

Ridgewood Municipal Alliance Meeting Minutes

Friday, March 21, 2025

9:35am to 10:35am

Zoom Meeting

Attendees: Danielle Caputo, Deanna Schablik, Liz Lukas, Stacey Swisniewski, Claudia Fortunato, Amy Beirsdorf, Sheila Brogan, Kevin Feeley, Jennifer Giammarella

Sheila welcomed everyone to the Q3 meeting.

Report related to happenings among youth related to vaping, alcohol and drugs – Kevin Feeley and Dan Kilday reached out to Dr. Wes Perkins and Dr. Daniel Craig and discussed a different organization to administer the social norms survey. Planning in the spring with a possible roll-out in the Fall of 2025. The survey would be focused on what kids are doing, and what kids perceive others are doing. Update to follow. Sheila mentioned that maybe the Opioid Grant money could be used for the survey to collect the data and then have statistics which would help in determining the logic model for the next grant cycle. Claudia commented on smoking and mentioned that she spoke to Tim Shoemaker and the results from the vaping programs is that “vaping prevention is working”, but people are switching back to cigarettes”.

Sheila thanked Deanna for working diligently to complete and submit the Quarterly Reports for Q1 and Q2.

Breakdown of Financials: \$4507.18 total

1. Community Education – \$705

Deanna mentioned that the invoice was just generated for the Website Hosting and domain name, and license. The total billed is \$352.17, up a little from last year, but still sustainable with the funds. The year of use will run from April 3, 2025 through April 3, 2026. Jaden Lee will be switching out photos on the main page this week, and updated the site based on events.

2. Vaping - \$1900

Claudia mentioned that Tim Shoemaker will present at both BF and GW Middle Schools on May 28th. There will be 4 sessions. The 6th & 7th graders will attend a session, and the 8th graders will attend a separate session, since the presentation will be slightly different than what they heard in 6th and 7th grade. Having a consistent speaker builds trust and rapport amongst the students. Parents will be invited to the daytime presentation since evening turnout during parent presentations has been extremely light over the last few years. Stacey mentioned that there was a brainstorming effort amongst 6-12 teachers and all felt that tacking the message onto a larger event may bring more parents to a program they may not have necessarily go to. Amy mentioned that when kids are the presenters of something, more parents would be inclined to attend, and Anna mentioned that the principals on the elementary level are really pushing events to the parents to increase attendance. Shared by Claudia, that another way to keep parents engaged in conversation with their kids is share an email with the parents that says something like “your kids saw this today”, and that would be a great prompt to the start of a conversation. Stacey also suggested tacking something on to the beginning of a Back to School night.

3. RHS Prevention: \$1800; \$102.18 (supplies)

Kevin and Jim met on March 20th to discuss the remaining programs for the year. The plan is to engage in small group discussions of students leaders, and possibly have Mark Cossak back for a larger student leader/Family Meal again, similar to the one in the Fall. The current leaders are realizing that the roles that they play transcend to others students, encouraging them to come back to the table. All programs will be completed by the first week of June. Kevin asked if refreshments were part of the \$102.18 line item to purchase food for the event. Deanna will look at the Form 7 and get back to him and Sheila. Claudia also mentioned that it would be a great idea to have someone speak to the high school seniors about what comes next (college, next level concerns, etc.). Maybe a panel of graduates to speak to the seniors about academics and transition might also be an option according to Amy.

Youth Programs: Deanna stated that 10 CYC members assisted at the “Minute to Win It” Middle School event in January. Claudia and Anna were thrilled about how the event went and that the CYC members were wonderful with the students and parent chaperones. Next event is tonight, at BF and will be an Old School Friday offered to both GW and BF students. Water will be supplied as part of the cash-match for the event for the 45 middle school students registers. Water will also be supplied for the DEI event, that had been rescheduled to April 4th. Next Old School Friday will be on May 16.

Update from Ridgewood Health Department – Danielle stated that the Health Department has been working on programs for Mental Health Month and are happy to continue their mental health wellness partnership with the BOE. Kevin mentioned that Matt Bellace would translate well with the high school students as well. Narcan Kits are available through the Health Department and the Health Department is looking to do some Narcan Trainings over the summer. Danielle was proud to announce that Ridgewood has been recognized as a Healthy Town for the Mayor’s Wellness Campaign for inclusive programming. Out of 596 towns in New Jersey, Ridgewood is one of 30! All of this was made possible through the community partnerships with Parks and Recreation, Age Friendly Ridgewood, The Ridgewood Library, Ridgewood Public Schools, Bergen County, etc. Thank you everyone!

Next meeting: Friday, May 16, 2025 (Virtual)

Respectfully submitted,

Deanna M. Schablik, CPRP