

Preston Youth Services Bureau Advisory Board
Regular Meeting
Wednesday, May 19, 2021 at 4:00 P.M.
Teleconference Call

Call to Order -- Melissa Lennon called the meeting to order at 4:06 P.M.

1. Roll Call

Members

Melissa Lennon – Chairman
Amanda Phelps - Vice Chairman
Rachel Tucker – Secretary – arrived at 4:39 P.M.
Zachary Robinson – Youth Rep.
Armando Bettini – Police Rep. - absent
Jessica Boucher – School Rep.
Kim Litsey - Youth Org. Rep.
Kasey Peek – Community Member

Also Present

Amy Brosnan – Youth Service Director

Melissa Lennon asked that item #12 b. be brought forward in the agenda due to the presence of Diane Deedy.

Diane Deedy, Library Director, reviewed the Story Walk idea and that it's location would be at Preston Community Park so that the community would have easy access. Children and parents could easily enjoy the books while enjoying the park and all it has to offer. It would be especially nice in the warmer months. Ms. Deedy explained that the cost of the weather proof story boards to accommodate a typical 32-page story book would be about \$6,010.80 for 10 boards. At this time the Library does not have any funds to spare in their budget for such an undertaking. She explained that the amount given doesn't cover the cost of frames, labor, or the cement needed to secure the story boards into place. She stated that books could be changed monthly or every two months and that could easily be done by Library staff.

The group discussed possible funding for the project. Diane Deedy said she would look into possible grants through the State Library Association.

2. Public Comment – No one present

3. Approve Meeting Minutes

a. April 21, 2021 – Regular Meeting

Kasey Peek motioned to approve April 21, 2021, Regular Meeting Minutes. Kim Litsey seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Correspondence –

- Sent out Annual Report to the Board of Finance
- Sent a letter to the Board of Selectmen regarding the appointment of Kasey Peeks and the resignation of Dr. Roy Seitsinger as PPS liaison
- Received an email from Nancy Musa stating that the Town Hall will be open to the public as of June 1st and that all Boards and Commissions can resume meeting there.

5. PYSB Financial Report –

Amy Brosnan gave the Financial Report, she shared that it was the same as last month minus the recorder's fee and her salary. She did note that there were several outstanding bills which were: \$1,200 for Erica Cunning for the Stress Workshop; \$5,175 to New England Science & Sailing; and D.A.R.E. shirts and certificates for \$412.99. The total for the outstanding bills is \$6,787.99. The remaining balance after these bills are paid is approximately \$12,522.73 with additional cost for the N.E.S.S., salary, and recorder fees to be paid in June.

6. PYSB Annual Report for the BoF

Melissa Lennon acknowledged Amy Brosnan efforts to complete the Annual Report that was provided by her to the Board of Finance.

7. Ethics Training Compliance

Chairman Lennon thanked all the Board members who have done the Ethics Training that the Board of Selectmen are now keeping track of. The time given to participate is appreciated.

8. Resignations & Appointments

a. Recommendation for Alternate Members

There are no resignations. There have been discussions in the past to appoint an alternate member. With no additional people in attendance Chairman Lennon asked that this be tabled. Board members agreed.

9. Youth Services Bureau 101 Class for New Directors, Staff, and Boards – June 4th

It was recommended that Board members try to attend this virtual Workshop on June 4th from 9 - 2:30. If members are unable to attend, they were encouraged to review the recording of the Workshop at their leisure.

10. Community Needs Assessment Survey 2021 (week of May 10th)

The survey went out the week of May 10th. There were 227 students, 14 school staff, 58 parents, and 26 community members who responded to the survey. Students seem to want a youth center, skate park or bike park. They seem to be looking for a safe place to go. Some of these items might be good candidates for the Town's next Capital Projects. Each member was asked in turn their take on the survey.

Amanda Phelps pointed out that until there is a skate park in town perhaps offering a field trip to skate parks nearby. She also felt that people felt they wanted more opportunities to learn life skills.

Zachary Robinson thought that perhaps offering extra curriculum opportunities other than sports; clubs that high school and town schools don't offer.

Kim Litsey suggested that for more sustainability that waiting for post-covid time might be prudent so that the Board can better meet the needs of the whole community.

Kasey Peek pointed out 2 areas. First, sports are covered by the schools so we should look at non-sports activities such as Legos, robotics, board games to help build a sense of community. Second, we need to advocate youth partner with local businesses. Also, our high schoolers lose a connection with younger students; perhaps a mentorship even once a month to connect and read to or tutor a younger student.

Jessica Boucher suggested more outside activities and volunteer opportunities to help others. This would help build a sense of community as well as helping others. Also provide a Baby-sitting Course or connecting with the United Way to volunteer would help build leadership skills.

Rachel Tucker if children and teens want to learn sewing, knitting, cooking, etc. bring in older adults/seniors to teach them and bridge that generational gap.

Amy Brosnan felt that after listening to the members that many of their ideas would be easy to implement. She also felt that there is a need to look more into supporting mental health. Norwich has a Girls' Circle.

Melissa Lennon felt that two ways to engage seniors and students would be through pen pals or reading partners.

11. Preston Youth Services Bureau Programs & Activities

a. Stress Happens Parent Workshop (virtual April 7, 21, 28, and May 12 @ 7 p.m.)

Both Rachel Tucker and Melissa Lennon shared that they enjoyed the workshop. It was stated that the presenter was positive and upbeat, but even though it was opened to surrounding towns, it would have been better to have more participants.

b. D.A.R.E.

It was shared that the program is finishing up, and that T-shirts and certificates are being ordered, and the final celebration will be held at the school.

c. N.E.S.S. (June 21-23, 2021)

i. Motion to approve bus transportation

Amy Brosnan reported that the program was posted at 9 am and by 10:08 that same morning the trip was filled and that she has a wait list of 12. She then explained the cost of the trip – there will be 2 staff and 1 support staff at a cost of approximately \$810. The transportation will come to roughly \$526, for a total of \$1,336.

Kasey Peek motioned to approve the funding for N.E.S.S. staff and transportation, not to exceed \$1,500. Rachel Tucker seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Then members discussed the possibility of sponsoring a second trip that would cost a total of \$6,000. It was cited that the Wait List is already at 12 and that this trip addresses issues that were pointed out on the survey. It was also mentioned that Board funds could be directed towards the Story Walk boards.

Kim Litsey motioned to table Story Walk boards discussion until a Special Meeting in June. Kasey Peek seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Kasey Peek motioned to fund a second N.E.S.S. trip, not to exceed \$6,500. Kim Litsey seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

d. Other

12. Preston Youth Services: Programming Ideas

a. IndieFlix Original sequel to LIKE in October (anxiety or cyberbullying)

It was mentioned that perhaps a sequel talk could be organized.

b. Story Walk – partnership with Preston Public Library

This was tabled until a Special Meeting in June in hopes that Diane Deedy could find more funding, and it was hoped by then there would be a better idea of the funding needed.

c. School Garden

Gardens can help put food on the table and can contribute fresh produce to the food bank.

d. Fitness Equipment for PPMS

It was shared that PPMS was looking for exercise equipment – 4 rowers, 2 overhand arm pulls, and 2 fan bikes for a total cost of \$7,000. Members felt that it would only be used by middle school students and not shared by the community as a whole. Also, the Board does not have the funds at this time.

e. Pen Pals with Seniors

Amy Brosnan volunteered to reach out to Fran Miner to coordinate with the Seniors. She explained that she would have a questionnaire that participants would fill out so that they could match a senior with a student.

f. Preston Youth Employment Services (Y.E.S.)

Amy Brosnan explained that this would target 14 and 15-year olds looking for work. She shared that Montville already has a program called HIRE a Teen. It would be for people looking to hire a babysitter, pet sitter, dog walker, simple yard work, and other odd jobs. It would be a referral service, once a connection is made the payment is between the hired teen and the resident. The only concern was the Town's liability in such cases. Amy Brosnan said she would check with Montville to see how they handle that and with Preston town officials.

g. Parks & Rec Summer Concert (June 29th) – PSYA Book Give-Away

It was mentioned that Diane Deedy will be at the event to promote the Library's Summer Reading Program. It was suggested to have a Youth Service table at the event as well to possibly give away free books.

h. Other

13. Special Meeting (June 2, 2021), if needed

It was decided that the Special Meeting would be held June 9, 2021 at 4 P.M.

14. Public Comment - None

15. The adjournment came at 5:56 P.M. due to a lack of a quorum.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kimberly Lang

Recording Secretary

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PRESTON, CT.

2021 MAY 25 A 11:07

Bonda A. Hopkins
PRESTON TOWN CLERK ASS