



# TOWN OF VERNON

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VERNON YOUTH SERVICES BUREAU  
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**YSB Advisory Board  
Regular Meeting Draft Minutes  
Fully virtual  
Tuesday, February 8, 2022  
3:00pm**

Join Zoom Meeting

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## 1. Welcome and Introductions:

The following YSB Advisory Board Members and Staff members introduced themselves:

Laura Bush, Terri Ouellette, Mason Thrall, Marty Sitler (in place for Amy Watt), Officer Allison Lawrence, Kimberly McTighe, Julie Halpin, Michelle Hill

## 2. Approval of the 9/28/2022 Draft Minutes:

A motion to accept the draft minutes as presented was made by Laura Bush and seconded by Kim McTighe. The motion passed with 5 in favor and 3 abstentions. (from members who were not present at the 9/28/2022 meeting.)

## 3. Program updates/ discussion:

### • YSB After School Program (ASP)

Michelle shared that there are 9 children currently enrolled in the YSB afterschool program for elementary aged students, with one more student enrolling this week. The program began kicked off in October with the hiring of YSB program staff. Michelle described the Be A Hero for a Buck Holiday program/event which took place in December. This event was supported by donations from town and Vernon Public Schools employees to purchase warm clothing and gifts for the children in the ASP program. Families joined their children at the event

for dinner including pasta, meatballs, salad, and rolls. The families enjoyed a video prepared by the afterschool program staff, which was shared with the members at the end of the meeting.

- YSB at RHS :

Kim McTighe provided the following update for the YSB office at RHS:

- Kim helped to implement the holiday gift card program for students in need.
- Kim also assisted in setting up third party clinical services now being offered by the Village for Children and Families on site at RHS for students to access, which is now currently up and running. A 2<sup>nd</sup> clinician is being onboarded to help meet the student need.
- The 2021 Summer Youth Employment and Learning program has been extended for some students through a grant received by Vernon Public Schools. This has allowed 4 students to continue their employment. Kim checks in with these students each week. She explained that because students become employees if the town they must be at least 16 years old to participate.
- Kim is working with school administration and the School Resource officer to coordinate with the vendor to bring the "Save a Life Tour" to RHS on February 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. This distracted driving prevention program is free to us and is sponsored by the CT Department of Transportation. Students will get a link to a virtual victim impact presentation which they will watch in class and then they will have the opportunity to cycle through the texting and driving simulators throughout the rest of the day.

- Diversion Programs-

Michelle shared that the purpose of diversion programs are to intervene at a pivotal point in a young person's life when they show signs and behaviors that they may be getting off track and going in a direction that could negatively affect their future and cause involvement with the court system. Working with the youth to strengthen their connection to the community is one-way diversion programs are effective. Michelle shared a video created by the Connecticut Youth Services Association that showed a JRB success story, based on this strategy.

Juvenile Review Board- Julie provided the following JRB update:

Julie shared that the JRB has been able to meet the referral needs, which steadily continue to come in. We are seeing a slight increase in cases with in the past month. Julie reported that there has been a very high level of completion rate for students referred to the JRB. She shared that through more fully adopting the restorative practice approach that the JRB has been very focused on helping the young person to take accountability and that includes strongly incorporating their ideas on what they can do to make things better where they caused harm.

Truancy:

Michelle explained that in 2017 with the pass of legislation Truancy referrals were shifted from the Court system to Youth Services Bureaus. The shift occurred, because YSB's are very well connected to resources in the community and it is the role of YSB to take a lead in coordinating services for youth. The YSB has been seeing some referrals this year and in many cases, they have been complex cases. With the number of mental health needs climbing for youth, one challenge has been finding services / programs that have availability.

Service Review Team:

Michelle shared that the YSB has been exploring options to help support families with youth who are struggling with behavioral and emotional issues. The YSB is seeing referrals come in with youth who have complex issues and parents are looking for help. One model which YSB is interested in called the Services Review Team (SRT), provides a collaborative and coordinated teams approach to working with families. Michelle gave a brief description of the process and asked for input and thoughts about who might be good to include as members on this team. Feedback received supported the continued exploration of the SRT, with the suggestion of also looking in to possible grant funds that may support the work.

- Gently used athletic gear program – name (tbd)

July shared information about a program she has been organizing to help families repurpose very gently used sports items and equipment by donating them for use by another family. Julie is working with the Cornerstone

Foundation, who has a decent inventory of gently used items, to gather an inventory of supplies. The program is in its beginning stages of being developed and once established will be promoted. The YSB is working on coming up with a program name.

**Summer Programming:**

- **Summer Food Service Program:**  
Michelle announced that guidance on SFSP operation for this summer is expected soon. It is possible the program will go back to the original regulations and operations this summer. Vernon Public Schools, the provider for the meals will be sponsoring the program for summer of 2022.
- **Summer Youth Employment and Learning Program (SYELP)**  
Kim shared information about the SYELP program, which serves Vernon youth 16 and up who are in school. There is eligibility criteria, one which includes being eligible for free or reduced lunch. Since all students are eligible to receive free and reduced lunch this school year due to Covid, the applicant pool is larger than normal. Vernon typically serves between 15-20 students. Students with special needs are welcomed to apply.
- **Leaders in Training Program**  
The YSB is in the process of developing a new program for the summer called a leaders in training program. The program will be designed for 14 and 15 year olds looking to increase their skills in leadership, working with younger children, and other job related skills to help prepare them to become a camp counselor, youth program staff, or another job of their choice where they might use leadership skills. More information to come on this program at the next YSB Advisory Board meeting in May.

**4. Collaborations:**

• **Vernon School Readiness Council (VSRC)update**

Michelle gave an update regarding school readiness. The Town currently receives funding for 18 full day, full year preschool slots operated at the YMCA, and 32 half day, school year slots operated at Vernon Public Schools. The grant application for 2022-23 will be coming out shortly.

Vernon Better Together Initiative: The VSRC is making progress with the capacity building grant. So far 5 new parents and a local business owner have joined the Council. Website updates are still taking place and a

Parent survey is being developed to help identify strengths and needs in Vernon’s local early childhood system.

• **Local Prevention Council update:** Vernon R.O.C.K.S coalition

Michelle shared that the Vernon ROCKS Coalition is Vernon’s local prevention council. The focus of this group is to prevent substance use among youth in the Community. Vernon ROCKS has youth membership that drives campaign messages and strategies to create awareness about the dangers of substance use to be shared with their peers and the greater community. Coalition staff is currently in the process of recruiting more students.

State Opioid Response grant:

Vernon ROCKS has recently applied for funds to assist in the local prevention of opioid miss use. With these funds we will be able to provide more Narcan training, continue to educate coalition members of Substance prevention strategies, and help support those in recovery.

**5. Funding updates (2021-22)-** info provided. Did not discuss. Will be discussed at May meeting.

**Vernon YSB funding**

2021-22

Town budget	SDE Cost sharing grant	Enhancement funds	Amplify local prevention council funds	Summer Youth employment and Learning	School Readiness &SR E	School Readiness Capacity building
\$263,678	\$21,321	\$10,948 (277 increase)	\$9,142	\$27,798	\$319,864 \$4,569 \$3,881	\$25,000

**6. Members’ comments, questions, and sharing.**

No questions were raised. The YSB ASP afterschool video was shared.

Motion to adjourn meeting proposed by Laura Bush and seconded by Mason Thrall passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by:

Michelle Hill