



LEWIS COUNTY YOUTH BUREAU

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Penny (Demo) Moser, Director

Lewis County Youth Bureau Advisory Board

Minutes of January 15, 2020

Kirstin Moshier-Co-Chairperson and Student Representative-Lowville Academy, called the meeting to order at 4:01pm. The meeting was held at the Lewis County Courthouse, 2nd Floor in the Legislative Chambers.

Present: Scott Mathys-Co-Chairperson, Kirstin Moshier, Mike Leviker, Alyssa Brower-Student Representative-Lowville Academy, Deanna Edick, John Exford, Ward Dailey, Michele Ledoux, Cinda Bush, Chloe Benson-Student Representative-Harrisville Central and Brian Finn. **Excused:** Katie Zehr, Rhonda Vanucchi, Kallie Bauter-Vice Chairperson and Student Representative South Lewis Central, and Peyton Walker-Student Representative-Copenhagen Central. **Others Present:** Randy LaChausse- Chairperson of the Youth Bureau Legislative Committee, Richard Chartrand-Legislator and Penny Moser-Director Lewis County Youth Bureau.

Introductions and Welcome:

- Welcome Legislator Randy LaChausse who was appointed as the Legislative Chairperson on the Lewis County Youth Bureau. Legislator’s Greg Kulzer and Richard Chartrand, Legislators were also appointed on the board.

Minutes: Review of the November 20, 2019 Youth Bureau Advisory Board meeting minutes: Cinda Bush made a motion to accept the minutes as written; Deanna Edick seconded. **Motion Carried.**

Correspondence:

A Thank you note from the Village of Castorland was received, thanking the board for allocating 2019 County Projects Funds to purchase fitness equipment for the Villages’ Playground. The note, stated “The kids will surely enjoy the transformation in the Spring!”

Old Business:

Youth Bureau Strategic Planning/Directives – Re-Cap and Discussion: At the November 2019 meeting concerns were voiced regarding the potential of having the youth bureau umbrellaed under DSS. The purpose for the change was due to the concern related to the over, capacity workload due to the youth bureau being more involved in the community, adding in the Safe Harbour-Seed Funding, and expanding in general.

Concerns voiced included the need for assurance of the following: “What Will the Youth Bureau Look Like Under DSS”; Making sure there is no conflict of interest; Make sure the structure of the board remains the same, specifically as it relates to having youth on the board, so student representatives continue to have a voice when it comes to the allocation of OCFS Youth Development funds that are designated to support, enhance and meet the unmet youth program needs of the county; and other fundamental questions. * For clarification, Ryan Piche, County Manager and Jennifer Jones, Commissioner-LCDSS, were invited to our December 18th meeting, however the meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather. A week later Penny, Scott Mathys, County Manager Piche, Legislator Randy LaChausse, Jennifer Jones-Commissioner, and Katie Zehr had a meeting to further discuss and define concerns voiced.

Priorities in 2020-Discussion-Strategic Direction -“How Do We Want to Proceed”

Chairperson Mathys asked “How do we want to strategically proceed as a board with Initiatives/Projects? Do we want to continue to sustain offering community programs such as the annual “Homeless Christmas Tree” Initiative or maybe instead partner or help with other established programs such as Office for the Aging’s Santa for Seniors program. Penny reported that an overwhelming amount of personal, hygiene, kitchen and bath supplies were donated during this year’s annual “Homeless Christmas Tree” Initiative, therefore at this time she does not believe the youth bureau will need to offer this initiative again 2020, however will monitor throughout the year.

Questions directed to Legislative Chairperson LaChausse: Would the youth bureau look different under DSS and was there an alternative motive for the proposal to be umbrella under DSS. Legislative Chairman LaChausse responded no to both questions.

Deanna Edick, Director of Services at DSS and youth bureau board member, reported that in her unit at DSS she has a Community Services Worker that, is able to assist Penny whenever needed.

Penny advised that she had consulted with Tina Louis, Youth Bureau Director in Madison County. The Youth Bureau merged with DSS almost 3 years ago. She advised that the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) has a “Merger Protocol” that must be utilized if the intention is to umbrella the youth bureau under DSS or any other entity. Penny has requested the merger protocol. Once received she will share it with Scott and County Manager Piche. Tina advised that there are benefits to merging as far as additional funds coming into the county. Penny advised that after consulting with Tina Louis and Matt Newman from OCFS, she believes the youth bureau should be umbrellaed under DSS. Penny has invited Tina to meet with the youth bureau and county officials. Penny will invite Tina to the youth bureau’s February board meeting, to provide and overview of the benefits of merging with DSS.

Ward Dailey and Michele Ledoux agreed that it makes sense to have the youth bureau umbrellaed under DSS, specifically as it relates to getting additional help for Penny.

After much discussion, consensus of the youth bureau membership present was to proceed with the OCFS merger protocol to have the Youth Bureau umbrellaed under DSS.

Old Business

Safe Harbour-Seed Funding (\$30,000): The Workplan was submitted to OCFS by the deadline of November 30th and was approved. It is important to note that we can modify the workplan as needed (At the November meeting the YB received a copy of the plan). The Youth Bureau will contract with the Victims Assistance Center of Jefferson County (VAC is an oversight agency for the local Child Advocacy Center) to coordinate trafficking and trainings. As the neighboring county already has administered Safe Harbour provisions, their base knowledge will be essential for the successful and efficient coordination of local efforts. The contract period will be January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020). The DRAFT contract was submitted to County Attorney McNichol for review and submission of standard language. The breakdown of the VAC agreement is as follows: **Personnel Services** = \$10,638 (8-hours per week average – VAC; **Public Awareness Campaign** = \$3,462; **Printing Program Materials** = \$1,000; **Wrap around funds/client assistance (food, clothing, hygiene products, transportation, phones, fee-for-service care, etc.** = \$2,000; **Staff Training and Development** = \$400; **Travel:** \$1,500; and **Public-Raise Awareness Campaign/Other:** \$11,000. VAC will plan a conference to encompass training of health, human services, educators, law enforcement and the public. Other activities will include bill boards, public transit advertising; posters in areas youth frequent such as schools, libraries and community centers. ***There will be a concentrated effort to use local media outlets for ongoing distribution of awareness and educational materials. Amy Quonce from the Child Advocacy Center will periodically throughout 2020 provide Safe Harbour updates to the youth bureau on the contracted services.

2019 “Homeless Christmas Tree” Initiative-Update: The 2019 “Homeless Christmas Tree” began November 21st and ends December 20th. This initiative is the collection of personal hygiene, kitchen and bathroom supplies, items needed when an individual or family “starts over.” The items are provided to people who are facing economic hardships, homelessness, job loss, illness, addictions, house fires and more. Referrals for assistance come from multiple community agencies. The tree was displayed in the window of Lake Effect Tech in the Village of Lowville. This initiative was again a success! A big thank you to Josh Fitzgerald, Owner of Lake Effect Tech. Thank you to Kallie Bauter-Vice Chairperson and Student Representative at South Lewis Central as well as Chloe Benson and Justine Schmitt-Student Representatives from Harrisville Central School District, who on their own, received permission from their school superintendents, to have a “Satellite Homeless Christmas Tree” at their prospective school districts. They collected an array of personal hygiene and baby items. Additionally, over \$1,000 was received in monetary donations, that will be utilized to replenish items in the “Homeless Closet” through, out 2020! A big thank you also to Kallie Bauter who helped pack up all the donations and to the County’s Maintenance Department who delivered the donations to the Lowville Food Pantry where they are stored until we need to replenish items in the “Homeless Closet” located at DSS throughout 2020. Many agencies utilize items from the “Homeless Closet” including: Lewis County DSS; Lewis County Office for the Aging; Transitional Living Services, Northern Regional Center for Independent Living and more. A portion personal hygiene items collected were provided to the newly formed Catholic Charities for their “Personal Care Cupboard.” Additionally, a monetary donation of \$85 was received. The donor specifically asked that these funds be used to help our senior citizens, therefore the \$85

donation was provided to Lewis County Office for the Aging for their “Shelf Stable Project” which provides a bag of shelf stable foods to each Home Delivered meal participant for them to have on hand if OFA would have a snow day and or power outage and were unable to deliver meals to their seniors.

Community Board Members: With Safe Harbour, Penny requested discussion on appointing additional community board members to the Youth Bureau. Maybe even create a Safe Harbour Sub-Committee made up of individuals who understand and work with victims of sex and labor trafficking. Penny has contacted Chief Randy Roggie, to assist in seeking out a retired police officer to be on the board and would also like to ask to have a caseworker from DSS on the board. Scott advised that someone from Probation would also of value on the board. **Update:** Penny contacted Eileen Mathys to see if interested in being appointed to the board. Eileen typically is present at our meetings and has knowledge and insight about our community. Eileen said yes. Penny will be submitting her name to the Board of Legislators for a 2-year appointment. Penny also contacted Mary Jo Burkhard, Director of Lewis County Probation Department, who will seek out a probation officer to be on the youth bureau board. **After discussion, consensus of the youth bureau membership is to approve of Penny moving forward to seek out additional youth bureau board members.** Penny advised that a Resolution will be forwarded to the Board of Legislators for approval once she receives confirmations.

Next Meeting

The next meeting has been scheduled for **Wednesday, February 26, 2020 at the Lewis County Courthouse at 4pm in the Legislative Chambers.**

Agenda items for February Meeting

- **Safe Harbour will be a, standing agenda items for 2020**
- **2020 Youth Development Funds – Discussion on Allocation of Funds**

Adjournment: Cinda Bush moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:05pm. Deanna Edick seconded.
Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Penny L. Moser, Director
Lewis County Youth Bureau