

Youth Services Committee Minutes

Wednesday, May 13, 2015 – 5:30

Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices Conference Room

Members Present: Carol Wiggins (acting Chair), Trooper DeCarli, Denise Morell, Lori Rogers, Brian Keldsen, Maureen Allen, Dan Leavitt

Invited Guests: Joel Rosenberg, AHM; Carmen Vance, First Selectman; Ann Dunnack, Rec Commission; Alyssa Grinnell, Porter Principal; Dick Szegda; Natasha Nau, Town Administrator; Sue Epstein, Library Director; Jill Swenson, Rec Director; Matt Sternant, Lions Club.

1. Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 5:30pm.
2. Approval of Minutes: Minutes from the 3/11/15 and the 4/8/15 meetings were approved.
3. New Business:

AHM: Joel Rosenberg provided a report from AHM. The TASKS program pairing teens with seniors has been a popular program. Other successful programs include the Garden Club, the Get Outside Club, Playground Mentors, and the Leadership and Services Club. During the 2014-2015 school year, 5 Porter School children and one high school student have been referred to the Juvenile Review Board. 13 children and families have accessed clinical services through AHM. Although it is not officially part of the services being purchased by Columbia, AHM has opened access of the Family Resource Center to Columbia families and 6 children/families have received some services. AHM will again be providing the Summer Youth Theater, which is open to Columbia students. Last year, three children participated and it is hoped that there will be more this year.

Joel also reported that there is progress toward restoring the Youth Service Bureau funding through the Legislature. Final approval is pending. Approximately 60% of the AHM budget is dependent upon fundraising. AHM hopes to include more Columbia residents in its fundraising efforts in the future.

Joel commended the cooperative efforts of the town Seniors, Recreation Department and Trooper DeCarli.

There was some discussion about Columbia having a contract with AHM. It was clarified that it is more of a "friendly agreement". Any future plans to end or to expand services would require much further discussion. It is not possible to predict any cost changes.

Porter School: Alyssa Grinnell reported that the AHM/school relationship has been a productive, positive relationship. She spoke of some of the learning opportunities that students have had as a result of Cheri Rivard-Lenz's work in the school.

Open Discussion:

Ann Dunnack and Jill Swenson spoke of efforts to engage children in town who are not interested in the athletic opportunities. A Paint Night has been offered. There are efforts to provide music and art activities. The Youth Nights at the Senior Center were discussed. Getting chaperones has been an issue. The school has had similar struggles. This triggered a discussion about communication in town. Many things are communicated solely within the school community, and others are not aware of events. Possible improvements to the town notification system were mentioned and Natasha will explore. The Lions Club Leos are available to help with service projects. There are opportunities for book groups at the library for various ages. There are limited opportunities for Columbia youth who are attending the various high schools.

No other updates were provided.

4. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 6:35

Received: June 22, 2015
At 3:59
Attest: Robin M. Kenefick
Town Clerk/Assistant Town Clerk