

Youth Services Commission
Minutes of
Meeting February 7, 2012

Watchung Municipal Youth Services Commission Meeting was called to order at 5:03 PM.

In attendance were: Dr. Malyska, Ms. Chris Blackadar, Ms. Debra Joren, Mr. Albert Ellis, Ms. Mary Nunn, Ms. Kathy Caldas, Det. Stankan, and Miss. Claire Barrameda. Also in attendance was Ms. Cindy Britt from the County Youth Services Commission.

The secretary reported that we did receive our Grant monies and also donations from WHYBA (\$500.00) and PBA (\$100.00). We also received \$62.50 from Friends of Somerset County Youth for our participation in the fundraising event (raffle).

Dr. Malyska reported that the Italian Club has started. Ms. Blackadar said there are 40 students registered (24 showed up for the program so far). It will be held on Tuesday – 2 times per month. Mr. Ray Schweitzer, who is running the club, is very pleased with the program and plans to incorporate cultural things such as music, food, history, dance, etc.

Ms. Nunn discussed the Pursuit of Excellence Program. The first session was held for five weeks in October/November with 10 students from 3rd grade and 10 from 4th grade at Bayberry School. The next session is scheduled to start on November 14th with 3rd graders on Tuesdays and 4th graders on Thursday. The program is set to end the first week of May. State testing is done the second week of May. Bus transportation is provided.

Dr. Malyska said there are two teachers set up already and looking for two more then the program will be off and running.

The problem for the program turns out to be the busing. We only have a bus that has 29 seats and we have 40 students registered. The bus route can be very long. Especially when the program starts around 3:30 with some students are being dropped off around 5 – 5:10 and in the fall it was dark.

Ms. Nunn questioned Ms Britt about the program and possible additions we could add to apply for the Competitive Grant again so we can continue this program next year. Possibly holding during the school day. Or a Saturday – maybe two Saturdays before the State testing to further help the students. Ms. Britt will check to see if this would be a possibility but in order to get this grant it would have to have something different added to the program- maybe mentoring or something like that.

Ms. Nunn asked if Ms. Britt knew of any programs held in other towns that might be of interest. Ms Britt did give examples such as a program that Bound Brook received a five year grant from Middle Earth for their 21st Century Program which is an after school program. It is an excellent program which incorporates everything from the school day in terms of working with the kids including mentoring, life skills, etc. They serve about 140 kids after school.

Ms. Britt said many times for the Competitive they like to see partnering with another town, etc. She said we should also check into Educational Grants.

Ms. Caldas asked why, when a program has proven its success, it would not be acceptable for a Competitive Grant. Ms. Britt said the Competitive Grant is for starting a program and when you apply for the Grant one of the questions asked is how you would continue the program.

Mr. Ellis mentioned the possibility of contacting the High School to see if there are peer leaders that could mentor for 7th and 8th graders. These students would then have someone they know (a friend) when they enter High School. Or they could tutor students.

Other suggestions included having peer mediators at Valley View (7th and 8th graders) helping in 5th & 6th grade classes to help or give advice, etc. and at Bayberry they could be out on the playground to help work out problems or help a student find a friend.

Ms. Britt reported that they have not gotten the go ahead from Freeholders regarding the Grants this year. She is hoping to hear something by March.

Dr. Malyska mentioned that all programs need approval of the Board of Ed.

It was suggested that we check for other Grant opportunities to continue the Pursuit of Excellence.

Ms. Britt mentioned all the upcoming presentations being held by the County. One of them is on "Autism" this coming Thursday. The fee is \$15.00. It is an excellent presentation.

Girls on the Run is now a non-profit program. There is now a fee of \$25.00 per student. We have 25-30 girls. They are going to ask WEF to pay the fee which will be approximately \$750.00.

There were further suggestions for requesting a donation and Ms. Blackadar will send a letter to the Recreation Commission.

The commission asked Miss. Barrameda if she had anything to report – she said not at this time.

Being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Our next meeting will be held April 10th at 5 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
MaryAnn Hance, Secretary