

Colchester Youth & Social Services

127 Norwich Avenue, Suite 205, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

P: 860-537-7255 F: 860-537-1731 E: youthservices@colchesterct.gov



Youth First Coalition Meeting Minutes

September 7, 2022 | 5:30 PM – 6:45 PM | Zoom Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Russell Melmed, Anne Marie Maffuid, Samantha Van Zilen, Lauren Lorincz, Dave Koji, Carol Wikarska

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Charity Benedict, Valerie Geato, Cindy Praisner, Carol Wierzbinski, Holly Rozanski, Katy Peterson, Jeff Rodman, Janet DePratti

1. CALL TO ORDER

Russ Melmed called this meeting to order at 5:32 pm.

2. ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA

None.

3. CITIZENS' COMMENTS

None.

4. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Minutes of the May 4, 2022, meeting presented for review and approval.

Motion by: C. Wierzbinski

to approve the minutes of May 4, 2022, meeting as presented.

Second by: S. Van Zilen

Abstains: D. Koji

Vote: Remaining in attendance approve

Minutes of the June 1, 2022, meeting presented for review and approval.

Motion by: S. Van Zilen

to approve the minutes of June 1, 2022, meeting as presented.

Second by: D. Koji

Abstains: R. Melmed

Vote: Remaining in attendance approve

Minutes of the July 20, 2022, meeting presented for review and approval.

Motion by: S. Van Zilen

to approve the minutes of July 20, 2022, meeting as presented.

Second by: R. Melmed

Vote: Unanimous to approve

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5. COLLABORATIVE FOR COLCHESTER'S CHILDREN (C3) - CINDY PRAISNER DISCUSS EVENT

C3 will be sponsoring the Choose Love bus, which is provided by the non-profit Jesse Lewis Choose Love Movement, at Celebrate Colchester on September 17, 2022. Scarlet Lewis, founder of Choose Love, will speak at 2 pm. C3 will also be hosting 4 tables, one for each of the four core values of Choose Love, along with activities at each. Charity stated CYFC may help by hosting one of the tables. Cindy stated they are looking for adult volunteers. Time slots are 12:30-3 pm and 3-5 pm. Charity passed around a signup sheet for this and other upcoming events.

6. LPC/SERAC FUNDING – DISCUSS 2022-2023 FUNDING APPLICATION

Charity stated the application for the next year of funding is coming up. The amount is for \$4000. Last year the amount was slightly higher due to covid. The funds need to be used for vaping prevention and education. They cannot be used for treatment or equipment. Ways to spend the funding were discussed:

- a. YAC to promote vaping prevention and education through Instagram. Dave offered to mentor.
- b. Jeff stated funds could be used for his Vaping Prevention curriculum. It is four week course with each session lasting 45 minutes.
- c. Funds could be used for Community Conversations and other program attendance incentives. Up to 5% of the amount awarded can be used for food.
- d. Ann Marie suggested displaying posters in the school with "Did you know?" bullet points.
- e. Dave suggested marketing the success & contact information of current programs: posters with QR codes, business cards with email addresses.

Ways to improve Jeff's (Project Courage) visibility was also discussed:

- a. Having Jeff attend the first day of Health Class and instructing students how they can self-refer or refer a friend to Project Courage's services.
- b. Waking casually around the lunchroom to start conversations with students.
- c. Having Jeff's business card on teachers' desks
- d. Introducing himself to all the teachers / attending a weekly teachers meeting.
- e. Jeff needs to have his own school email address and appropriate office sign to help students feel more comfortable.

7. DFC COMMITTEE UPDATES

7.a. DATA COMMITTEE

- a. Russ stated the most recent Data Committee meeting discussed the presentation for the upcoming Community Conversation, which will report on the 2022 survey results. He stated the team decided to focus reporting that reflects the four core measures of CYFC funding, having the presentation fun & interactive with parents and students so they can be aware of the others' perceptions, having Ann Marie give a 15 min presentation on how parents can best talk to their children, and wrapping up the presentation with preventative approaches.
- b. The validity of the data was discussed as the survey showed that students used both marijuana and alcohol significantly less in the past 30 days than the previous survey. The students took the survey on school owned computers which many felt influenced them to give answers that showed them in the best light. At less than 50% of the seniors taking the 2022 survey, their numbers were the least reflective of their class.
- c. Suggestions included:
 1. Dave recommended using a historical approach to numbers in the report.

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2. Ann Marie suggested using a panel of students to say what is going on in the school.
3. Focus on the main points we want to bring across and what we want the audience to take away.
4. Dave suggested presenting approaches for relatable student types, e.g., problems at home, partially using, using, being approached in school to use substances.
5. Jeff offered to go to the middle school and talk about prevention.

7.b. MARKETING COMMITTEE

- a. Charity stated about one-half of the 40 videos are complete. More participants are needed to create them. The videos have gotten thousands of views on the internet.
- b. Proposed Schedule for the Community Conversations:
 - #1 Presentation of the 2022 Youth Services Data – September, week of 19th or 26th
 - #2 Behavioral Health and Coping – Early November
 - #3 QPR Training – Late November
 - #4 Developmental Assets – January
- c. Charity showed the coalition branded merchandise available to use as give-aways at community events, the alcohol prevention packet that will be distributed at the school open houses and the YAC notebooks that will be handed out at events. She stated she is looking for volunteers and passed around a signup sheet for:
 1. Bacon Academy Open House Sept 15th
 2. W.J. Johnston Open House Sept 28th
 3. Trick of Trunk
 4. Celebrate Colchester

7.c. EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

Discussed as part of 7.a. DATA COMMITTEE

8. FOLLOW UP ON BOS & REFERENDUM

- a. Discussion occurred regarding the moratorium banning retail cannabis sales in Colchester. This will end at the end of September. The discussion included:
 - a. Writing a letter to the Board of Selectmen
 - b. Getting youth services on the agenda for the next Board of Selectmen meeting on Sept 15th. If unable to get on the agenda, then have Youth Services and CYFC members attend and speak as citizens.
 - c. An approach that included education.

9. UPCOMING EVENTS – BOARD MEMBER VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Topic tabled in the interest of time.

10. RESOLUTION RUN PLANNING

Topic tabled in the interest of time.

11. NOMINATIONS FOR SECRETARY & VICE CHAIR

Topic tabled in the interest of time.

12. REVISIONS TO BYLAWS

Topic tabled in the interest of time.

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13. NEXT STEPS

Russ and Charity: Complete presentation for upcoming Community Conversation on Oct 11th

Charity: Have Community Conversation date added to Digital Backpack, promote on social media

Youth Services: Attend BOS Meeting to make comments regarding banning cannabis retail sales.

14. CITIZENS' COMMENTS

None.

15. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 7:15 pm.

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