

Lewis County Youth Bureau Advisory Board

Minutes of February 15, 2017 meeting

Scott Mathys-Chairperson 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-Chairperson, Madeline Lehman-Vice Chairperson and Student Representative Lowville Academy, Grace Metzler-Student Representative Lowville Academy, John Exford, Mary Martin, Journee Allen-Student Representatives Harrisville Central, Deanna Edick, Shaun Shaw-Student Representative Beaver River, Noah Ramer and Dustin Snyder-Student Representative Copenhagen Central, Michele Ledoux, Officer Brandi Groman and Ward Dailey. **Excused:** Mike Leviker, Camille Ledoux-Student Representative Beaver River and Reegan Domagala-Student Representative South Lewis. **Others Present:** Roscoe Fawcett Jr., Chairperson Youth Bureau Legislative Committee, Andrea Moroughan and Greg Kulzer-Legislators, and Penny Demo-Director.

Introductions and Welcome

Welcome Officer Brandi Groman our newest board member. Officer Groman is filling the un-expired term of Chief Randy Roggie.

Minutes: Review of the December 21, 2016 board meeting minutes. Noah Ramer, moved to accept the minutes as written; Shawn Shaw seconded. Passed.

Old Business

2017 OCFS Youth Development Funds (up to \$13,000 available) – Review of applications received and awarding of funds. As directed by the Youth Bureau at their November 16, 2016 board meeting, a press release announcing the availability of up to \$13,000 in 2017 OCFS-Youth Development Funds was published in the Lowville Journal & Republican. The funding was open to applicants interested in offering program opportunities for youth under the age of 21 that are designed to prevent juvenile delinquency through positive youth development and early intervention and prevention services that, are designed to curb the high priority problems affecting youth. Deadline for submitting applications was January 31, 2017. A total of six (6) application were received. Prior to the meeting, board members received a copy of each application along with a brief summary of each proposal and were asked to review application prior to today's meeting and be prepared to ask questions. Applicants were invited to the Youth Board meeting to verbally present on their project/program. Chairperson Mathys reminded the membership that Per the Youth Bureau By-Laws, inability to provide a verbal presentation will

not exclude the applicant from consideration. Voting process for awarding Youth Development funds is a simple majority of the membership present.

The following applicants provided a verbal presentation:

Brandi Groman-Lowville Village Police Department: On behalf of Chief Randy Roggie, Officer Groman provided an overview of the Lowville Village Police Department's Youth Aid Officer and Safe Child Identification Card Programs application. The New York State certified Youth Aid Officer provides guidance for troubled youth that have interactions with law enforcement agencies. The Youth Aid Officer also conducts and supervises the administration of issuing free identification cards through the "Safe Child" identification system at public functions and upon request of individual youth groups. The Lowville Village Police Department is requesting funds to help support additional training for the Youth Aid Officer, and to purchase supplies needed to continue to offer FREE Safe Child ID Cards for youth in Lewis County. **Requesting: \$6,000 in 2017 Youth Development Funds.**

Arlene Hall, Executive Director-Mountain View Prevention Services: Mrs. Hall provided an overview of the Youth Advocate Program. Youth Advocates work with students K - 12 in four Lewis County School Districts. The program provides counseling for youth dealing with problems at home; separated or divorced parent issues; academic struggles; peer problems; dating relationship troubles; grief issues or communication difficulties. Children benefitting from this program may present behavioral problems or they may simply be feeling stressed/overwhelmed with something in their life and have a need to talk to someone who can help sort things out. The Youth Advocate meets with students individually or in groups depending on the need or issue to be resolved. If children need services beyond the parameters of this program referrals to the appropriate agencies or departments are encouraged and made. In 2016 Youth Advocates worked with 231 students. **Requesting \$10,000 in 2017 Youth Development Funds.**

Renee Moser, Teacher at BRCS – Therapy Dog Program: On behalf of Beaver River Central School, Mrs. Renee Moser provided an overview of BRCS application to have a Therapy Dog at the district. The district is requesting funds to support the training of a Therapy Dog. A group of students from a psychology class at BRCS recently proposed and gained approval from the school board to have a therapy dog program at the school. The dog will be incorporated in the Middle and High School classrooms of the handler and teacher. However this resource will be made available for crisis intervention, counseling, PAWS for reading programs and other activities through a sign out process. This program was inspired by the use of therapy animals in counseling and their success rates. BRCS prides themselves, in creating a welcoming environment for students to learn and grow in. A therapy dog is a natural addition to BRCS as the benefits of therapy dogs in programs from helping veterans with PTSD, to their use in nursing homes, in

colleges and in public schools has been well documented. Benefits of having a Therapy Dog program at BRCS include but are not limited to: reducing stress in students; improved physical and emotional well-being; lowering blood pressure; decreased anxiety and improved self-esteem. **Requesting \$2,000 in 2017 Youth Development Funds.**

Zachary Herbert, Student at Copenhagen Central School – Motivational Speaker: On behalf of Copenhagen Central School District, Zachary Herbert, a student at Copenhagen Central, provided an overview of the school's request for funding to cover the balance of the cost of securing David Flood, a motivational speaker. Mr. Flood will address students at the district about character, making the right choices, responsibility, integrity, respect, hard work, and compassion. There will be two seminars for 6-8th grades and high school. After the seminars, Mr. Flood will work with students interactively in a smaller setting. This program will increase student's workability with one another and decrease the negative peer interactions. The program will prompt students to belong to a whole student body to come together as one and to stand up against bullying. Mr. Flood will challenge students to be the change for the community in the aspect of creating good relationships between peers. Zachary expressed concerns at Copenhagen Central and believes that having Mr. Flood at the district will "shed light on fixing the problems." The total cost for this motivational speaker is \$3,350, however Zachary, had heard Mr. Flood speak, was very impressed and has raised \$1,675 towards the cost of having Mr. Flood address Copenhagen Central School students. **Requesting \$1,675 in 2017 Youth Development Funds** (this is the balance of funds needed to secure Mr. Flood to speak at the school).

Brigitte Gillette-Copenhagen Central School – Attendance Incentive Program: Brigitte Gillette provided an overview of the Attendance Incentive Program at Copenhagen Central School District. The district has a population of 472 students Pre-K-12, includes 40% at or below poverty level. Their goal is to increase daily school attendance by positive behavior interactions including recognizing and rewarding perfect attendance and individual student attendance. Funding will be used for incentives such as extra lunch, magnets, certificates, field trip, and an end of year party for perfect attendance students. **Requesting \$500 in 2017 Youth Development Funds.**

Sgt. Eric Schmitt-Lewis County Sheriff's Office – Juvenile Aid Officer Program: Sgt. Schmitt was planning on providing an overview of the Lewis County Sheriff's Office application, however was called out on a call prior to the youth bureau meeting. The Juvenile Aid Officer Program is designed to educate children about safety and drug abuse. With the increased rate of drug use in Lewis County the Juvenile Aid Officer will be spending more time in school districts talking to students about the drug epidemic and will provide instruction to students about the harmful effects and consequences of using drugs, how to stay safe, and the importance of making good decisions. **Requesting \$1,000 in 2017 Youth Development Funds.**

After much discussion, Michele Ledoux made a motion to award the 2017 Youth Development Funds in the amount of \$13,000 to the following applicants: Lowville Village Police Department/Juvenile Aid Officer Program/Safe Child ID Cards – \$5,000; Mountain View Prevention Services-Youth Advocate Program-\$5,000; Copenhagen Central School District-Motivational Speaker-\$1,675; and Beaver River Central School District-Therapy Dog Program-\$1,325, Noah Ramer seconded. Passed. Abstained, Officer Brandi Groman.

Remaining 2017 Youth Development Funds: The Youth Bureau has \$8,115 remaining of 2017 Youth Development Funds. Typically we utilize a portion of the remaining funds to fund municipalities that run summer recreation programs, and for the Youth Bureau's administrative costs. At our March meeting we will further discuss the remaining balance.

New Business

2017 County Project Funds (Up to \$5,000) Discussion: In the Youth Bureau's 2017 budget, we requested and were approved for \$5,000 from the county to be used for youth projects that support positive youth activities/programs in Lewis County. This funding can be used to support existing youth programs that had a decrease of funding, were eliminated or for new youth programs. County Project Funds cannot be used to support salaries. In 2016 the following received County Project funds: Harrisville Free Library-Summer Reading Program; Lewis County 4-H Teen Council Program; Village of Port Leyden-Sports Equipment for Village Park; Adirondack Pop Warner Cheerleading Program-Mat; Constableville Volunteer Fire Department-Restricted Active Members-Youth Protective clothing; Harrisville Central School-Character Education Program and Fall Festival; and the Village of Croghan-Solo Expression Swing and Frame. Penny asked the board if they would like to designate the 2017 funds to a specific youth program, or open the funding up to any youth program through a competitive application process. **After discussion, the board unanimously approved of opening the 2017 County Project Funds up to any youth program through a competitive application process. A press release announcing the availability of up to \$5,000 will be issued to the local media. Proposals must include a description of the activities to be funded, budget, number of youth to be served, and expected outcomes of the program. Deadline for submitting proposals will be April 7, 2017. Applicants will be invited to the April 19, 2017 Youth Bureau meeting, to provide a verbal presentation of their project/program. ***Consensus of the board is to advise applicants who were not awarded 2017 Youth Development Funds, of the opportunity to apply for 2017 County Project Funds.**

Recruitment of Student Representatives to serve on the Board: Per the Youth Bureau By-Laws, the Youth Bureau can have up to 2 student representatives from each Lewis County School District. We have openings for a Harrisville and a South Lewis student representative.

*****Reminder: Currently we have several Student Representatives who are seniors, therefore their term of office on the Youth Bureau Board is slated to end in June 2017 therefore we are asking our seniors, to begin identifying a student(s) from your district that may be interested in replacing you on the Youth Board. Please invite potential board members to our March, April and or May meeting(s) to observe, in an effort to better determine if they would like to be appointed and if they have enough time to dedicate to being an active board member.**

“Homelessness in our Community.” Chairperson Mathys brought up the topic of homelessness in our community. Recent forums have brought to light that 81 students were identified by the Lewis County School Districts as homeless this school year. The definition of “homeless” is dependent upon requirements of the data collection source, however the fact that there are students experiencing housing instability is concerning, especially when 17 of that 81 are students in Kindergarten and First Grade. Usage of the Homeless Apartment was 751 bed nights last year. This is in addition to other equally important problems facing our youth such as drug addiction, mental health issues, domestic violence, and sexual assault. While the situation can appear hopeless, we need to rise-up and take back our community. While the approach may be challenging, we can’t sit back and let our inaction be the barrier to trying to make the community a better place. Noah Ramer volunteered to assist in reaching out to school districts in coming up with ideas in helping to make the community aware of the homelessness issue. Noah will work with student representatives of the youth bureau and present a plan at the m\March Youth Bureau meeting. Thank you Noah.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, March 15, 2017** at **4:00pm**. The meeting will be held at the **Lewis County Courthouse, 2nd Floor in the Legislative Chambers.**

Adjournment: John Exford made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:55pm; Shaun Shaw seconded. **Motion carried.**

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

