

Minutes submitted by Kathy Mobarak-Miller.