

YOUTH COMMISSION MEETING
Westborough Youth and Family Services Office
Room 21, Forbes Municipal Building
45 West Main Street, Westborough, MA
December 13, 2010
7:30 PM to 8:45 PM

PRESENT: Kristin French, Michelle Grasso, Andy Rosenshine, Judith Tully, Rachel Bridge, Ritika Lahoty, Cameron Mattheson, Ali Strand, Oscar Najarian

WYFS: John Badenhause, Director
Cathy Cairns, Administrative Assistant

ABSENT: Kasey Packer

7:33 PM: MEETING OPENED/ POLAR PLUNGE

Michelle officially called the meeting to order and said how proud she was of John's participation in the Polar Plunge on Dec. 11th. Judith and other members agreed it was a very nice event, with lots of volunteers. John said there were 38 plungers and he raised over \$500. Judith said the event raised \$9600 so far, with more checks coming in. Ritika said four students said they were interested in participating next year.

7:42 PM: MINUTES REVIEWED

Michelle called for the November minutes to be reviewed. Andy made a motion to accept the minutes, Judith seconded, and the minutes were accepted unanimously.

7:22 PM: REPORT FROM YOUTH MEMBERS

Ali reported that students' PSAT scores are in. Rachel reported students are still working on the legal issue surrounding the Safe Rides program. She said students were surveyed about the program. She said an email may be sent to parents with a link to the survey, but that isn't definite. Ritika reported that a Shrewsbury High School junior killed in a car accident on Dec. 7th is now being considered a possible suicide by some. He was known by many WHS students who are shocked at the news.

John said Kasey sent him an email about various school topics such as: the basketball season starts tomorrow; early college decision has seniors stressed; the Winter Dance is not happening this year and school spirit seems to be lacking, although the "Under the Lights" sports programs have helped raise spirits. Other high school members discussed the fact that the Yearbook staff usually sponsors

the Winter Dance and they are very busy right now, as well as the fact that dances haven't been very popular in recent years.

7:52 PM STRATEGIC PLAN

John passed out copies of the Westborough Youth Commission Strategic Plan 2010-2011 for those who needed copies. The four major goals are:

- 1. Secure funding for Hot Summer Nights.**
- 2. Raise the profile of the Youth and Family Services Department.**
- 3. Finish Youth Needs Assessment Process.**
- 4. Collaborate with schools, other town departments and neighboring communities to address youth needs through programming and project initiatives.**

Goal 1 - Secure funding for Hot Summer Nights:

John said the goal for HSN finding is \$9000. YFS has received the Tufts University Cummings School Service Fund grant of \$500; \$500 from the Westborough Country Club; \$500 from the Westborough Cultural Council (waiting for the letter) and at least \$2000 from In Your Shoes (Polar Plunge) which brings a total so far of \$3500. Michelle said Fallon has a foundation and John said we will check it out. Judith suggested running a campaign (such as her "Buy a Bus" for trips) where all of the information is given out up front, then individual local businesses would be approached with a suggested donation amount. John said he was willing to talk with the local business owners. Ritika said local businesses sponsor sports team, so it is a good idea. John said funding for HSN is need by March, and the program coordinator from last year is interested in coming back for 2011.

The subgroup working on the HSN funding is Judith, Kristin and John.

Goal 2 - Raise the profile of the Youth and Family Services Department:

A) Invite selectmen and Finance Committee members to events and programs. B) Publicize programs/events to get the WYFS name in press regularly.

John reported that Westborough TV is taping a series of interviews with department heads, so that residents can learn the function of each town department. Tim Dodd is our selectman liaison, so he will most likely interview John for Cable. Donna Kelly, of Westborough TV, wants to complete the interviews before the budget crunch. It was decided that Michelle will be interviewed along with John. Judith reported that many people commented on seeing John and Oscar on cable TV talking about the Depression Screening, so public service announcements on Cable do help promote the department.

John mentioned that YFS does not have a Finance Committee liaison at the moment.

Michelle said we need specific goals to raise our profile for each month. She suggested that in January the group should focus on getting a new member for the Youth Commission. In February, we should focus on fundraising.

The subgroup working on raising the profile of YFS is Michelle and Andy.

Goal 3 - Finish Youth Needs Assessment:

The group decided to review the results John wrote up in January.

Goal 4 - Collaborate with schools, other town departments and neighboring communities to address youth needs through programming and project initiatives:

John said YFS has an ongoing collaboration with the schools and other town departments through 1.) networking and meetings; 2.) identifying partners and planning prevention programs with PHP (Partnership for Healthy Pathways.)

Andy asked if the police are involved, and Ritika said the health teacher has called in specific police officers to deal with specific issues. Students also utilize Facebook to arrange events or gatherings to deal with specific issues or tragedies.

John said YFS has been available to help during crisis situations, such as the time when a Middle School teacher was arrested for possession of pornography. He said we aren't usually called in but hopefully that may change, especially after the recent murder/suicide. John said he spoke with the School Superintendent and the Police Chief after the tragedy. He also reached out to the Library Director since their staff was affected.

Michelle asked if it should be YFS' obligation to reach out in emergency situations rather than wait to be called. Judith said schools are known for being very closed environments and that it is a slow process to become involved if you are an outside organization. John said he has spoken to the School Superintendent to let her know YFS is available to offer help. Oscar suggested putting in writing the types of services we can offer to schools in an emergency. Judith suggested having magnets made with YFS info on them and giving them to the kids. John said the new school improvement plan has a goal to increase the social and emotional support of students. Judith said the teachers are becoming counselors in tragic situations and that the teachers need to know they can look to YFS as a place to send kids in need, with the goal of getting the schools to see YFS as part of the system, rather than outside the system. John said he has been meeting monthly with representatives from the Police Department and the schools and the meetings have been going well. John is also on the school councils of both Westborough High School and Gibbons Middle School, and he will continue to

update the group about his involvement with the schools. Judith suggested having speakers into the schools to talk to parents. John said we used to sponsor monthly programs on different topics. He is currently working on a parenting talk sometime in the winter. He is also working with the library on organizing a community read with the funding coming from the Mass Library. The grant gives \$7000 funding for books and speakers on specific topics.

Next month, the subgroups should report on goals (HSN and Raising YFS Profile), as well as discussing the Needs Assessment results.

8:45 PM MEETING ADJOURNED

NEXT MEETING – Monday, January 10, 7:30 PM