

YOUTH COMMISSION MEETING
 Westborough Youth and Family Services Office
 Room 21, Forbes Municipal Building
 45 West Main Street, Westborough, MA
January 13, 2014
7:30 PM to 8:13 PM

YOUTH COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

Patricia Ainsleigh, Christine Anthony, Andy Rosenshine, Judith Tully, Jack Chuma, Corbin Whitaker and Meredith Wolpert

YOUTH COMMISSION VOLUNTEERS PRESENT:

Oscar Najarian and Gerad Sokol

WYFS: John Badenhause, Director
 Cathy Cairns, Administrative Assistant

ABSENT: Pranit Lahoty

7:30 PM: MEETING OPENED

Andy called the meeting to order. The December 2013 minutes were reviewed. Judith made a motion to accept the minutes, Patricia seconded, and the minutes were accepted unanimously.

7:32PM: YOUTH REPORT

Mid-term exams begin Friday. Students get out at noon during exams. If students have an A in the class, they are exempt from the exam.

The school will have a hypnotist performing on March 10th.

Winter sports will end in about a month.

To help alleviate stress, the school announcements every morning include tips to combat stress such as eating healthy.

7:36 PM: APPOINTMENT PROCESS

The process of appointing new members to Town boards and commissions has changed. Now, the Board of Selectmen will perform the official interview of candidates. Boards and commissions can meet with candidates and write a letter of recommendation supporting a candidate. This change applies to all boards and commissions. The Town Manager had suggested to the Board of Selectmen that they should become more involved.

Lauren Schiffman is being interviewed by the Board of Selectmen for the position on the Youth Commission tomorrow night. They are allotting five minutes for the interview. The group discussed the fact they felt five minutes is hardly adequate for an interview.

Andy wrote a letter explaining the YC's position on the process and in support of Lauren.

Andy asked if we are in need of a future YC member with certain skills how do we let the Board of Selectmen know. John suggested we let Tim Dodd know of our concerns. Andy said we should write up a job description for future YC members, focusing on what types of skills are needed. The group should go through Tim Dodd with the job description.

Prospective youth members of the YC are welcome to come to YC meetings to learn what we do before they go to the Board of Selectmen with their letter of interest. There was some discussion that the new changes might change the dynamics of the youths who apply for positions.

In a similar situation, the School Committee student rep was initially voted in by the students; later the Superintendant selected the rep. It was found that didn't work well, so it has now reverted back to the students voting in the student rep.

The Town publicizes open commission and board positions. Maybe we can publicize that possible candidates can contact us.

The new policy states the Board of Selectmen will wait up to two months after a candidate has applied to see if anyone else applies.

7:50 PM: WHAT'S UP TONIGHT? YOUTH ACTIVITY PROGRAM

Meredith and Gerard presented the program ideas discussed with John at an earlier meeting. The goal is to create a set of activities for high school students that will be substance-free. Possible locations: the YMCA, movie theaters, Sky Zone or a restaurant.

If kids arrive at an activity in possession of drugs/alcohol or are drunk/high, they will be asked to leave.

The plan is to invite high school aged Westborough kids (this will include Westborough students attending St. John's, Assabet, etc.) and kids with connections to Westborough students. This will enable Westborough kids to bring friends from other towns.

The events will be social, casual events that are easy to organize; the type of events kids can text each other about. The group wants to keep the tone of the events light; like "big brother" isn't watching their every move. They want low-cost events everyone can participate in.

Another possible event is a powder puff game where the girls play football and the guys are the coaches and cheerleaders.

There was a discussion about liability if an intoxicated kid is asked to leave an event. Where are they going and how do they get there? The group needs to decide how to deal with this issue, so maybe research can be done on how other groups do it. The group discussed the possibility of having two adults at each event; the coordinator and a designated adult driver who would drive kids home. There could also be adults on call if needed. And maybe there should be a mini-training session on how to handle situations for adult chaperones.

The Town Manager supported the idea of using the remaining 125 hours (out of the 400 hours) in the Youth Activities Coordinator position for the new event coordinator. The Finance Committee saw no problem with the budget changes. They only want to meet with John to discuss the needs of the department (review activity indicators.)

8:10 PM: OTHER BUSINESS

Judith reported there will be a mini-golf event at the Library on February 1st, which is a fundraiser for the Friends of the Westborough Library.

John will let the group know the date and time of the Fin Comm meeting where the YFS department will be discussed.

Town Meeting is March 15th.

8:13 PM: MEETING ADJOURNED

NEXT MEETING – Monday, February 10th 2014 at 7:30 PM