

Andover Youth Services Steering Committee Minutes

March 22, 2022

Virtual Meeting Broadcast on AndoverTV

Call to Order

Chair Ryan Murphy called the meeting to order at 7:30 and conducted a Member Roll Call.

Roll Call: Albert Pless, Y; Ryan Murphy, Y; Brian Masterson, Y; Laura McVeigh, Y; Tim McCarron, Y; Trent DeBonis, Y; Lis Tamarkin, Y.

Emily arrived later to the meeting.

Also Present: Andrew Flanagan, Town Manager, Director of Human Resources, Jessica Porter, Director of Community Services Jemma Lambert, and Consultant Andrea Egmont.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Identify Themes from Committee Member Survey

Jess briefly spoke about the proposed interview/screening timeline which includes advertising the position within a 30 -day time frame on websites and other relevant forums, resume reviews, initial interviews, and follow-up assessment of skills before panels.

Each person on a panel would have an opportunity to see each of the applications and would score or rank the resumes to then be compiled to determine the final round of candidates.

Andy presented an overview of the survey results from the committee.

The surveys showed a strong “shared community” vision. Survey comments included: cares and values all youth regardless of race, class, or social economic status; is truly inclusive of all of Andover’s youth from differences in their social identities, race, sexual orientation, gender identity; includes differences in extracurricular interests such as athletics, music, performance arts/ visual arts, and gaming. Also, noted in the survey was that the Center should be filled with

people excited to be there and who are interested in making it a place that is welcoming to all types of students and youth.

Andy noted that themes of Community, Empathy, Kindness, and Acceptance were the strongest.

When asked about what the Youth Center should include, the answers ranged from a place for multi- cultural events to enrichment activities of all types. The emphasis on positive youth development and sense of belonging to community were discussed.

The existing *mission* of AYS may remain based on survey responses but the *vision*, or what the Center will look like may be somewhat different.

Discussion of Skills and Qualities for Director Position

Some of the “hard to quantify” yet essential qualities a Youth Services Director should have include energy and being a positive role model--someone who engages with and is an effective communicator with children, parents, and the community. Qualities also cited were leadership, and a warm and welcoming person who puts youth first. Members agreed that being genuine was important.

Andy talked about skills-- including the knowledge and ability to recognize and accomplish town-wide priorities and to work cooperatively to support the administrative parts of their job. Being part of a management team with organizational skills as well as a relevant educational background and computer skills are also part of the job description.

Jemma suggested a first phase of screening to determine whether an agreed list of qualifications has been met --the so-called “measurable” areas would take place first and next phases would be more in-depth and may involve a more tailored part of the assessment/interview process.

Laura asked about listing skills in order of importance and would like to see an emphasis on youth experience, and Lis asked about whether the job included a mental health counseling piece to the job.

Andrew said there is no expectation that this position would involve administering mental health services, rather the person would be expected to identify potential issues and refer individuals to the Licensed Social Worker on

staff. A Licensed clinician with the Town's Health and Wellness department is also available as a resource.

Brian liked the idea of phases starting with skills and noted that leadership could fall within a range of different professions.

Jemma suggested looking at screening through a DEI lens. Consider best practices around measurable education and experience, and Albert agreed that keeping transparency and inclusivity was key.

Jemma also noted that cover letters can be helpful in seeing who candidates really are. The job needs someone who has both passion as well as administrative skills, keeping in mind the staff is small and there are many kids in the program.

Tim asked whether an earlier job description might be a good benchmark to build upon. Our strengths include a well-established community base, and the hiring search should be flexible enough to include people with both management and youth leadership skills. Tim also asked how many might apply for this position. Andy said this is a unique position, but she recently hired a Rec Director and there were 25 candidates.

Jessica said that we might see 30-35 during normal times but it's difficult to predict an applicant pool in these times and she agreed that solid management skills along with youth development experience are needed.

Lis asked for an organization chart and Andrew said his office will provide one but with respect to this position, the Director of Youth Services would have a staff of 4, and report to the Director of Community Services who in turn reports to the Town Manager.

Brian said the process needs to be well communicated to potential applicants and that we should do what we can to remove inherent biases.

Emily asked about narrowing down the pool of candidates and Andrew reiterated that the process will be completely transparent.

Review Dates for next Meetings and Action Steps

Ryan asked about next steps asked if Andy could draft job description using comments from this group.

Jemma said that a focus on skills and experience will drive the search process.

Ryan will ask members to submit a list of skills to incorporate into the profiles/skill set for the job description to be reviewed in two weeks.

Laura asked about other job descriptions or best practices for positions similar to the AYS Director position that might be helpful.

Ryan announced the next meeting will be April 5 at 7:30 PM.

Emily announced her new position on the School Committee and said that tonight will be her last meeting on this Steering Committee.

Adjourn

It was moved by Ryan, seconded by Lis and voted 8-0 to adjourn at 8:37 PM

Roll Call: Ryan, Y; Tim, Y; Brian, Y; Albert, Y; Laura, Y; Emily, Y; Lis, Y.

Documents

“AYS Director Vision Creating Candidate Profile”/Questionnaire

Existing Andover Youth Services Web Site clip “A Revolutionary Youth Development Program”

Current AYS Program Director Qualifications