



Youth Council Meeting Minutes - October 18, 2023

Item 1 | Call To Order

- The Meeting was called to order by Ali Atoui at 11:52 a.m.

Item 2 | Attendance

- James Brogna, Nathaniel Chines, Annabeth Ghorl, Thomas Berinato, William Buswell, Michaela Lyons, Madeline Naper, Maya Polak, Sofia Panighetti, Juiliana Spalding, Olivia Wall, and Erin Caldo were in Attendance.

Item 3 | Public Comment

- Two High School students were present to explain the programs of the Environmental club at the high school.
- Right now the club is partnering with TreePlenish, an organization that assesses the environmental impact of communities and plants trees.
- The club was seeking the approval and support of the Youth Council, and will be pursued further.

Item 4 | Approval of Meeting Minutes

- Meeting Minutes from October 4 were approved unanimously.

Item 5 | Youth Risk Behavior Survey Presentation

- The results of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey from earlier this spring were presented by Catherine Dhingra.
- The survey risks risk factors and protective factors among 7th through 12th graders.
- Rates of depression, suicide attempts, and self harm have decreased from previous years.
- Rates among LGBTQ+ students and students of color are significantly higher than white or non-LGBTQ+ students.
- Overall rates of substance use have also gone down from previous years, but E-Cigarette use among High Schoolers has gone up.
- Rates of in-school and online bullying have decreased, but are higher than average for the Middlesex League.
- A strong correlation was found between depression, sleep, and screen time.
- There have been initiatives to try and increase support for students including class time dedicated to students, more health classes, parent education, more teacher training, and hiring new counselors.
- Student connectedness has increased among students at the middle school and the high school.

Item 6 | Wakefield Intergenerational Community Tree Project



- If the Youth Council is given the grant we applied for, the Youth Council will begin an intergenerational community tree project.
- This would allow Wakefield residents to contribute to a banner that will be hung at town buildings.

Item 7 | Youth Council Finance Working Group Updates

- The Working Group is in progress, with the aim being to obtain a budget for the 2025 fiscal year.

Item 8 | Liaison Presentation: Town Council & Town Administrator

- Ali Atoui met with Town Administrator Steve Maio to discuss the role of the Town Council.
- The Town Council is the executive governing body of the town.
- The Town Administrator is the supervisor of town boards and oversees implementation of policies and hiring, among other roles.
- The next Town Meeting on November 18 will address many current issues in the town.

Item 9 | Liaison Updates

- Madeline Naper met with the Commission on Disabilities regarding how the two bodies can support each other. They discussed implementing wheelchair accessible swings at the elementary schools, as well as High School elevators not being wheelchair accessible.

Item 10 | Snow Angels Shoveling Program

- The Snow Angels program will begin soon with the incoming winter weather.

Item 11 | Veterans Day Clean Up Partnership Event

- Due to logistical issues, the Youth Council is not planning to host the clean up this year, but will explore other ways to honor veterans.

Item 12 | Communications/Outreach Subcommittee Updates

- Meet the members' posts will begin soon.

Item 13 | Announcements

- Vanessa Westlake is still working on the Active Bystander Training initiative.
- Michaela Lyons suggested more ideas for accessible playgrounds.

Item 14 | Determine Next Meeting Date

- The next meeting will be in person on November 8 at 11:45.

Item 15 | Other Business Not Reasonably Anticipated

Item 16 | Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned unanimously.