

AMHERST YOUTH BOARD

Meeting Minutes
September 10, 2025

1. Attendance/Introduction of Members and Guests

Chairperson: Krista Krause

Members Present:

Indraja Sujith, Salil Karkhanis, Dawn Cwierley

Excused: Kristy Lindner, Rose Mary Buscaglia, Kristine Arcadi

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

Anagha Menon resigned as she is attending Columbia University in NYC.

2. Public Comment/Presentations

Ms. Terri Lavin was introduced. She recently graduated with a Master's Degree in Social Work from Daemen University. She had worked with the Sweet Home Family Support Center in the early 1990s when Kim Cassidy was the coordinator. She has had experience with Erie I BOCES in the Special Education Department. Most recently she has worked at Glendale Elementary School in a Pre-Kindergarten class. She is happy to be working at the Amherst Youth & Recreation Department. She has begun to visit the many programs operated by the department.

3. Meeting Minutes of May 14, 2025 & June 11, 2025

MM/SC Dawn Cwierley/Indraja Sujith

4. Committee Reports

- **Finance** No report
- **Amherst Youth Consortium** **Indraja Sujith, Salil Karkhanis**
 - A flyer was distributed with information on the Saturday, September 13 free event for high school students at the Northwest Amherst Community Center. 3 on 3 basketball, the Ga Ga Ball Pit, board games, card games and the making of friendship bracelets will be offered.
 - The AYC vegetable garden was re-constructed by a staff from the Amherst Center for Senior Services, Mr. Steve Janis. He took down the 13 raised beds and created 7 new, larger raised beds. He redid all the netting and stakes of the perimeter barriers.
On June 14, 7 AYC members planted 24 tomato plants and 4 zucchini plants.
Over the past 9 weeks, over 20 AYC members did over 50 days of garden care.
100 large red tomatoes have been donated so far, most to the New Beginnings Food Pantry.
Donations also went to St. Leo the Great Parish food pantry & the St. Christopher's food pantry.
 - 18 AYC members participated in a cleanup of Glen Park in the Village of Williamsville on Saturday, August 9.
 - The New Beginnings Food Pantry continues to receive full support of the AYC.
In June, 63 families representing 130 people received food.
In July, 90 families representing 184 people received food.
In August, 79 families representing 164 people received food
 - In July and August, AYC members gave assistance at 3 of the 5 elementary summer day camps operated by the Town of Amherst Youth & Recreation Department.
- **Family Room** **Dawn Cwierley**

Jennifer Reed is the new director of the Family Room. She previously was the Program Leader at the Clearfield Afterschool Program.
- **Amherst Youth & Community Coalition**

Kathy reported that the Coalition is working on a community viewing of the movie,

“Can’t Look Away”. The location of the viewing is planned for the North Park Theatre on Hertel Avenue in the City of Buffalo. The owners of the theatre are providing the space for free. The Coalition is paying \$1,000 to the production company to show the movie.

5. Liaison Reports

- **Councilmember Angela Marinucci**
She is at Amherst Town Hall for a meeting regarding Pediatric Cancer Awareness month.
- **Amherst Youth Foundation** Mary-Diana Pouli
The first Middle School night to be held at the Williamsville Youth & Family Center is scheduled for Saturday, September 20 in the evening.

6. Chairperson’s Report No report.

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

Program Updates

- The Fall Program Guide is on-line and copies are available at the libraries and town facilities.
- The Harlem Road, Clearfield and Williamsville town afterschool programs are full with a waiting list. The Northwest Amherst afterschool program, which serves children in the Sweet Home Central School District, has 12 participants. The SHCSD changed end times for the elementary schools which has impacted sign up at the site.
- On Saturday, September 13, the department is hosting a Moonlight Hoops activity from 9:00-11:00 PM for middle school students and Amherst Police officers at the Clearfield Community Center.
- The last Farmers’ Market is taking place on Sunday, September 12 at Basset Park from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Approximately 2,000 attend each Market. There is a waiting list of vendors who wish to participate.
- Full programming for adults with a disability is being offered this fall.
- The 7th Annual Harvest Festival is set for Sunday, October 5 at Basset Park from 1:00-4:00 PM.
- It was a great summer for the department:
 - All 6 summer day camps had full rosters.
 - Attendance at the pools was quite busy because of the many, many hot days.
 - Summer staff was exceptional.
 - Royal Park Splash Park opened in June. It will continue to stay open through September. The hours are 8 AM to 8 PM. A one month water bill for the Splash Park was @\$10,000.
- Daemen University sports is in full swing at the site.
- A Halloween event is taking place at the Amherst Police Training Academy in October.
- The Audubon Library Playground is packed most days.
- Permanent bathrooms are being constructed at Paradise Park.
- A Winter Market will be held on Saturday, December 6 in the Amherst Town Hall parking lot.

Personnel Update

At this time there is only one full time clerical staff at the department’s Northtown Center’s site.

Budget

- There is a hiring freeze until the end of the year.
- It appears that the Amherst Town Board will take back unused funds.
- Amherst Youth Board advocacy may be needed.
- The Supervisor’s budget is due on October 1.
- The federal Drug Free Community Grant is ending.

8. Old Business No old business.

9. New Business No new business.

10. Adjournment

MM/SC Dawn Cwierley/Salil Karkhanis to adjourn the meeting.

The next meeting is on Wednesday, October 8 at 7 PM.

Minutes submitted by Kathy Mobarak-Miller.