

North Reading Youth Services Committee Meeting

Date/Time: Monday, June 15, 2020 - 6pm

Location: Zoom – Teleconference

Committee Members Present		Committee Members Absent	Guests/Visitors Present
Peter Majane, Chair	Patty Harrington	Deborah Mahoney	Jennifer Ford, Y.S. Director
Danielle Masterson, Vice-Chair	Leslie Shultz	Samantha Miller	
Karen Buscemi, Secretary	Jason Slattery	Amy DiChiara	
Frank Ferraro	Christy Dampousse		

Chair Peter Majane called the meeting to order at 6:02pm.

1. **Review of Previous Minutes:** April 27, 2020 minutes were reviewed and accepted.
2. **Financial Report:** YS Director Jennifer Ford stated there were no changes to the finances and would not be asking for reimbursement of recent book purchases as she will be keeping them after their use in programming.
3. **Social Services Report:**
 - a. YS Director Jennifer Ford outlined she has offered Pride Month support along with discussions and social media posts regarding systemic racism given North Reading is not a hugely diverse community. She is considering talking with administrators about incorporating Equality, Diversity and Inclusion professional development for all town staff including Police and Fire.
 - b. Jen has observed many kids are struggling with remote learning and have increased stress levels due to the uncertainty of schools reopening this Fall. It was noted that realistically large gathers will not be permitted for quite some time and the likelihood of schools reopening in the Fall is slim. Parents are experiencing their own anxieties about helping their kids with learning at home since they are not trained to do so in addition to having to manage their own work pressures and/or financial instability due to Pandemic.
 - c. The question was asked whether there has been an increase in alcohol and drug use due to the COVID-19 pandemic and Jen stated that some conversations with adults indicated they were having 2 glasses of wine instead of 1, and all age groups have been affected by the pandemic in some way. It was noted that cases of domestic violence have risen according to PD report in recent meeting.
 - d. The committee shared stories of personal experiences with social distancing and its difficulties in certain situations.
4. **Participation Report:**
 - a. YS Director Jennifer Ford outlined April held strong for participation in virtual programming yet slowly decreased in May. She associated it to virtual burnout given schools and other programs are currently online as well. The weather is getting nicer and kids want to be outdoors rather than virtually connected. Due to these factors, June programming highlights providing support to several oppressed communities including LGBTQ and people of color. She anticipates there will be less summer participation as kids want outdoor programming and there are currently non-direct guidelines as to how to proceed. It was noted that even a few programs offered is a benefit as it gives kids a sense of normalcy, which is extremely important right now.
 - b. YS Members reiterated the need to be prepared for a full opening of all services once the green light is given. Jen stated she is definitely ready for that.
5. **Old Business:**
 - a. YS Director Jennifer Ford outlined her new budget number increased but there would be no hiring of an assistant this year. She will revisit the conversation next year.
 - b. Jen's salary as Youth Services Director was approved.

- c. Jen mentioned she still regularly attends weekly COVID-19 emergency response meetings with the Fire Dept., Police Dept., Town Administrators, DPW, and Supt. Daly which essentially updates everyone on their efforts.

6. New Business:

- a. YS Director Jennifer Ford stated she will take over as advisor for the Youth Action Team which focuses on substance abuse and healthy behaviors/choices. There was a misperception in the HS that the former advisors were allegedly instructing kids to report peers found vaping and this led to the nickname "The Narc Club". The Youth Action Team was designed to inform, guide and promote healthy living which Jen will uphold in the future.
- b. Summer focus will include a photo contest and local PSA's.
- c. In light of the recent racial tensions and protests, North Reading residents created "Hornets Against Hate" Facebook page which was well received and they held a successful, peaceful protest on the common.
- d. Jen announced she will attend the newly formed "Racial Justice Summit" which she is excited about. She was also asked to join the School Reopening Task Force.
- e. The community group In This Together (ITT) 01864 comprised of over 100 volunteers which offers services for seniors for grocery shopping, picking up prescriptions (non-narcotic), and Phone Pals is in conversations to keep these services running by the Town after the COVID-19 pandemic is over.
- f. Jen collaboratively facilitated with Elder Services the distribution of masks and resources to NR senior citizens.
- g. Vice Chair Danielle Masterson offered a book title for further racial understanding - "This Is My America" by Kim Johnson.
- h. Chair Peter Majane suggested the committee reach out to Superintendent Patrick Daly to speak at the next meeting.

Next meeting: Mon. July 27, 2020 - 6 p.m.

Location: TBD

Meeting adjourned at 6:56p.m.

Documents/Handouts	
Committee Meeting Agenda	Committee Minutes from April Meeting

July 27, 2020
Minutes Approved on Date

Peter Majane
Peter Majane, Committee Chair