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HHS Commissioner

CITY OF WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS
Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Youth Opportunities

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City Manager's Youth Advisory Commission

Tuesday, October 22nd, 2024 at 3pm

Zoom link:

<https://clarku.zoom.us/j/96715184204>

- I. Call meeting to order - Permission to Record! - Present**
 - A. Jennifer Safford-Faquharson, Judi Kirk, Bryant Cortes, Virginia Murphy, Jeury Abreu, Casey Burns
- II. June minutes and notes - motion to approve: Virginia Murphy**
 - A. Second: Judi Kirk
- III. Update on previous action items -**
 - A. Have not met since June and the previous action item was to do with what we called it at the time as "CHIPY". The CHIP for youth, that would help inform the Youth Agenda is now called the "CYCHIP" (Children and Youth Community Health Improvement Plan). DYO is working with Healthy greater Worcester Foundation and DPH to put together all the data that will be needed for the youth agenda. This is a process they have done before for the CHIP, which will be replicated for the CYCHIP.
- IV. Updates -**
 - A. DYO -**
 - 1. End of Summer Program -** This has been the best summer program has ever put together. Emphasizing in improving training, curriculum, and working conditions by providing materials and being more prepared for the youth want and need. We maintained 5 parks. Some of the parks went up to 100 youth at times , although it fluctuated due to weather events such as extreme heat. Program ended on the 5th of August with clean up

happening for the following 2 weeks. We had 25 Youthworks participants. The rest came from different funding sources. The staff were more engaged with the youth than in programming activities, which has been a struggle in previous years. The curriculum still needs to be updated for the upcoming year with the hiring of a curriculum and training specialist. Capacity at DYO has been a struggle as it has only been 3 people putting the program together. However, DYO is planning on hiring 2 positions in the upcoming months, which should help with capacity for the upcoming year.

2. Grants -

a) **SSYI** - Jeury has been serving as the program coordinator for SSYI until DYO hires for the position. Jeury has been sick the past 2 weeks and has not been able to be as present for SSYI these 2 weeks. However, prior to this, Jeury has been integrating more and more into the position until the hiring for it happens. Jeury has been coaching the case managers and creating outreach plans with the goal of creating leads for the case managers to work with to engage with the youth. There has been case manager turnover since June and the team has struggled a bit with engagement from the youth. Jeury has been working with officer Frigon who is the WPD SSYI contact to get the case managers the latest information on the youth who are part of SSYI. He is able to show them the profile although the staff is not able to keep certain information such as photos. It helps the staff create a sense of who the client is, what they look like, their affiliations, friends, and family members to help case managers generate a lead.

b) **Shannon CSI** - We have had a lot of struggles with new partners and their lack of knowledge of what is needed, thus many of the contracts were not signed. At this point, all contracts have been executed except one for Extreme Kid, Inc. which we had to do an amendment for. We have since gotten the amendment approved and are working on executing the contract. The main thing we are working on currently is a comprehensive guide on what we will need for the contract to be executed, what the PCR is (invoicing), and the individual risk assessment.

3. Youth Council - Started working again at the end of September. They will meet with the city council today 10/22/24 for a meet and greet. DYO is hiring for 3 more Youth Counselors, as they are missing representation from UPCS and South High schools. They are working on 3 main projects:

a) One is regarding food insecurity for youth. They want more information about what the schools can do to help with food insecurity although they have not been able to secure a meeting with the nutrition department at WPS. There is an interim director at the nutrition program currently and they have not been as

responsive. However, Casey did a Trauma Training Tuesday for food insecurity which they were sent the video and were able to get a lot of information from. The Youth Council is aware that there are restrictions on what WPS can do with the food they have, but they would like to meet with them to know what those restrictions are. They may reach out to Casey at some point to meet over this project as well. Youth Council were recently told to wait until December to meet over this as WPS will have a new Nutrition director at this point.

- b) The second project they are working on is Vote 16 and seeing how feasible this would be for the City of Worcester. When meeting with the city manager in the Summer he stated that he was going to put feelers out to city council to gauge how that could work in bringing it up and seeing how much support the youth can get. He was going to report back to the city council in our meeting with him in the fall.
- c) Mental health project with Worcester Public Schools. Liza and Jeury from DY0 met with Jean Conway who is now the head for the School Adjustment Counselors to update them on this project as we had met with Thomas Toney prior. Jean Conway is now under Tom and will assist the Youth Council in this. Jean would like to meet with the Youth Council in person to go over the project and see what is feasible for the Youth Council and WPS to work together on regarding mental health.

B. Youth Violence Prevention -

- 1. **CAB** - Has been going great with a new model where Angel Guzman and Frankie Franco lead the group in terms of support and mentoring. Tee Freeman is also the facilitator. They meet twice per month. They have struggled a little bit with attendance. They have a few youth who have lived experience and have had open cases or have since been incarcerated. However, they have been able to join via phone call since phone calls are now free. They are still getting support when they are incarcerated through Angel Guzman which has been great for those individuals, but also for the group overall.
- 2. Governance Council - Met on Monday 10/21/24. Laurie Ross presented the indicators report with a focus on the home visitation and birth rates in Worcester. Doti and Yolanda gave an overview of the Home Visitation program for newborns with Pernet and some of the challenges that have come up. Casey Burns and Raquel Castro-Corazzini gave a quick update on the food assessment. They also touched up on the CYCHIP and also presented on the after school assessment. Superintendent was present and offered ongoing collaboration and support.

C. Youth Agenda - Tempe and DY0 team have been using some slides to visualize the process and show where we are at in the process. They are identifying the

qualitative data they still need to collect specifically in the age range of 5 years old to 10 years old. Also to identify the full plan and budget that will be needed to complete the Youth Agenda. The group meets every Thursday. They also connect with every group possible to let them know what is happening and ways they are able to get involved.

1. Judi Kirk has been sitting in some of the youth agenda meetings. She states that the community reception has been very positive and there is excitement around it.
2. Jennifer Safford-Faquharson stated that there was going to be a community conversation that has turned into a data summit about most of the things we are talking about regarding the Youth Agenda. It's going to allow all of the data that is being collected to be reviewed by each other (stakeholders within the community) in thinking about moving forward and how to understand the data we have had a hard time understanding. For instance, one of the pieces that has been worked on in a number of different spaces is what is the situation with Women and Girls related to violence in the city, which is something a lot of folx have been seeking to understand. The data summit will be November 20th. As it was going to be a community conversation about this, it has turned into a data summit because they have realized there was still a lot they don't even know yet and to put it out for the entire community might be a bit premature, thus they want to take their time analyzing the data before they put it out to the community as a whole. Especially since this is going to help inform the Youth Agenda and everyone's plans moving forward regarding youth is what they are hoping.

- D. School Updates** - There are ongoing Union conversations around staffing needs as far as mental health or clinical staff. A few adjustment counselors and a lot of BCBA's were let go from last year. It complicates the support for some of the higher need children. However, overall things are going well. There haven't been any big rumbles or waves.
- V. Youth Advisory Commission attendance & recruitment** - Brianna Turner is resigning from Youth Advisory commission due to no longer being free at the times of the meeting.
- A. Who hasn't been represented in this Commission is something we would like to think about. We have a lot of folx with combined roles so folx should think about those who are missing.
 - B. Possibly ask the Youth Council about what type of representation they think would be beneficial in this Commission.
- VI. Announcement** - November 9th will be the college and career access fair from 1pm to 5pm at the Worcester Public Library.
- VII. Action Items** -
- A. DYO - pull together the list of needed members for the Youth Advisory Commission. Talk about what type of representation is needed for youth in the Youth Advisory Commission for youth with the Youth Council..
- VIII. Adjournment - Motion to adjourn - Judi Kirk**

A. Seconded - Virginia Murphy