



**TOWN OF MILFORD, MASSACHUSETTS  
MILFORD YOUTH CENTER  
MILFORD YOUTH COMMISSION  
24 Pearl St., Milford, MA 01757  
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**Milford Youth Commission Minutes  
In-Person Meeting**

**Date: Thursday, October 7, 2021**

**Time: 6:15pm**

**Location: Milford Youth Center - Conference Room, 2nd Floor  
24 Pearl St., Milford, MA 01757**

**Members present in person:** Ariea Bryan, Paige Brown, Darlene Dulude, John Dulude, Chuck Calagione, Michelle Stokes, Brendan Rickert, RJ Sheedy, Jay Vaz

**On-Phone Members Present:** None

**Members Missing:** Steve Sousa, Sandra Caponi

**MYC Employees Present:** Jen Ward

**Others Present:** David Lavigne (Milford Finance Committee Liaison)

- Meeting called to order by Paige Brown at 6:24pm, seconded by Chuck Calagione, and all in favor via roll call.

**A) New Business**

**1. Approval of Minutes: 9/13/21 & 9/24/21**

- o Brendan Rickert acknowledged work he and Paige Brown (MYC Clerk) have been doing these past couple weeks with the Legal Department (Melissa Tomas and Attorney Boddy) to better align more detailed agenda and meeting minutes to abide by state open meeting laws.
- o Chuck Calagione restated his suggestion to bring a trusted person of support when anyone meets with Town Counsel department. RJ Sheedy followed by stating he found it helpful to reach out to Melissa Tomas and Attorney Body earlier in the day about a last-minute revision to the 9/13/21 minutes prior to this night's meeting. The

change was made before the meeting by Paige Brown, changing RJ Sheedy's abstention from voting to a vote against the approval of the article language for submission to Town Meeting.

- Motion by RJ Sheedy to approve the minutes dated 9/13/21, seconded Ariea Bryan and all in favor via roll call.
- Motion by Jay Vaz to approve the minutes dated 9/24/21, seconded Darlene Dulude and all in favor via roll call, abstained by Michele Stokes bc she was absent.

## 2. Signing of warrants:

- a. 22-12 Revolving Account for \$686.63
  - Jen Ward reviewed and shared each expense summary for mileage, equipment, and award plaques.
- b. 22-13 Revolving Account for \$77.42
  - Jen Ward reviewed and shared each expense summary for program fundraising & craft supplies.
- c. 22-13 Maintenance Account for \$66.50
  - Jen Ward reviewed and shared expense summary for cell phone bill for Youth Center staff members.
- d. 22-14 Revolving Account for \$3,131.76
  - Jen Ward reviewed and shared expense summary for summer camp bus expenses, staff t-shirts and program supplies.
- Motion to approve warrants by Ariea Bryan, seconded by John Dulude, all in favor via roll call.

## 3. Review of Revolving Account Balance - \$61,391.11

- Jen Ward reviewed and shared monthly expense and grant and gift fund summaries. Jen Ward noted that a portion of the YouthWorks fund was unused and will be returned to the State, she also noted that YouthWorks is interested in working with the Milford Youth Center again next year.

## 4. Town Counsel Meeting on Board Training

- Recap of meeting with Attorney Charles Boddy
  - Brendan Rickert discussed meeting agenda/minutes changes - adding more detail and better aligning the agenda and minutes. Brendan Rickert stated that according

to Attorney Boddy, the MYC Board is not the only board Town Counsel is advising on better Open Meeting Law practices nor is the MYC Board the most in need of adjustments. Town Counsel is working with boards town-wide to bring all of them into proper Open Meeting Law alignment. The MYC Board, particularly Brendan Rickert and Paige Brown, are working together with the Legal Department, by asking for guidance and also feedback on agendas and meeting minutes. Revisions are made according to the feedback, prior to agenda posting and meeting minute vote for approval and posting.

- Brendan Rickert discussed Attorney Boddy's statement that all town boards will have upcoming Open Meeting Law training. The timing has not been determined yet, but it will be run by state Attorney General's office. Ideally, each board member should have received training when they were appointed. Attorney Boddy is making efforts to rectify that and seeking to get all town board members the necessary Open Meeting Law training.
- Brendan Rickert reviewed the major points of Open Meeting Law- transparency, detailed documentation and questioning/understanding proper procedure. Brendan Rickert emailed state Open Meeting Law documentation to board prior to meeting.

5. Town Meeting Preparation:

- a. Pre-Forum 10/18/21 at 7 PM - Brendan Rickert stated that at this time the Board has not been requested to attend. He said it is usually the top 10 articles of priority at the meeting that need to be explained, and a request to attend is sent out for those. If they need us to attend, it will be requested by Reno Deluzio (Chair of Town Meeting Improvement Committee).
- b. Town Meeting 10/25/21 at 7 PM - Brendan Rickert stated that Rick Villani asked that a Youth Commission Member be present. The meeting is remote this year, and members will be sent credentials to log in and all others can watch on Milford TV. Jen Ward will be in attendance, but needs a Board member to attend. Brendan Rickert will attend and present the article for the HVAC, gym and basement. David Lavigne stated that the Finance Committee generally finds the idea of the article favorable, but has not made a formal decision as they did not have the warrant in hand. Second article - The Select Board did not approve the second article MYC submitted regarding a change in the maximum number of board members.

**B) Invitation to Speak:** No one other than the board members, Jen Ward and David Lavigne were present.

**C) Directors Report:**

- 1. Assistant Director posting:

- a. Human Resources Director has posted <https://www.milfordma.gov/home/files/milford-youth-center-assistant-director> - Jen Ward review that the position has been posted and Town Human Resources (Kristin Melpignano) is taking the lead. HR has already booked interviews for 10/13/21. Jen Ward will let board know about possible times a member can attend other interviews on 10/14/21 and 10/19/21. Eleven candidates are currently being screened and then will possibly be scheduled for interviews.
  - b. Dates and Times for 1<sup>st</sup> round interviews:
    - i. 10/13: 1:30-5:00pm
    - ii. 10/14: 3:00-4:30pm
    - iii. 10/19: 9:00am-5:00pm
2. After School Program:
- a. September enrollment - Jen Ward review of snacks and dinners served; 1,311 total kids attended, 293 snacks and 343 dinners were served. Food ordering has been conservative due to shelf life but will increase to more like 50 per day. YMCA handles the paperwork & funds for the food program and Milford Food Service Department supplies the food. Jen Ward acknowledges and appreciates their efforts.
  - b. October Programs:
    - i. After School Calendar - Jen Ward stated that Alex Schwartz has done great job getting calendar coordinated and running. However, without an Assistant Director and a Nutrition Coordinator, he and Jen Ward are currently performing their own work and that of the two empty positions. Jen Ward is also relying on volunteers to run programs like gardening & fishing, while other like Fit Fun are funded by external sources. Jen Ward would like to add more part time staff to work in tandem with the additional volunteers.
    - ii. 10/29/21 – Dress up and activities - Jen Ward stated that the haunted maze was a big success in prior years, but this year the kids will only dress up if they'd like to work within COVID and staffing limitations.
  - c. Staffing:
    - i. Part-Time staff hires:
      - 1. Emily Farnhill - gym person/supervisor - Jen Ward stated that Emily has been a great addition and may also apply for the Assistant Director position.
    - ii. Approval to post part-time Health Coordinator – Jen Ward stated that the position has been vacant for a few years, and manageable while the Youth Center was fully staffed. However, now without an Assistant Director, Jen Ward

needs to remove this from Alex Schwartz's (Program Coordinator) responsibilities. Hiring someone in this part-time role will help Program Coordinator in transition period without an Assistant. Director or AmeriCorps member. Position is listed at \$21.72/hr. Kristin Melpignano (Human Resources) gave approval to move forward with posting. Brendan Rickert suggested reaching out to physical therapy clinics/ hospitals/ athletic departments as additional applicant sources.

- o Motion to approve posting by Brendan Rickert, seconded by Darelene Dulse, all in favor via roll call.

d. Policy Updates:

- i. Masks/Kitchen area review - Jen Ward reviewed that the only area aloud to be unmasked is the kitchen when sitting on designated X. There is no use of bubbler unless refilling a water bottle. The kitchen is most difficult to supervise. Jen Ward requested Board of Health come review kitchen space to be sure it's up to COVID code. In all other areas, there is a three-foot rule and everyone must be masked at all times. Jen Ward's concern is that she does not have direct connection with the schools regarding COVID positive cases or close contacts. She's learning of positive cases/close contacts from kids not schools or parents. Jen Ward will send another email to parents reminding them to notify MYC, as it is their responsibility. Brendan Rickert asked RJ Sheedy about School Committee conversations around vaccine mandates. RJ Sheedy stated there was a subcommittee meeting about possibly making a vaccine available to the younger student body in January, but no mandate. David Lavigne asked why schools aren't working in tandem with the Youth Center to share info on COVID cases/ contact tracing, and asked RJ Sheedy to put that on the School Committee agenda. MYC Board is uncertain if it is a privacy restriction keeping the schools and the Youth Center from communicating on positive cases/close contacts, and would like to get more information. Brendan Rickert said he will request an invitation to speak (no dialogue allowed) about this at School Committee next week, and asked RJ Sheedy what the process is to get a dialogue not just an invitation to speak. RJ Sheedy suggested speaking with Kevin McIntyre (Superintendent) first. Jen Ward stated that the communication she has had with the schools in the past has been with school nurses and not with Kevin McIntyre.
- ii. Youth not leaving property at close and/or out-front during programming. Incident occurred on 9/29/21 after closing. Emily Barnes, Asst. Director called Jen Ward, Director to let her know about incident. 8 youth followed Tristian Cummings, part-time staff, to his car. They asked him to for a ride, in which he said no (against our policies). They continued to try to get in his car, a few of whom actually got into his car. A parent also sent a video that shows one youth jump onto moving car. Nick Beinars, another part-time staff, came over

to help Tristian to have kids leave him alone with no resolve. After speaking with both part-time staff about the incident and consulting full-time staff, the MYC Admin team made the decision that this offense warranted a “second strike” which is a week out of the program. The director called every parent on the morning of 9/30/21 to explain what had happened, why it was not only disrespectful but also very dangerous. By policy, the parent/guardian must meet with MYC staff prior to the one-week suspension, with the child in order to return, so that we can all be on the same page going forward and hopefully prevent any further issues. The Director then informed the Chair and Co-chair of the incident as well as Town Administrator, Town Counsel and Police Chief. Town Counsel replied that the incident report needs to be revised and MYC staff and Youth Commission is waiting for more clarification.

iii. Request to Police Department to have Special Ops return

1. Response from Police Chief Falvey is the following: “Yes, I will have the Deputy assign on-duty personnel to be present and just so you are understanding that we may not be there in the events there may be other calls for service which would not allow us to be there. Please communicate with Deputy Sanchioni to what hours you’d like officers present.; The Director followed up with sending October Calendar, times of operation and thanked the police department for their quick response and support.
- Jen Ward reviewed details above and after a quick response from the Police Chief, she had requested that Special Ops be present more regularly, specifically every day after 4pm when many kids start leaving at once. The busiest times are the rush on arrival and closing. Jen Ward also confirmed with Tristan Cummings (16 yr old minor) & parents that he is ok following the incident and told him his safety is paramount. MYC staff will now park in the back of the building to minimize the chance of any similar incidents. Jen Ward stated that she does not feel her staff is unsafe, but this needed to be dealt with.

3. Rentals/Other MYC Programs:

a. New Requests:

- i. Milford Cheer Party – Jen Ward review that the Board of Health advised against this type of party as it would be 70-80 girls and 20 coaches along with food in the gym. Jen Ward communicated the Board of Health response to Milford Cheer who responded that they understood the decision. All rentals are screened now if they are out of normal COVID parameters and are run by the Board of Health who in this case advised against it.

- ii. Ray of Hope group of Alcoholics Anonymous - Jen Ward reviewed a request for Sunday rentals in the gym with coffee & food. Emily Barnes (former Assistant Director) had provided Ray of Hope with pricing information, and they then declined to rent based on a limited budget. Going forward, Jen Ward does not feel the Youth Center as a children's organization is a good fit for Ray of Hope or other groups of similar addiction related nature.
- iii. Birthday Party - Jen Ward reviewed two requests for birthday parties, both also requesting to have food and drinks. She declined these rentals due to the same difficulty in managing unmasked renters while eating & drinking.
- iv. RJ Sheedy asked if rentals have been down during COVID time. Jen Ward stated that were none in the first 3-5 months of the pandemic, but that as restrictions evolved rentals did also. Rentals have been improving since now that masks are the main safety protocol, and cohorts and headcount limitations are no longer needed. RJ Sheedy asked if more renters are being sought or old renters returning. Jen Ward said the rental opportunities are listed on the website. However, since she is currently understaffed, her time is being spent on daily operations, particularly with the After School program and not on recruiting rentals.

b. MYC Programs starting in October:

- i. Kids Play- Jen Ward reviewed that the Board of Health gave approval for the 0-5 play group to start. It is restarted today (10/7/21) with 5 families, for the first time in almost 2 years, since the beginning of the pandemic. It will run once a week, a donation of \$5 per session is suggested and parents/guardians must stay.
  - 1. Adult Open Gym – Jen Ward reviewed that the Board of Health approved both vaccinated unmasked and masked nights. Adult Open Gym will be once a week, alternating weekly between unmasked and masked nights. All attendees must be 18 years of age or older but also show their ID and vaccination card if attending an unmasked night. The cost is \$3/Milford resident & \$5/non-resident. The first night was last night (10/6/21) and no one came which Jen Ward found to be odd since many requests for an Adult Open Gym were made.
- 4. Looking to start design work for Music Multipurpose Room. Jen Ward pointed out that this was mislabeled on the agenda as the Dance Room, which she said was her mistake.
  - a. **Lobisser Building Corp.:** As requested, Jen Ward reached out to Lobisser again on 9/23/21 and was informed that she would get a call back by 9/24/21, but she did not receive a call.

- b. **MJH Architects response:** The Board requested that Jen Ward reach out to MJH Architects and ask if they would honor prior quote, given their experience on music/multipurpose spaces. MJH Architects will honor their portion of the quote but will need to check with their spec writer on the change in material costs since the start of the pandemic. Jen Ward would like to move forward given that she has had no response from Lobisser. If material costs have changed enough, the project could now potentially go over \$10,000 and would need to go out for bids. Jen Ward would like to proceed with the quote revisions from MJH Architects so she can send that to the Town Engineer for specs/bids.
- 5. CraftRoots Fundraiser review: Jen Ward thanked Board for all participation leading up to the fundraiser as well as at the fundraiser.
  - a. Raffles - \$1,860 raised; \$1,762 after MA Tax
  - b. Monetary donations: \$670
  - c. All donors have been sent out thank you letters from MYC and Jen Ward will inform the Select Board of donor names.
- 6. Summer Camp Final Budget Update – The Board requested final budget report for summer camp at last meeting and Jen Ward informed the Board that she was waiting on August bill for bus transportation. Jen Ward review of final summer camp net profit of \$2,679.99. Jen Ward reviewed that summer camp is not viewed as a money maker nor is it intended to be. It was also intentionally overstaffed this year to deal with COVID safety measures.
- 7. Donations Updates:
  - a. See newsletter for monthly updates: Jen Ward reviewed that the newsletter is posted on the website and all donors, large and small, were thanked.
  - b. Holiday Giving Campaign:
    - i. United Way of Tri-County – 50 Youth will be sponsored
    - ii. Sira Naturals would like to sponsor youth too, unknown amount at this time

#### **D) Other Business**

- Brendan Rickert asked if the Board would consider a general timeframe for meetings going forward, much like other Boards that have it posted that meetings are always on the first Monday of the month, as an example. He feels it offers more consistency for non-members to plan around if they're considering attending a meeting. Brendan Rickert recognized that RJ Sheedy is on the School Committee we should try to not conflict with their meetings to allow RJ Sheedy to attend both meetings as he would prefer not to miss any meetings. Brendan Rickert proposed the second Thursday of each month which RJ Sheedy found agreeable. However, Jen Ward requested that just the next meeting be left as scheduled for 11/4/21. Jen Ward had already checked with Kristin Melpignano (Human Resources) for timing on the hiring approval for the Assistant Director. Jen Ward believes she'll be ready for final approval from the Board by 11/4/21 and needs to get the position filled as soon as possible since she's understaffed. The

Board agreed to keep that meeting date, however RJ Sheedy noted he won't be able to attend since the School Committee has a meeting that night. The general timeframe for meetings going forward was left to be decided at a later date and the November meeting left at 11/4/21 so Jen Ward can move forward with hiring a new Assistant Director.

- Motion by RJ Sheedy to adjourn at 7:49pm, seconded by Chuck Calagione, and all in favor via roll call.

**Next meeting scheduled for November 4, 2021 at 6:15 pm.**