

November 11, 2025

Mayor Johnson is making serious claims about what happened in this meeting: on his personal facebook page, he posted:

"Tonight at the budget presentation, the Council and a resident discussed cutting most of the Youth Center staff to save money, as well as charging fees for kids to attend even those who live in Greenport."

In a comment on [Gossips](#), he said

"There's nothing that's a lie about wanting to cut the full time staff at the youth center. mayor is just a title I'm gonna be vocal about anything I feel is unfair."

As I tend to think a lot of our problems are problems of communication (and lack of leadership), I wanted to provide a record of what happened so we can talk about it. So, I had the meeting [transcribed](#).

Calvin Lewis, the Director of the Youth Department, made a presentation to the Council, and then it opened up to questions.

I have included the entire discussion following Calvin Lewis' presentation, as well as a comment from the public. I have included links to the video.

Transcript begins on the next page.

> *Peter Spear*

Here is where Calvin Lewis' presentation ends, and questions begin:

Vicki Daskalouis, Council Member:

Question for council members – a question. What is your criteria when you pick Student of the Month? Like, does everyone eventually become Student of the Month?

Calvin Lewis, Youth Director

Ideally, yes. It's open for every kid to be eligible to be awarded Student of the Month. It usually reflects attendance, behavior, engagement in programs. All of our members are kids who are there three to five times a week, engaging in a variety of programs. They're really just showing up and embracing it.

Vicki Daskalouis, Council Member:

Does the same apply for Employee of the Month?

Calvin Lewis, Youth Director

Yes. The Employee of the Month is typically someone who's gone above and beyond. That person is chosen among the full-time staff – the ones who have capacity to see both our K-2 program and our 3-8 program.

Vicki Daskalouis, Council Member:

How many full-time employees do you have?

Calvin Lewis, Youth Director

So it's myself, the secretary, the cleaner, the program coordinator, and two full-time staff. So a total of six.

Vicki Daskalouis, Council Member:

The program coordinator – was that the position that for some time wasn't filled? I remember when Liz was there.

Calvin Lewis, Youth Director

Yes. That's right. We did eventually fill that position, but it was a good two years that it went unfilled.

Vicki Daskalouis, Council Member:

And I think Liz was doing part of that role?

Calvin Lewis, Youth Director

Yes, she was doing part of it, because I think her predecessor left notes and contact info and such.

Vicki Daskalouis, Council Member:

Okay, thank you. That's full-time. Is there part-time staff also?

Calvin Lewis, Youth Director

Yes, we also have part-time staff.

Vicki Daskalouis, Council Member:

How many part-time?

Calvin Lewis, Youth Director

Six full-time, ten part-time. Part-time is usually 15 to 20 hours a week.

Tom DePietro, Council President

Next. Margaret's online.

Margaret Morris, Council Member

Okay, Margaret – yes. So the sixth full-time person is the cleaner, correct, Calvin?

Calvin Lewis, Youth Director

Yes, the cleaner is full-time.

Margaret Morris, Council Member

Can you explain to me the hours that cleaner works and why you need a full-time cleaner?

Calvin Lewis, Youth Director

We have a full-time cleaner to help maintain cleanliness of all the spaces we use – Oakdale, the Youth Center, and our satellite site at

the library. The cleaner works a 6:00 to 1:00 schedule, five days a week.

Margaret Morris, Council Member

So that person comes in after everything has closed?

Calvin Lewis, Youth Director

No, 6:00 a.m. to about 1:00 p.m.

Margaret Morris, Council Member

Okay. How about the church – who cleans that?

Calvin Lewis, Youth Director

We're no longer at the church.

Margaret Morris, Council Member

Oh, that's why you said you're now at the library.

Calvin Lewis, Youth Director

Correct.

Margaret Morris, Council Member

It's still fresh. When did that happen?

Calvin Lewis, Youth Director

We just began that this September.

Margaret Morris, Council Member

So that would save us – what was it – \$10,000 a year?

Calvin Lewis, Youth Director

Well, that wasn't a city expense, but we were paying rent for the church, which was around that – yes, roughly just under \$10K.

Council Member:

Okay. So now you're at the library – which room is it?

Calvin Lewis, Youth Director

So, we're on the second floor. We utilize the back.

Council Member:

The first two bathrooms?

Calvin Lewis, Youth Director

Yeah. Yes, the two.

Council Member:

So they need to go clean those, right?

Calvin Lewis, Youth Director

Right. Yeah. We do utilize that space – foot traffic, bathrooms, and stuff. You know, I do think our kids deserve a clean space to be in.

Tom DePietro, Council President

Any other questions?

Claire Cousins, resident in the audience

I'd just like to say this is the level of programming I think a lot of parents have been waiting for. I think it sounds amazing what you've been able to offer the kids since you've come in. Highlighting the staff is really important. I think young people have shown how excited they are to go to your program. Myself – I just want to commend it. If you need comments – good stuff.

Nick Zachos, resident in the audience

Yeah, I'd just like to clarify – does the cleaner do more than just cleaning?

Calvin Lewis, Youth Director

Oh, absolutely. Light fixtures, maintenance – a cleaner/maintenance hybrid. One name really for a church from the 1800s that costs a few thousand dollars a year to upkeep – and he's the one who fixes all those things.

Council Member:

Sure.

Calvin Lewis, Youth Director

Yeah. As best he can. He's a jack of all trades.

Nick Zachos, resident in the audience: ([Watch](#))

Can I ask one more question? As this goes on and people seem to be questioning positions in relation to the budget – what it sounds like to me – is, are council members also going to be questioning personnel in other departments? Like DPW, police, fire, or is this focus just on the Youth Department, which is one of the smallest departments – the smallest budget in the council?

Vicki Daskaloudis, Council Member:

Well, I mean, if you heard before, I was questioning the other department. I wasn't talking about the Youth Department. But I do believe at some point, the city should calculate how many kids there are and how many youth programs we have. Because right now, there's PS, there's Promise, there's Youth – so I was wondering if there could be some kind of collaboration between all of those units.

Just saying – forget the money for a second – there must be a better way to handle it without having separate entities. Maybe having them work together. Coordinate.

Calvin Lewis, Youth Director:

They do, actually. I host about 25 youth organizations that meet regularly.

Vicki Daskaloudis, Council Member:

No, no – I mean just in the City of Hudson.

Calvin Lewis, Youth Director:

Those city groups are part of that network as well. We meet on a monthly basis to discuss similar topics.

Claire Cousins, resident in the audience:

To your point, yes, there are multiple programs for youth. But the

Youth Center is the only open rec space that offers multiple program options – where kids actually get to decide what they want to do.

There's crafts, homework help, cooking, field trips. Kites Nest has a specific topic they focus on. That's their niche. Promise serves a younger crowd. A lot of the older kids age out of Promise and want to go to the Youth Center for more freedom.

And like he was saying before – it's a feeder program. Whether it's sports or leadership, most young people's first job is at the Youth Center because they came through the Youth Center. That's the pipeline. That's where they're getting youth investment. So I think it's invaluable to have an open rec space for young people.

Vicki Daskaloudis, Council Member:

How about the school? Is there something you can work out with the school?

Calvin Lewis, Youth Director:

The school has their own program.

Vicki Daskaloudis, Council Member:

Is it competitive with yours? Like, do you see more kids going there or here? Do you know their numbers?

Calvin Lewis, Youth Director:

I don't have that.

Vicki Daskaloudis, Council Member:

That's what I'm saying – it'd be nice to have all the information in one place. Instead of just saying, "I have this many kids," maybe we all try to work together under one umbrella of after-school programs for our kids.

Dominic Merante, Council Member

I think a lot of the kids in the school's after-school program don't live in the City of Hudson. Parents use that as daycare because there's nothing else in the outlying towns. So I think you'd see higher numbers of kids from outside the city in that program.

Calvin Lewis, Youth Director:

And I'll just add: the after-school program has a limited number of seats. They fill up incredibly fast, and then they're locked in for the whole semester. Plus, they operate under a different set of hours than we do at the Youth Department.

Claire Cousins, resident in the audience:

So that's done by 5, 5:30 – and that's just when things are getting going in the Youth Department. None of those other organizations exist as a drop-in that can provide space for youth, teens, or young adults in the evening hours – when there's no other youth program running. Nothing during those hours – not Kite's Nest, Promise Neighborhood, school, anything.

Vicki Daskaloudis, Council Member:

I think it would be very good to have some information about what takes place at those meetings with the 25 other youth orgs – just so we can compare. Then you wouldn't have to explain so much, and we can put everything in perspective. That's all. Yes, thank you.

Margaret Morris, Council Member:

To Dominic's point – I think it was Dominic who mentioned it – the children who attend the Youth Department who don't reside in Hudson. Why is it that the taxpayers in the City of Hudson are paying for after-school care and evening events for children who aren't residents?

Claire Cousins, resident from the audience:

Are you referring to the after-school program?

Margaret Morris, Council Member:

No – I'm sorry, that question was for Calvin, and I meant the Youth Department.

We have a fairly substantial percentage of children and teens accessing Youth Department services who don't live in the City of Hudson. Why are we paying for that?

Calvin Lewis, Youth Director:

Could you say that again?

Margaret Morris, Council Member: ([Watch](#))

Why are we paying for services for kids who don't live in Hudson? We used to get numbers from Liz showing how many children lived in Hudson versus how many didn't. To Dominic's point, there are a lot of kids using the Youth Department who live outside the city. So what's the rationale for the City of Hudson paying for services for children from Greenport or Livingston?

Calvin Lewis, Youth Director:

Well, I'd say it's an investment in the youth. I mean, they're in our city – so therefore, we should support it.

Margaret Morris, Council Member:

I'm sorry, could you say that again? I didn't catch it.

Calvin Lewis, Youth Director:

I'd like to think on it and get back to you.

Margaret Morris, Council Member:

Okay. It just seems to me that the municipalities accessing our services should be providing some funding for what they're using. I'm not saying their kids shouldn't access the services – I'm just saying the City of Hudson and the Youth Department budget, which is our budget, should get some funds from the municipalities whose children are participating.

Calvin Lewis, Youth Director:

Yeah, I mean, I think you have a valid point.

Tom DePietro, Council President

Thank you. Okay, moving right along.

Later in the meeting there was a comment from the audience

Resident in audience:

I have a question on the previous topic, not the policing topic. I answer that which the youth department. Sure. Yeah. I just was unclear at the end of that conversation. Can you guys hear me okay? Yeah. Okay. At the end of that conversation there was this really cool

presentation. I don't know anything about this, so I'm just listening to your presentation and I'm like, this is so lovely, all of this love and opportunity you're providing and I know that obviously I think everybody here knows that there are budgetary issues in the city and I understand it a general level that there's a question of the city funding and then people being outside of the city limits and I would imagine that maybe some people also go back and forth. Maybe there are families that are in and out of the city. I'm not really sure, but I guess what my question is is the question to you after you, your presentation was why should the city pay for this? And then it was kind, which I understand why that's a question, but it was left sort of lapping in the breeze. Now it's the youth department's responsibility to sort of come up with a reason. But then what's the impact of that? It seems like to me it seems like not knowing too much about how the organization works. I would think that if there's going to be a question of there's some portion like a third or something like that, people who are outside of city limits by residents, then somebody's got to get together and communicate with the town, the government outside that would provide that funding if that's the route that we're going to go. And it just kind of seems like it is probably not just the youth department by themselves to do that. It seems like it's the rest of the government to do that. So am I just thinking something that everybody knows or it just was kind of left hanging? He's supposed to answer that question by himself and come back and have a solution. I've been in situations like that where I myself have been assigned something and left and then I was like, I don't know what I'm supposed to do in the next meeting. What am I supposed to provide? I can't do this. Well, should you like to clarify that your

Tom DePietro, Council President

Best insight was that people go back and forth? I've people on council and elsewhere. I probably don't appreciate how often that happens because it doesn't affect them. This now who should actually be approaching those other towns. It's interesting. Our supervisors don't seem right.

Rich Volo, Council Member

I mean we have five supervisors in the city of Hudson that meet with the board of supervisors for the other county. We did meet with them

months ago to say, then these other towns chip in.

Claire Cousins, resident in audience

I think the only point I would add that is constantly missing from this conversation is what the county does provide when it comes to youth programming, a large chunk of youth programming within the city, both for the youth center and programming abroad, coverage, transportation. They move things in their budgets to support youth programming throughout the county. The co-host committee, which is the 25 youth programs that get together on a monthly basis also is supported by the county. So the county as a whole does invest in Hudson probably more than they invest in other towns and villages throughout the rest of the county. So I think that they are pouring a fair share into what the city is offering. And then I would also encourage beyond the supervisors, there are department heads that are in charge of these budgetary items that are in question and if you reach out and ask, pretty sure that he's very forthcoming with how the money is allocated to you programming throughout the county and specifically for the city on Hudson. It's very broken out. Thank you Claire for that clarification. Okay,

Resident in audience

So then is that, I'm not trying to assign work to anybody, but I'm just trying to make it sure that nobody is leaving this meeting being like, am I supposed to do something or am I not? Or are people going to be mad at me? Am I come back and I don't have an answer to something that seems like it needs to be collaborative representation. I don't know. Or maybe you guys don't want to deal with that, but that's just, that seems to me

Tom DePietro, Council President

Thank you for raising. Anybody else? Okay, we'll move along. Thank you. We will talk about it further.