

**Tidewater Youth Services Commission (TYSC)**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**May 03, 2021**

**Attending:** Dr. Cynthia Blakeslee, Ms. Katherine Grimm, Ms. Jenny Hodge, Ms. Kimberly Jennings, Mr. Rusty Jordan, Ms. Olympia Perkins, Ms. Ginger Ploeger, Mr. Shawn Sawyer & Ms. Beth St. John

**Not attending:** Mr. Carl Faison, Mr. Azeez Felder & Ms. Pamela Little-Hill

**Staff:** Ms. Jenny Hodge, Ms. Ginger Ploeger & Mr. Shawn Sawyer

\* The Virginia General Assembly authorized public bodies — including local boards and commissions — to meet electronically during the state of emergency declared by Gov. Ralph Northam in response to COVID-19. Due to the State of Virginia still being declared as being under a State of Emergency, some members participated by means of virtual participation due to social distancing needs.

**Guests:** None

**Call to Order:** The Chair, Katherine Grimm, called the May 03, 2021 meeting of the Tidewater Youth Services Commission to order at 11:35 a.m.

- I. **Review of Minutes:** The minutes from the April 05, 2021 meeting were distributed & reviewed. There were no noted corrections. A motion to approve the April minutes as written was made by Beth St. John and was seconded by Kim Jennings. The members voted and the minutes were accepted unanimously.

II. **Items Carried Forward:**

A. **Tidewater Youth Services Foundation (TYSF):** Jenny Hodge

Jenny Hodge updated the TYSC Board on the following:

Marketing and Communication:

- Update on [Rise and Grow Grant](#) for Communication, Marketing, and Development
  - Working with [Proximo Marketing](#) to finalize three promotional videos.
    - First video features three community members and organizations who have worked with us or partnered to share their experience working with us.
    - Second video is a brief history of how the Commission and Foundation were both started and work together.
    - Third video explains what the Foundation funds and how donor funds support at-risk and court-involved youth.
  - Also working with [PB&J Marcomm](#) to implement a Consumer Management System (CRM System) to track and cultivate relationships with donors, funders, volunteers, etc.
- Data Research Projects
  - VCU interns are working on several research projects with our Second Chance Reentry Program, Lynnhaven Boys Home, and our Community Based Clinical Services. Data will be used for grant applications and targeted intervention.
  - Data analysis and visualization will be conducted by interns and Jenny Hodge, Foundation Executive Director, to interpret the data.
  - Data will be shared with members of the TYSC Board and staff.
- Regional Juvenile Justice Coalition
  - Still in the beginning planning stages with a small group of committed nonprofits.

- Looking to approach several local funders/grant making organizations about applying for a Planning Grant to fund activities for development and training for the coalition and its members.
- Rusty Jordan suggested that the Foundation explore grant opportunities with the OBICI Foundation.

## **B. Bond Refinance**

- The Bond for the Tidewater Youth Services Commission's main office building located at 2404 Airline Boulevard is due to expire this summer.
- Shawn has been in discussions with Towne Bank regarding the agency's options. The remaining amount owed on the building at Airline Boulevard is close to \$500k.
- The fees for securing the bond 10 years ago, were considerably high. With interest rates currently being close to an all-time low, it appears that it would be more financially advantageous for the Commission to pursue a commercial mortgage.
- Dawn Provost, Vice President, of Towne Bank in Portsmouth provided TYSC with 4 amortization schedules representing 4 scenarios in the commitment letter. TYSC plans to pursue a commercial mortgage.
- The loan scenario based on \$500k with an interest rate of 3.97% spread over 15 years will lower payment by \$1,350 per month. Freedom Title & Escrow will be doing the closing. The refinance should now be completed by the end of the month.

## **C. Combining of Lynnhaven Boys Home (LBH) and Crisis Intervention Home (CIH)**

Lynnhaven Boys Home staff and youth have been temporarily merged with the Crisis Intervention Home program until more staff can be hired and trained. The move occurred during Spring Break. The programs will be combined until at least the end of the fiscal year (June 30, 2021). Thomasine Norfleet (CIH Director) will be assisting Carlos Hooker (WBH Director) with Westhaven Boys Home while Ericka Palmer (LBH Director) and Juan Colon (LBH Assistant Director) will oversee operations at 811 13<sup>th</sup> Street. DJJ has been notified and referring agencies will be notified as well. The CSU Directors will notify the judges. This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> time in 3 years that Lynnhaven staff merged with Crisis Intervention Home due to staff shortages. The population at CIH is 9 today. Ideally, it would be best to keep the cap the number of youth to 15 maximum. The goal now is to focus on the recruitment, hiring and retention of staff. The biggest barrier at this time is the significant lack of applicants. The internship program for the agency has been a viable asset and considerable resource at this time. The agency has also been able to hire some of the interns on as employees following the conclusion of their internships.

## **D. Members or Staff: None**

# **III. New Business**

## **A. \*Re-Presentation of the FY 2022 Revised Budget**

- Per the Board's request, following the April meeting, Shawn sent out additional information to the Board members regarding salaries and wages to better assist the Board with making decisions regarding the proposed Cost-of-Living Adjustment(COLA) and increases to entry-level positions.
- Shawn expressed his gratitude to Vicki Hubbard and the finance team in getting everything accomplished despite her being out due to a family emergency.
- Shawn reiterated that TYSC is currently experiencing an unprecedented crisis due to personnel shortages. Addressing this crisis is critical and has to be a significant priority. The only adjustment to salaries, since 2017, was for existing employees and the increases were far below the recommendations of the salary survey that was conducted in 2015.
- To address, staff retention and recruitment of new candidates for employment, the original proposed budget recommended a 10% across the board Cost-of-Living Adjustment(COLA) increase for existing employees to

address retention. In addition, it was proposed that there be a 10% increase in the starting salaries for our entry level positions (Outreach Counselor, Group Home Worker, and Residential Counselor).

- The original proposed budget also included increasing the starting hourly rates for part-time community-based counselors to \$18, \$20, and \$22 per hour for Counselors I, II, and III respectively. Increasing the residential relief hourly rate to \$15 per hour. The current wage for a relief counselor is \$12.58 while minimum wage is anticipated to be increased to \$9.50 within the next few months.
- It was also reviewed that the overall personnel budget for FY22 has decreased even with these adjustments being implemented.
- Shawn and Ginger expressed to the Board again that personnel shortages have become dire and it is imperative that we address staff recruitment and retention. TYSC must come into line with the starting salaries of similar positions in order to be competitive in the job market.

The revised budget included a new proposal for a 5% COLA increase for FY'22. A 10% increase in difficult to fill entry-level positions, a 3% adjustment in salaries/wages to account for compression, part-time Community-Based counselors proposed increases as mentioned above and raising the residential relief counselor starting rate to \$15 per hour. Shawn and Ginger reviewed the number of current vacancies in the agency.

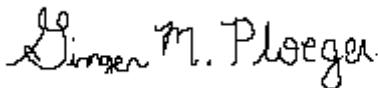
There was much discussion from the Board members about concerns about creating compression with the proposed plan, questions about possible pay discrepancies, expressing that perhaps not every employee's position warranted an increase, the possibility that increasing Commission salaries may create employees from one public agency moving from one to another and that a committee of TYSC Board members should be formed to evaluate further the salaries and wages of the Commission to make recommendations. Ginger reminded the Board that the Commission did have a comprehensive Wage Classification Study that was completed by an independent company that specialized in public agencies that made very specific recommendations many of which had never been implemented. Some Board members expressed wanting to form a committee to review more closely the salaries and wages of the Commission members before approving a COLA and again it was expressed that there was concern that not all employees' positions may warrant an increase. The Budget was due to be voted on by the April meeting and at the point of this meeting the Board was not in compliance with existing bylaws.

Kim Jennings made a motion for there to be an emergency meeting to review the salaries and wages of the Commission and to evaluate the wages before determining if a COLA is to be implemented. Olympia Perkins seconded the motion. Olympia Perkins needed to depart the meeting at 1:14pm. Although other suggestions were made regarding how to proceed with salaries and wages, it was determined that at that point there was no longer a quorum.

The Board recommended to reconvene again on May 10, 2021 at 1030am for an emergency meeting to discuss further the proposed budget and to review employee salaries and wages. The MAG study will be sent to the Board members as requested.

**Adjournment:** There being no further business, Beth St. John motioned that we close the meeting. Rusty Jordan seconded. All were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 1:32 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Ginger M. Ploeger  
Deputy Director  
Tidewater Youth Services Commission