



CITY OF WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS
Division of Public Health

Michael P. Hirsh, MD, FACS, FAAP
Medical Director

City Manager's Advisory Committee on Youth
Monday, August 3, 2015
5:30PM-7:30PM
Holy Cross College
1 College Street, Worcester MA

Minutes

Members Present:

Judi Kirk, Chair
Tim Garvin, Member
Brianna Turner, Member
Sue Hunt, Member
Laurie Ross, Member
Kathy Chau, Member
Rev. Clyde Talley, Member

Members absent:

Caleb Encarnacion-Rivera, Vice Chair
Brayan A. Chavez, Member
Kanchana Fernando, Member
Kathy Chau, Member
Laurie Farnsworth, Member
Juainer Beato-Lopez, Member

City Staff Present:

Raquel Castro-Corazzini, Staff advisor, Youth Opportunities Office, Public Health (WDPH)
Bryan Diehl, Youth Opportunities Office, Public Health (WDPH)

Minutes

(5:45) With only 7 members present quorum was not established; meeting continued as an informal gathering to share updates

Laurie conducted a general background for Youth Violence Plan. Major highlights include:

- Worcester with low homicide rates
- Juvenile arrests declining (locally and nationally)
- 340 incidents and under 18 arrested, which is low for a City with 25K in schools
- Still a violence problem statistically with men of color

Timeline history of youth violence plan:



- Various attempts at Youth Violence before Shannon Initiative, (although Worcester had Shannon and SSI grants for a long time). Problem persisted amongst young men of color. Questions asked were “What causes violence in the city?” and “what needs to happen to fix problem?”
- Assessment, community meetings, joining of two violence prevention groups (institutional and grassroots)
- Joining of two groups
 - Institutional (Shannon Initiative) – research-based approach; prevention oriented
 - Grassroots (Youth Violence Coalition) – small organizations doing targeted work in community; intervention oriented
- Worcester Partnership for Health Equity – emerges after expanded discussions of structural racism in how money was distributed
- Stakeholders exploring deeper conversations amidst escalating violence in the city

Questions from Summary:

- How are we organizing around violence with this plan? And who is doing it?
Police preparing for violence on the streets to go back to school with 60 day plan; the Police Department is engaging in meaningful dialogue; plan working because stakeholders are actually coming together to work
- Have there been trainings for teachers to handle the trauma (at all levels)?
Work groups have been piloting programs such as Worcester Hears as well as identifying individuals that are believed to be doing violence
- How does identifying really work?
Identification serves as a starting point; large institutions such as the Worcester Public Schools and the Police Department have traditionally been poor at doing this... it takes a lot of momentum from many organizations to push them to action
- Talley – current initiatives: Worcester Interfaith with summer jobs, Clergy-Alliance, “Yes We Care” Program; existing programs that need funding rather than funding new things; “Why aren’t these programs listed on the structure and plan?”
The plan continues to include information and initiatives as they roll in and become apparent to the drafters; those mentioned will be included

Additional commentary:

- Inclusion - Work groups within the plan were coordinated by CM and Mayor’s Office, while some individuals or organizations may not have heard or did not receive invitations there will be Opportunities to include anyone still interested moving forward;
- Funding - Existing funding by targeting existing programs with an idea that the momentum will grow funding for other programs, should be talking about changing how money is distributed
- Solidarity of cause – keeping groups together is paramount to plan’s success
- Transparency – most people have lost faith in the City’s ability to address issues of race, keeping community, organizations, and individuals involved relies on consistently informing about progress and opportunities to participate; authentic engagement and outreach

Homework:

- Who is involved in the work groups and how do people get involved and what is the level of involvement?



- Could the consortium provide tutors?
- Organizational chart of Youth Opportunities Office

Updates:

- HHS and DPH Director being hired... update on Health and Human Services and how office is floating in limbo
- Letters of acceptance to Youth Councilors
 - Orientation on August 24th
 - Youth Council has absolutely no money (should put together a rudimentary budget)
 - Needs t-shirts (Worcester Wears... Jess at DCU center)
 - Lunch

Next meeting (September 14th)

Suggestions

- City Manager should come to the next meeting; Judi to write email which states that one of the commissioners should be sitting in on the hiring process of HHS Commissioner
- Resource sheet from undoing racism training
 - Who was or wasn't at the undoing racism training and what did the training mean to the youth commission?
 - Recommendation that training to come back a certain number of times per year
 - Institutionalizing undoing racism training for lower level rather than just planners; potentially using a train the trainer model
 - Training with Youth Development Workers, Adjustment Counselors, Police Department all present at the same time

Announcements:

- Youth Worker Conference
 - October 26th
 - Laurie's Book!
 - *Dilemmas in Youth Work and Youth Development Practice*, Ross et al.

