

**CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES COLLABORATIVE COMMISSION**  
**MEETING NOTES – OCTOBER 10, 2018**  
**CITY HALL, SISTER CITIES**

**ATTENDANCE**

Amanda Hazelwood

Councilman John Chapman

Gwen Mullen

Isra Shuster

Jamica Littles

Javan Owens

J. Glenn Hopkins

Julie Crawford

Kelly Organek

Kurt Huffman

Laura Durham

Maile Organek

Malka Zeefe

Melissa Ann Little

Mike Mackey

Rose Dawson

Stephen Parker

Tammy Mann

**Excused Absent**

Kate Garvey

Brian Orrenmaa

Michelle Smith-Howard

**Unexcused Absent**

**Staff**

Robin Crawley

Chelsea Eickert

**Guests**

Kathy Siegler

**WELCOME**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Alexandria Seaport Foundation opportunities for youth

Kathleen Seifert, the Executive Director from the Seaport Foundation, spoke to the Commission about their Apprentice program and their Middle School Math program. The Apprentice program focuses on providing educational help (GED) and building anger management skills, social emotional skills, and carpentry skills through boat building and adult mentoring. The 6-9-month program serves young adults, however, they are considering dropping the entry age to 16 because they are trying to capture kids early, before risky behaviors become present. The apprenticeship is funded by grants and donations. Funding is always challenging.

Once participants complete the apprenticeship, employment looks like hospitality, construction, air conditioning, and community college. The program is made up of three different partner groups – 1. partners feeding into the program, 2. extern partnerships, 3. and partners on the other end.

**REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF DRAFT SEPTEMBER MINUTES**

September minutes will be reviewed with the October minutes.

Before moving on to the Committee Recruitment Fair, introductions were made to new members of the Commission. Malka Zeefe, the Commission's Chair, also encouraged youth members to attend the Executive Committee so that agendas are informed by youth voice.

## **COMMITTEE RECRUITMENT FAIR**

Committee Presentations:

**Advocacy and Policy Committee** – The Committee's Chair, Stephen Parker, provided a handout and gave an overview of the Committee's purpose. The Advocacy and Policy Committee tells a story of what children and youth in Alexandria need and asks for what they need. The Committee's focus is on the priorities of the commission. They work on implementing as many policies as possible for children and youth. Stephen Parker reminded the Commission that those who appoint us are also our audience. They expect us to report back. This Committee takes the opportunity to testify before City Council and School Board about issues that our work influences. The Committee considers questions like, how can we get our messages across about children and youth issues? How are we analyzing the budget as it relates to our goals?

One or two specific Advocacy goals where the Commission can be most effective:

- State level – the Early Childhood Education agenda. Currently the alignment and coordination of Early Childhood is split across five different state agencies. There's an opportunity, however, to create one unified agency at the state level. The Committee would also come up with more ideas to promote free Early Care and Education.
- Local level – Apprenticeship Programs. The Committee will explore businesses that have started a successful apprenticeship program so that the Commission can eventually try and start one of its own. Members of the Committee will be thinking about what the workforce needs are today and what comes next for Alexandria's youth.

When the Advocacy Committee will meet: Stephen Parker could use help coming up with ideas. He offered Wednesdays at 6/6:30 or 7, one week before the commission meets as an option, but the Committee can help decide on a meeting time.

**Outreach and Membership** – Committee Co-Chair, Rose Dawson referred to the "Snapshot" document, which states what the Committee focuses on. The main challenge for this Committee is maintaining the Commission's membership. There are currently four vacancies. The Committee is tasked with making sure that the Commission is staffed by people with skills and interest in reaching the goals that the Commission has been mandated to do. The Committee also helps staff the subcommittees with volunteers. There are six different committees and each one is supposed to have four Commissioners, so volunteers are needed to be effective.

There seems to be a disconnect between the Commission and the logistical appointment of members. One of the purposes of the Outreach and Membership Committee is to help make sure that the composition of the Commission is representative of who the Commission serves. Work is being done to fix the mechanisms and once those are corrected, there will be even more opportunities to join the Committee and help review applicants.

**Research and Data** – The Committee’s Chair, Gwen Mullen, encouraged people to read the duties stated in the Snapshot. The Committee needs members with a data skillset, as well as someone to volunteer to become the next Chair, as Gwen Mullen is stepping down from chairing the Committee.

**Implementation Monitoring** – Committee Chair, Melissa Little, presented a power point presentation of the Implementation Monitoring Committee’s functions and duties.

The current needs of the Committee are people (the committee currently has no Chair and no members):

1. A Chair for the Committee, since Melissa Little’s term has ended, and she will not be renewing.
2. Committee members will:
  - Figure out how to collect progress reports from external entities on the Children and Youth Master Plan implementation status.
  - Help with outreach to external entities.
  - Have skills in evaluation, communication and marketing.

A question arose about the connection between the Data Committee and Implementation Committee, since both seem redundant. The Implementation Monitoring Committee’s focus is on monitoring the status of the Children and Youth Master Plan (CYMP) and evaluating the effectiveness of the reported progress and the activities moving it forward. But not all the committees are just focused on the plan; they are taking a much broader opportunity to keep current on issues that impact children and youth. Because of this, the Commission utilizes the Data and Research Committee to identify and explain trends. The Research and Data Committee will help with upcoming events. For instance, the Commission plan’s on organizing a School Board Forum on School Safety and Security; this committee could start collecting information on school board members to formulate questions and could be the moderator of the forum.

**Finance and Grants** – Jamica Littles, the outgoing Chair of the Committee, also referenced the Snapshot. In the past, this Committee has done things like, contributed a letter to the City Manager based on the Commissions priorities and children’s needs, as well as developed a formal letter on behalf of the commission, presented by a youth representative, at the City Council meeting. The Committee will need youth to volunteer for that job.

Going forward, the Finance and Grants Committee will focus their efforts on:

1. Focus on CYMP Action Step - Getting an overall bottom line of how much money is going toward children, youth, and families. This will entail looking at the ACPS budget and the City budget and decentralizing these two entities to see the overall bottom line and if there are any gaps.
2. Career Readiness – researching funding and grant opportunities. They may partner with Research and Data Committee to identify apprenticeships.
3. Partner with Advocacy Committee – help write op-eds, advocate at the state level, and highlight areas where we need money.

**Action:** After hearing about each committee’s duties, functions, and goals for this year, Commission members are to sign up for the top two Committees of their choice.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Discuss Request from City Manager for Budget Feedback

Jamica Littles presented the letter that was submitted to the City Manager last year, in which priorities were identified. The Commission proposed using the letter from last year as a template to submit an updated letter to the City Manager. The Commission then acknowledged that they need to agree on the buckets/types of the priorities that they want to include in the letter. The Commission was encouraged by Glen Hopkins to focus on one or two priorities instead of five to ensure their success. Right now, the Commission has identified five priorities:

1. Early Care and Education.
2. School and Community Safety and Security.
3. College and Career Readiness, including work-based learning.
4. Youth Empowerment.
5. Educational Facilities – space for Early Care and Education programs.

After some discussion, the Commission narrowed their focus to the following buckets:

1. Increase investment in and access to early childhood education (e.g. Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) programs, facilities, infrastructure, and school capacity).
2. Explore funding opportunities, programs, and initiatives that address and strengthen pre-school, school, and community safety.
3. Invest in college and career readiness programs (e.g. work-based learning, apprenticeships, and youth empowerment initiatives).

The Commission moved to accept the three buckets and for Jamica Littles to draft a letter based on those three buckets. Motion carried.

Noraine Buttar will send out a general call for Commissioners to send back their top two choices on which committee they would like to join.

## **ADJOURNMENT**