

## **Portland Youth Services Advisory Board**

January 24, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 4:33 pm

### **Roll Call:**

**Present:** Michelle Donahue, (Chair), Margaret Stewart, (Secretary), Deb Calavas, Anne Whalen (via zoom), Sarah Donahue (via zoom), Erin Livensparger (via zoom)

**Absent:** Jenifer Mizner

**Other's present:** Jesse Revicki, (Youth & Family Services Administrator) Holly Kobayashi (Portland Housing Authority)

**Approve Agenda:** Deb made a motion to approve today's meeting agenda. Erin seconded. Vote unanimous.

**Approval of Minutes:** Approval of the minutes were tabled until the March meeting as the minutes for the October meeting were not available. We will approve September, October, and January minutes at the March meeting.

### **Old Business:**

#### **Review of Past Activities and Events:**

Halloween Monster March, went well. Halloween on Main; many, many people attended and went very well. December Tree Lighting and Parade; was very well attended and people had a great time. Many thanks to Michelle Donahue for getting the truck parade together.

#### **Community Outreach Meeting:**

Meeting on January 23, 2023 with the Economic Development Commission and Parks & Recreation Commission. They will support an Easter/spring event, potentially the Memorial Day Parade, summer kick off with the ice cream truck and petting zoo, the 5K, Monster March, and Halloween on Main in October, and the Christmas Tree lighting and Truck Parade.

It is realized that Portland is a small community and the same people are pulled in to help time and time again. We would like to involve the greater Portland community in these events. Michelle D noted that when Portland Youth Services has a table at these events it really helps promote the department and the services it provides. This is also true for Park & Rec, the Library, and Senior Center. These events also allow our youth to get involved in their community through volunteer opportunities.

The Advisory Boards and Commissions involved in working on these events will plan special meetings when they meet to discuss upcoming events. It allows for Portland residents to become involved during the public meeting if they would like to assist.

### **New Business:**

#### **2023 Calendar:**

The YSB calendar for meetings was presented and dates for 2023 were agreed upon. Meetings are generally the fourth Tuesday of the month at 4:30pm. If we need extra meetings to plan specific activities we can call a special meeting.

Deb made a motion to accept the calendar. Michelle seconded. Vote unanimous.

Jen Mizner is a member but has not been able to attend meetings. Michelle will reach out to her to see if she is interested in continuing to serve. If she is unable to continue on the board, one of our alternates will step in to replace her.

### **Review of Bylaws:**

We reviewed our Bylaws. The question arose about having a youth (under 18) on the board. We all agreed that having a youth(s) serve on the board is an asset as a way to gain a youth perspective. Our bylaws state that youth have an advisory role but they are non-voting members. Also our term on the board is for 4 years. We realize that 4 years is tough for our teens to serve as they will either be too young when they start (13 or 14) or may leave for college after 2 years on the board if they begin at 16 years old. An idea was presented to have 2 teens serve, each being on two-year terms. They would begin in consecutive years so they will overlap a year. That way we always have two teens on the board with one that has already served a year and one new teen. We would also bring them in as juniors in high school and they can serve through their senior year for two year terms.

### **Upcoming Events Planning:**

Egg Hunt: During April school break, Jesse is interested in holding an egg hunt program at Portland Care & Rehabilitation Center. Last year the activity went well. The children were generally 7 years old and younger.

Listening Circle: YSB and State Education Resource Center (SERC) involving youth from Portland, East Hampton, Durham, Middlefield. First group will be held in February. The circles will discuss issues of diversity, culture, equity and inclusion both in and out of school. Jesse may have 3 youth interested. There will then be two leadership trainings and an implicit bias training which are open to community members.

### **Administrator's Overview:**

Budget submitted last week. The budget is pretty much the same as last year's. We are getting a little more revenue annually from DCF for direct services. Jesse has asked for a Social Services worker at 15 hours per week to assist him with direct involvement with the youth. In order to accomplish this, Jesse cut some money from other programs. Years ago Portland had this position which was funded by the state, but funding was eliminated and Portland eliminated the position.

Current programs include: Drop-In & Draw, an after school program for older teens/youth and a second arts & crafts program for young children during the day.

Little Hikers will begin again in April. Erin is willing to assist Jesse with this. Jesse would like to begin a hikers program for teens.

LGBTQ+ Support nights twice per month in the evening. One night would be a drop-in activity night; the other night would be support-style groups for youth and for parents separately. There will be a planning meeting in early February and hope to have these programs begin in March.

Upcoming programs: Jesse would like to start a role playing game program. It is still in the planning stage.

Another suggestion was to have an intergenerational painting event. It is a great way to bring people together including intergenerational groups.

### **Public Comments:**

Holly Kobayashi from Portland Housing attended the meeting as a way to introduce herself and her program. We were very interested in all she had to say and welcomed her to future meetings.

Discussed how to get Chatham Court kids involved in summer camps. Some kids chose not to go to summer camp for financial reasons and others don't attend as they don't feel part of the peer group. Many of the Chatham Court residents liked the camp that was held at Chatham Court in years past as they felt they were with their friend group.

**Board Member Comments:**

Deb would like to help in any way. Concerned about what the year of isolation because of COVID has done for the children. The schools are doing a lot to work with the kids following their isolation. Vacations, especially summer is tough.

Jesse would like to get a grant to hire a case manager for our diversion population. We currently have 10 families involved in the program. Jesse put out an invitation to the public for interested people to join the Diversion Board and we got 3 people. A Zoom training on diversion boards will take place in February and all diversion board members are encouraged to participate.

**Meeting adjourned:**

Deb made a motion to adjourn meeting. Margaret seconded. Vote unanimous.

Meeting adjourned at 5:40pm.

Respectfully submitted by Margaret Stewart, Recording Secretary