

Commission for Children and Youth

Monday, September 16, 2019 - Weston Town Hall Meeting Room

Regular Meeting Minutes

5:30-6:45pm

Commissioners Present

- Shara Kolodney
- Knox Watson
- Michele Tivey
- Michelle Albright
- Jane Hoeffner
- Hilary Misiano

Commissioner's Absent

- Bridget Angus
- Denise Harvey

Other Attendees

- Laura Cleary, Youth Services Director
- Charlene Monn, Program Coordinator
- Allison Lisbon, Social Services Director
- Emma Spaulding, High School At-Large Representative

1. Call to order: Commissioner Kolodney called the meeting to order at 5:33 pm.
2. Approval of Minutes
 - **Motion:** *Move to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting on May 20, 2019.* Motion by Commissioner Kolodney and seconded. Vote 5-0.
3. Introductions and welcoming new member
 - Jane Hoeffner was welcomed as a new member of the Commission
4. Overview of Youth Commission roles/goals and vision
 - One empty position to fill on the Commission; need to reiterate role of Commission members as they've shifted in the past
 - Role of Commission
 - Get the word out to the community as an organization that's here to help, make community aware of assets
 - Commissioner Tivey brought up advertising and a mission statement. Her idea is that we don't stand as our own organization, but instead support Youth Services
 - Town website lacks clarity
 - Each member should step up to bring strengths, and work on initiatives that the rest of the commission can facilitate and help out with

- We need to be collaborators; do this through subcommittees
 - Mini grants
 - Community service
 - School liaisons
 - Become data collectors, connect with principal and work with the school to connect them to assets of the Commission
 - Bring new ones up this year!
- Last year we spent a lot of time shifting topics and talking about problems in Weston. This year we should leave that to extra time and leave Commission meeting time to solving problems and working on current initiatives
 - Focus on assisting current efforts; 8 different organizations trying to solve the same thing don't work as well as one combined!

5. Updates and Reports

Defining the Commission

- Commissioner Albright: Westport and Wilton had problems with interacting town organizations, we need to learn lessons, and those are that WYC can be a vague organization and because of that work in multiple different sectors
- Commissioner Kolodney: Each member on the Commission brings together different facets through specialized individual ability, so there is overlap but that's a good thing.
- Charlene Monn: The Commission has historically become a meeting place for representatives from different areas as people come to talk about problems instead of doing things, so Laura is trying to materialize things and create real action plans. Last year was a learning year; this year it's go time.

6. Subcommittee Updates and 7. Idea Follow-up

Youth representation

- Invite students to come and speak/discuss with the Commission
 - Isabel hopefully coming to talk about mental health
- Charlene Monn talked to Hurlbutt youth about losing a sibling, brings lots of perspectives to mental health and very mature. Great opportunity to give that kid a leadership position and help develop into a good person.
- Commissioner Kolodney: Kids in high school could come tutor and mentor children, but this could fall out of the jurisdiction of the Commission as a program and be a hand off to Charlene and support her?
 - Commissioner Kolodney would be willing to invite high school kids to work with younger kids for service hours
 - No longer a homework club, so this could fill the vacuum as a WOW program
 - Becomes a two pronged approach, great for high school kids as service and great for mentored kids

- Make this idea into subcommittee
 - Weston Helping Weston works as a connector, so does Facebook group “Weston Tutors, Snow Shovelers...”
 - Try to bring those programs to town government?
 - Kids could get certified? Various issues needs to be considered.
 - Commissioner Kolodney will reach out to a school counselor
- Allison Lisbon
 - Changed role because she is no longer a voting member of the Commission; now will advise more as a representative from social services and advise how all decisions affect families
 - Help paying for fuel in the winter for people who can't afford it
 - State assistance for people in different income levels
 - Operation fuel, money you pay in eversource bill pays for fuel giving programs. Lots of knicks and knacks to figure out with government organizations such as paying or donating with credit cards and more
 - Suicide month, working to solve problems with suicide in youth and seniors
 - Commission on Aging - could use help connecting youth in Weston with senior citizen population
 - No more school dance, need more opportunities like this
 - CT suicide advisory board is regionalizing with quarterly training sessions on the state level
 - Commissioner Hoeffner would like to join effort
- Commissioner Kolodney is working with community connections through Anti-Defamation League to combat hate in the school
 - Trying to solve hate issues in the school like anti-semitism, ableism, etc.
 - Want to support the school in anti-hate issues that school sees as a problem but may need assistance having an impact
 - Try to combat hate out of the building through parent-student meetings?
 - How is the school fighting those issues and how can we help these efforts?
 - “HumanKind, Be Both” initiative, handing out t-shirts
 - At PTO meeting found school also using the ADL's DBT (dialectical behaviour therapy) in school
 - Already done mindfulness, school trying to have more Trojan time (advisory) this year
 - How can the Commission help school initiatives?
 - Approach theory - Teach families to understand mental health issues (combat ableism, “laughing off” issues)
 - Wingman program that we can grow (mentoring)
 - Dr. McKersie coming in October
 - Ask counselors about how school can help

- Updates in the School
 - Mini grants
 - Spread by Commissioner Kolodney on morning show, word of mouth, etc.
 - Spread by Commissioner Watson at club fair, facebook, signs
 - Could ask counselors to spread information in the school
 - Middle school social
 - Need help Saturday at 3, Hurlbutt swings
- Commissioner Watson provided an update on the volunteer registration project - the government has stopped providing a tracking service, so instead, each student will have personal folder with a spreadsheet for hours in addition to subfolders with documents providing proof of service

8. Marketing - Deferred

9. For the good of the order

10. Adjournment

Commissioner Kolodney adjourned the meeting at 6:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Knox Watson, Acting Secretary