

Youth Advisory Board Minutes  
January 8, 2015

**Present: Barbara Ruhe, Kathy Bagley, Rachael Sunny, Eric Knapp, Colleen Keane, Gerri Roberts, Erica Teixeira, Leslie Esoian, Ken Lesser, Rachel Bahouth, and Michael Scavetta**

**The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.**

**Approval of November 2014 Minutes:**

- No edits were noted. Ken Lesser made a motion to accept the minutes as submitted and Eric Knapp seconded. All approved.

**Financial Report:**

- Rachael Sunny noted that there is currently \$8,088.01 in the Youth Advisory Board account. In November YAB received a \$500 donation from Walmart thanks in part to one of the Social and Youth Services volunteers who works at Walmart.

**Youth Services Report:**

- Grants
  - CASAC
    - Youth Services submitted the CASAC Grant (total amount requested is \$4,245)
    - Monies would be used to cover costs of Crossroads/a.s.A.p and cost of National Prevention Conference that Rachael attended this past fall
    - Also would cover an alcohol awareness event that Social and Youth Services would host in April in conjunction with MADD. Target audience would be high school students and their parents.
  - CYSA JRB Grant
    - Youth Services submitted a grant to CT Youth Services Association (they received a grant from the Department of Children and Families and in turn are awarding mini grants) to help support the Wethersfield Juvenile Review Board
    - The grant would provide funding for mental health services (counseling, drug and alcohol assessments, etc.), a boys support group(group would meet twice a month and provide adolescent males in town with a safe place to come together and “hangout” in a facilitated format – would be contracting with HumanUp to run this group) and parent education
- Friday Night Hang Out
  - 98 6<sup>th</sup> graders officially signed up for the pilot fall session of the Friday Night Hangout
  - Each session were averaging about 70 students
  - Made \$647.25 from registration fees (remainder of registration fees were used to pay for staff)

- From refreshments sales made another \$247.67
- In total have \$894.92 in the Friday Night Hangout which we can use to bring in special programs or purchase a piece of equipment for the Friday Night Hangout
- The winter session of the Friday Night Hangout starts January 8 and runs through March 20 (will continue hosting it every other Friday)
- a.s.A.p. (formally Crossroads)
  - Wrapped up fall session of Crossroads
  - Officially changed the name of Crossroads to a.s.A.p. (Afterschool ACHIEVEMENT Program). Thought was that it might generate more buzz and get more students to participate. Could also carry it into the elementary schools.
  - Winter session runs January 26 – March 12
  - Will be offering Art, Dance, Cooking and Lights, Camera, Action
  - Rachael is going to do some recruiting outside of the cafeteria during the lunch waves
  - Rachael will ask the Deane Scene to promote the programs in their newsletter (completed this task between the meeting and typing of minutes)
  - Rachael will also ask the school/BOE to send out an eblast to parents
  - Going forward the hope is to work with the current 6<sup>th</sup> graders through the Friday Night Hangout to determine what programs they would like to see included as part of a.s.A.p.
- Internet Safety Program
  - Middle school administrators had approached Youth Services about the need to host an internet safety program for the students in light of some of the issues that they have been having at SDMS
  - Rachael reached out to Scott Driscoll, former police officer and director of Internet Safety Concepts. He is available in April and May to come and do presentations during the day to the students and another presentation at night for parents.
  - Cost of each student presentation is \$600 and cost of each parent presentation is \$900
  - Youth Services has put together a proposal to a foundation to pay for this expense
  - Rachael also reached out to the High School to see if they were interested but unfortunately due to the construction at this time they do not have an area to host something. Can always revisit next fall if SDMS presentations go well.

#### **Old Business:**

- Youth Advisory Board Composition
  - The Town Manager approved the restructuring of the YAB Board composition from a board of 18 members to a board of 13 members. At the Town Council meeting on Monday, January 5, 2015, the Town Council also approved the restructuring of the YAB composition from a board of 18 members to a board of 13 members. This means that there is a current under 21 vacancy. YAB voted to put Rachel Bahouth's name forward to Town Council as a potential person to fill this vacancy. Gerri Roberts will bring this name forward to the Town Clerk so that the Town Council can vote on Rachel's appointment at the next Town Council meeting.

- Sophie Fortunato has not been actively participating in the YAB meetings. Barbara Ruhe is going to contact her and ask her to formally resign from the Board so that her seat (under 21) can be filled by someone else.
- Barbara Ruhe mentioned the possibility of doing a press release to announce that the YAB has been restructured.
- Youth Volunteer Manual
  - Several YAB members submitted organizations in the Wethersfield vicinity, which they know accept volunteers under the age of 18
  - Rachael still needs to consolidate into one document. Possibly have this as a “working meeting agenda” at the February YAB meeting.
  - Much discussion was had about the Civics Class Requirements that each student in 9<sup>th</sup> grade must volunteer 15 hours during their fall semester. Ideally would like to have the manual done before next September so that the Civics teachers can hand out the manual when they assign the “volunteer project.” Rachael and Michael will reach out to the teachers this May to see if there is a way to be more “proactive” when it comes to the assignment.

#### **New Business:**

- **Scholarships**
  - Ken Lesser talked about the idea of having YAB award a scholarship to a graduating senior recognizing their exemplary volunteer service
  - Everyone on the YAB is in agreement that it would be a great thing to do
  - Ken and Leslie will form a subcommittee to focus on the scholarship (parameters, forms, etc.)
  - Thought would be to have the top 3 candidates present their “essay” at the Youth Volunteer Recognition Night and then to either award the scholarship that same night or at the High School Scholarship Night
  - Kathy Bagley will look into the logistics of having a Town Board award a scholarship
    - Consensus was that if the YAB raises money specifically to award a scholarship that it should not be an issue
    - Barbara Ruhe offered to hold another “Will Writing Fundraising Event” to help raise this money
- **April YAB Meeting**
  - Barbara noted that the April YAB Meeting is scheduled for April 2<sup>nd</sup> which is Maundy Thursday. The members present voted to move the April meeting to March 26<sup>th</sup>.
- **Volunteer Recognition Ceremony**
  - This year’s annual YAB Volunteer Recognition Ceremony will be held on Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup>
  - Rachael has already reserved the Banquet Room at the Community Hall
  - Much discussion was had about how the Board advertises the event
  - In the past forms were handed out to all students in 3<sup>rd</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade (approved by Superintendent) and students would fill the volunteer nomination form out in school and then schools would return the forms to Youth Services. Youth Services would then sift

- through all of the forms and determine who should be recognized (over 1000 forms had to be reviewed last year). Postcard invitations would then go out to the selected students (last year it was around 800). Only received responses from 100.
- Rachael asked the Board to review the volunteer nomination form that has been used in the past and to make suggested edits. Would be ideal to establish a set of parameters (i.e. must have volunteered a minimum of 20 hours, must have volunteered someplace besides home or neighbors, etc.)
  - Board also should think about how to go about advertising/recruiting students to nominate themselves
    - Ideas that were suggested were morning announcements at school and email to parents
    - It was mentioned that the Social and Youth Services webpage needs to be updated and utilized more. The Social and Youth Services webpage would be a good place to advertise the Youth Volunteer Recognition event
    - Barbara also mentioned it could be posted on the Wethersfield Youth Services Advisory Board Facebook page
  - <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Wethersfield-Youth-Services-Advisory-Board/150603848332670>

At 8:43 pm Colleen Keane made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Eric Knapp.

Next meeting is February 5, 2015, at 7:00 PM.

**Action Items Before Next Meeting:**

- Wethersfield Youth Advisory Board Facebook page – Barbara is administrator. Is there value in continuing to maintain this page and if so does someone else want to take this on?
- Wethersfield Social and Youth Service Webpage – Social and Youth Services staff will be attending website training later this month. Will provide an update on the webpage at the February meeting.
- Volunteer Recognition Event – Board members need to review the Nomination Form and provide suggested edits and parameters at the February meeting. Also need to brainstorm some ways to advertise the forms. Hope is to have everything finalized at the February YAB meeting. Will have this as a working meeting item.
- Scholarships – Kathy will look into whether a Town Board can award a scholarship. Ken and Leslie will work on creating an application. Barbara will work on coordinating a Will Writing fundraiser.
- Youth Advisory Board Composition – Barbara will reach out to Sophie. Need to think about who the Board would like to nominate to fill Sophie's seat (under 21).

Respectfully submitted:

Rachael Sunny