

Somersworth Youth Connection (SYC) Task Force*

Date: March 25, 2021

Time: 5:30 PM

Chairman Dumont announced the legal authority to meet remotely* according to the Governor's State of Emergency declaration. He called the meeting to order at 5:32 PM.

Roll Call Attendance:

School Board

Tom McCallion – Yes

Coty Donohue – Yes

Steve Potter – Absent

City Council

Marty Pepin - Yes

Marty Dumont - Yes

Don Austin – Yes

Ex-officio Members

Superintendent Bob Gadowski – No

Asst Superintendent Lori Lane – Yes

SYC Director Maureen Jackman – Yes

Mayor Dana Hilliard – Yes

City Manager Bob Belmore – Yes

A motion to accept the minutes from the February 4, 2021 SYC Task Force meeting was made by McCallion. Seconded by Austin. ROLL CALL VOTE: McCallion – Yes; Pepin – Yes; Austin – Yes; Dumont – Yes; Donohue – Yes; Motion passed, unanimously.

Jackman provided the committee members with information about the SYC program. Financially, the program is supported with a five-year federal grant of \$167,000 annually. The grant funding is used primarily to pay to the salaries of the staff that run the program. This grant, which the school district has received for nearly 15 years, will run through the 2021-22 school year.

The program also collects fees from parents whose children attend the elementary program. No fees are collected for middle school students to participate.

The school district supports the program in a number of “in kind” ways – professional development, supplies, summer programming funding support, and office and program space. When the last grant was submitted, the school district's estimated in-kind contributions were estimated at \$261,000.

There are also a number of different partners that work with SYC, both in district and outside. Title I and the Farm-to-School programs have been collaborators. The meals program is coordinated with Tri-County CAP.

If the school district plans to submit another federal grant application, it is due in March 2022. We would find out in May 2022 if we would receive another five-year round of funding.

One of the requirements of the federal grant is to create a sustainability plan so that program can continue beyond the need for the federal grant or if the federal funding is reduced. Currently, there is no plan that would address what would be a significant shortfall if the district no longer received the federal grant.

Over the last few years, more restrictions/requirements have been added to data that Maureen must report to the federal government on the students who are being served by the program. Could this limit the number of or type students who can participate? Perhaps, we will have to see as more information is available from the federal government.

Jackman talked about the program itself and how there are many ways that the program could be expanded if there were additional funds such as for bus transportation. The program costs approximately \$1,300/student to operate.

The Mayor said that there may be opportunities with the new federal funding coming to support both cities and schools. Could some of these funds be used to create some level of sustainability?

Belmore said that one of the things that needs to be sorted out is whether or not the program is going to expand beyond what is currently offered. He said that he would need additional information on the program's budget, but is very willing to assist on finding sustainability options. The Mayor suggested that a meeting occur with Jackman, Belmore and other city staff, and school officials to discuss what could be done. Donohue agreed this was a good next step.

Dumont said that we should look at the current structure of the program in order to maximize the opportunity for students. The City is going to working on a number of economic and housing development opportunities that could increase the need for the program even more.

McCallion and Donohue suggested that looking at how SYC can connect with other city programs such as the Rec Department.

Next Steps:

City and School officials will meet to discuss potential funding mechanisms to support sustainability of the SYC program.

The SYC Task Force will reconvene after this meeting takes place.

Adjournment: A motion was made by Pepin, seconded by Austin to adjourn. ROLL CALL VOTE: McCallion – Yes, Donohue – Yes, Pepin – Yes, Dumont – Yes, Austin – Yes, Motion passed, unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 6:32 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Lori Lane
Assistant Superintendent of Schools*