

AMHERST YOUTH BOARD

Meeting Minutes

May 14, 2025

1. Attendance/Introduction of Members and Guests

Chairperson: Krista Krause

Members Present:

Rose Mary Buscaglia, Indraja Sujith, Salil Karkhanis, Kristy Lindner, Anagha Menon,
Councilmember Angela Marinucci

Excused: Kristine Arcadi, Dawn Cwierley

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

Guests: Amelia Schnell, student

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

Liya Kassa, AYC member and freshman at Williamsville North HS

Lakshmi Sujith, AYC member and 8th grader at Casey MS

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

3. Meeting Minutes of February 12, 2025

MM/SC Rose Mary Buscaglia/Kristy Lindner

4. Committee Reports

• Finance

- An e-mail from a parent, received on April 25, 2025, was shared. The request from the parent was a request for a refund of registration deposits for summer camp for two children who decided they did not want to attend.
After discussion, the request was denied for the following reasons:
The deposit policy was clearly stated on the website and was the last item that parents had to read before making their purchase; the petitioner waited until the last minute to request a refund, thereby holding on to 14 weeks of camp that could have been utilized by another family, granting the refund would have set a dangerous precedent.
MMSC Rose Mary Buscaglia/Anagha Menon to deny the request.

• Amherst Youth Consortium

- Indraja reported that AYC members volunteered at the February Recess camps and engaged children in playing chess, checkers, mancala, Guess Who? and the spoons card game.
Liya and Abe reported that AYC members volunteered at the April Recess camps and engaged children in AYC adapted games of Uno, Pictionary and Trivia. In regards to the Trivia Game, plastic “light up” hedgehogs were used by the children to choose whether the children answered questions on Disney movies, spelled challenging words or answered questions regarding celebrities.
- The 2024 Town of Amherst Warm Clothing Project for Children report was distributed. Children were referred from the 23 public schools in the Town of Amherst. 174 boys and 137 girls, for a total of 311 children, received requested new items including 212 winter jackets, 168 pairs of winter snow boots, 312 articles of clothing, 55 pajama sets and 37 pairs of sneakers. All who were resources were thanked for their care and generosity.
- Also distributed was the Amherst Youth Consortium Report-Year 2024 Annual Report and the Year 2024 Amherst Youth Consortium members listing.

• Family Room No report

- **Amherst Youth & Community Coalition**

- Kathy reported that Williamsville CSD completed the DAP, Developmental Assets Profile, survey with 4th, 6th, 8th, 10th and 12th graders. Needed is an update as to the administration of the DAP survey in the Amherst CSD and the Sweet Home CSD.
- The first pickup of confiscated vape devices from schools located in the Town of Amherst took place on April 30. Schools got the devices to Kathy and Kathy met with a staff from Roswell Park Cancer Institute.
- A joint meeting between members of the Coalition and members of the Amherst Youth Consortium is scheduled for May 29.

5. Liaison Reports

- **Councilmember Angela Marinucci** No report
- **Amherst Youth Foundation** Mary-Diana Pouli
 - Middle School Night is on Saturday, May 17 from 7:00-9:30 PM. The theme of the evening is space.

6. Chairperson's Report No report.

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

New Office Hours & Procedures

- The Amherst Youth & Recreation Department Office in the Northtown Center at Amherst is closed on Wednesdays to the public. Over the past several months, clerical staff have left the department to work in other departments or other businesses. By doing this, some now have a \$30,000 yearly salary increase. The public has been mostly understanding.
- The department will continue to be open Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 8:30 AM to 5:30 PM. On Saturdays, the department is open from 10 AM to 2:00 PM.
- Starting on Tuesday, May 27, those calling the department need to leave a message. When leaving the message, they are informed that someone will return their call in 24 hours.

Temporary Office Re-Location

The Northtown Center at Amherst will be closed to the public beginning on Monday, May 19 through Friday, May 23. The chiller plant on the feature rink is being replaced. In order to do this, the electricity will be turned off. Some staff will be working out of the Northwest Amherst Community Center located at 220 Northpointe Parkway, 14228. Some staff will be issued laptop computers to work from home or other locations.

Willowdale Park (formerly known as Westwood Country Club)

Councilmember Marinucci reported on the proposal by the Town of Amherst to turn over ownership of Willowdale Park to Erie County.

Summer Camp Registration

- 483 unique campers are registered.
- All the camps are full.
- Registration went well. 64% of families who registered have 2 or more children.
- Ecology camp offered the week of August 18 through August 15 is full.

Playgrounds

- Audubon Library Playground is just about finished. The surface needs to be poured. This playground has places for children to read in cozy areas. It has sail shade and 6 acorn seats. It will open in mid to late June. The playground was funded by a grant from New York Senator Sean Ryan.
- Redevelopment of the N. Forest Pool
 - A new playground and new splash pad are planned. The Jolly Boys of Williamsville, Inc. is donating \$150,000.00 towards the playground and a state grant is paying for the splashpark. The redevelopment is planned to begin in the fall of 2025 with completion expected in the spring of 2026.

Program Updates

- The Summer 2025 Amherst Youth & Recreation Department Program Guide was distributed. It is available on line. Hard copies are at the office, the town libraries and in each of the buildings where programming takes place. There are 4,100 unique slots for programming in the guide. The concert and movie listings and schedules will be posted on the department's Facebook page.
- The software program used by the department has a feature of sending reminders once a person has a Town of Amherst Youth & Recreation Department ID card.
- Registration for the department's afterschool programs from fall 2025 through spring 2026 for current participants already happened. Parents are able to register new participants this week.
- Saturday, May 17 will be Serve Day – Year 5 by folks connected to The Chapel. The work their 400 volunteers are scheduled to accomplish includes:
 - Painting at the Williamsville Youth & Family Center
 - Replacement of the Soccer Wall and other work at the N. French Road Soccer Fields
 - Spreading woodchips at Creekwood Park
 - Hand digging out the rubber mulch at the Eggertsville Park located on Sweet Home Road and replacing the rubber mulch with wood chips.
 - Eight senior citizen residents will receive help at their homes.
 - Offered to all senior citizens at the Amherst Center for Senior Services will be free lunch, hair cuts and manicures.

Personnel Update

Staff is needed throughout the department.

Financial Report

Through the end of April 2025, the department has taken in 6 months of revenue.

A staff from New York Assemblymember Karen McMahon contacted Mary-Diana regarding the possibility of receiving \$50,000. Mary-Diana asked for mats for the Northwest Amherst Community Center, 2 portable gas pits, funds for an art program and funds for summer camp field trips.

8. Old Business No old business.

9. New Business No new business.

10. Adjournment

MM/SC Anagha Menon/Kristy Lindner to adjourn the meeting.

Next meeting is Wednesday, June 11 at the Williamsville Youth & Family Center at 7:00 PM.

Minutes submitted by Kathy Mobarak-Miller.