

**City of Hyattsville Education Advisory Committee Minutes**  
**September 25th, 2023**  
**6:30 PM – 8 :00 PM**

Meeting held virtually:

[https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_YoAP1S1aTXCALftdtmgrRA](https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_YoAP1S1aTXCALftdtmgrRA)

Roll Call: Committee members

Mai Abdul Rahman (*Ward 1*) - Chair  
Melinda Baldwin (*Ward 2*)- Secretary  
Nicholas Misukanis (*Ward 2*)  
Cynthia Totten (*Ward 4*)  
Deshundria Fortson (*Ward 1*)  
Michael Angelino (*Ward 5*)  
Lisvette Garcia (*Ward 1*)  
Aliya Yancey (*Ward 1*)

***Quorum established***

Attending Council Liaison

Emily Strab (*Ward 2*)

City of Hyattsville Representative:

Colleen Aistis, Community Services Manager

Approval: September 25th, 2023 Agenda

**Nicholas Misukanis moved to approved the agenda. Deshondria Forstson seconded the motion to approve. Motion passed.**

Approval: July 24th, 2023 meetings minutes

**July 24<sup>th</sup> meetings minutes: Nicholas Misukanis moved to approve the minutes, Mai Abdul Rahman seconded it. Motion passed.**

**1. Back to School Night**

The event was very successful. Colleen shared information about the event and said saw joyful expressions on people's faces. We reached a lot of people in need. People appreciated the resources. We had about 50 more people in line that didn't receive backpacks. Tracy was impressed with the need. Colleen collected people's names to get additional backpacks as we receive them. Mai is sending donors thank you cards.

Child poverty is increasing in the US. Hyattsville has a large community of people in need. Schools in Hyattsville where the entire population qualify as Title I students. 40% or more of the students have to qualify as Title I for the school to qualify as a Title I school.

This is our second year doing the back packs. City recognizes that we need to institutionalize the event. Mai stated we can ask for \$8000. That amount would cover the cost of the event.

- 350 filled backpacks were distributed
- Also distributed were food, diapers, household items, diapers, fresh produce
- Fresh flowers were provided by Traders Joes. Flowers makes it a joyful celebration.
- Bottles of water were provided. There weren't enough to the heat., however as it was so very hot.
- Passion and Compassionate Rescuers provided the food. They go to grocery stores and warehouses. The food might not be shelf stable. T

Vendors couldn't have been happier and asked to return next year. The following were donors:

DC United  
WMATA – discounted fares were  
UMD Finance Center – personal  
Neighborhood Design Center  
Crossover Church – Community Baby Shower  
Bubble monger – did a great job keeping kids moving.

**2. Letter to council to institutionalize back to school (school supplies) funding.**

- Mai suggested we write a letter to the Council. There was discussion amongst the Committee members.
- Nicholas asked about the process to submit a letter. Mai answered by stating we would need a strong justification for our ask. Mai believes that there will be strong support for the request.
- Emily – when we go through the budget process is the time to submit the letter. We will need estimated costs and a strong request.

**Mike motioned to draft the letter. Cynthia second the motion. The motion passed.**

- Mai volunteered to draft the letter.
- We will need to approve the letter at the next meeting. Mai will send a copy to the Council President. She believes he will be in support of the request.
- Colleen added that she has received a request from the High School for backpacks. The school indicated there are youth who are in need there as well.

**3. 2024 Educational Committee Grant Program Timeline (November-February):**

- Mai introduced a committee visitor, Leandro Pavon to speak to the EAC grant programmer. Mr. Pavon stated that the grant is going to be very helpful because other funding is often not available for extra activities. Mr. Pavon used the funding he received for an after-school drama club. He purchased scripts and other necessary items. Because they received the EAC funding, they were able to start the club sooner as we didn't have to wait for other funding.
- Mai reported that the EAC increased the amount, moved the time frame up, and increased the number of times the school can submit a grant request.
- The EAC needs to send out the letter in November and collect the applications in February.
- Colleen will send out several reminders between November and February to all of the schools. Mai asked her how the EAC can best support her. Colleen will let us know.

#### **4. Discussion Items: Teacher shortages at Hyattsville Middle School and Hyattsville Elementary School Renovations**

Mai inquired if anyone on the committee had additional information about the teacher shortage at the Middle School? She is concerned that the Middle School may need an additional 35 teachers. She is aware that the County recruited 1000 teachers this summer.

Discussion: Teacher and bus driver shortages:

- Colleen stated it is a universal concern across the state. School bus drivers are very much needed as well. Being a school bus driver requires one to have a specialized license. Individuals may not be interested in being a bus driver because there is often disrespectful behavior on the buses and the driver is unable to respond. PG County has struggled to recruit even before the pandemic. Hyattsville offers competitive salaries for bus drivers.
- Mr. Pavon reported that Hyattsville Elementary School does not need teachers. They began their recruitment early in December.
- Mai: the middle school may have been caught behind in their recruitment. It is hard on the teachers and students.

Discussion about the proposed renovations of Hyattsville Elementary School:

- Mai also stated her concerns about changes in the building/renovation contract.
- Emily Staub reported that there was an update to contract went before the board for a vote. It didn't get enough votes to pass. Some board

members want specific provisions. If the contract isn't passed, the schools just won't get built.

- The contract is a public-private partnership to get the funding and contractors to build the schools. It needed 8 votes to pass, 7 people voted against it. Emily will forward Dan's email (As of 10-22-2023, this email had not been received).
- Mai: Until the board approves the contract, nothing will happen. We need to hope the contractors don't pull out as the contract is being renegotiated.

#### **5. Youth Center Update:**

Emily Staub reported that the roof permit is still held up by the Department of Inspections and Environment. We don't know when that permit will be approved. We expect that some of the interior renovations will begin this week. We had hoped that the youth center may be ready by the holidays. Given the roof permit hasn't been granted, we don't believe that will occur.

#### **6. Summer program fall enrollment & planned activities**

Colleen reported that the city has the year's activities planned.

- The after school and drop off program begins next week.
- Mini camps began this week.
- Drop-in sessions began on October 2,
- Movie in the park.
- Camp exploration activities with older students are also set to begin. This will include a broad range of activities including day trips including top golf, skating. Intergenerational activities are also planned. Youth and seniors will work on activities together. Cooking classes last time focused on using an oven which can be foreign in some cultures where the preparation of traditional dishes is done using a stove burner as a heat source.
- The tutoring and mentoring program is being held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Youth may drop in to the program if they haven't signed up in advance.

#### **7. Public comment**

The EAC had received a request to join the meeting from UMD student, Emily Miranda. The link to join the meeting was sent to her. She was not able to join. It appeared to be a technical difficulty.

#### **8. Appreciation for the work of the Committee:**

The Chair of the committee expressed her appreciation for the high levels of engagement shown and the work of all of the committee members. She announced that Mr. Pavon will be able to join the committee as soon as the council approves it. Ms. Shepard has stated that members of the committee

may reside outside of Hyattsville's parameters. The EAC hasn't done this before so it may take a bit of time. She asked that everyone be patient.

**Move to adjourn was made by Mike Angelino. Deshundra Fortson seconded the motion. Motion passed. Meeting was adjourned.**