



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Ian Baltutis
Mayor Pro Tem Kathy Hykes
Councilmember Bob Ward
Councilmember Jim Butler
Councilmember Harold Owen

From: Hardin Watkins, City Manager

Date: March 29, 2018

Re: Youth Solutions Forum Follow-up

During the March 5, 2018 Work Session, City Council heard a report from the Youth Solutions Forum process led by Rachel Kelly. The conversation was informative, productive, and beneficial.

As the discussion transitioned to next steps and action items moving forward, Mayor Baltutis, Mayor Pro Tem Hykes, and I attempted to summarize and gain agreement on the next steps to continue moving this effort forward. Staff was asked to review and consider the many discussion points and report back to Council during the April City Council Work Session.

Many in the community are eager to see some immediate action steps and the City is presently offering a number of helpful services, programs, and facilities through the Recreation & Parks Department, Police Department, and Community Development Division of the Planning Department. There are a number of quick-hitter ideas, such as late night basketball, mobile playground camp programs, mentoring, and similar initiatives that can start fairly soon once resources and facility availability are evaluated and allocated. The community involvement portion and coordination of existing programs and resources will take longer due to the number of organizations and individuals that could potentially be involved.

“Getting the word out” and sharing information about what is available amongst those who can best utilize the services and programs is a key strategy that will also take months to synchronize and harmonize.

City staff is committed to work to solve the problems that have been identified by the community over the past few months. Citizens seem to be interested in the amalgamation of more resources and programs to fill the gaps of the unmet needs. Some of these will be provided by local government and some will be provided by non-governmental organizations, the faith community, and good-hearted citizens.

Mayor Pro Tem Hykes asked City staff to determine resources currently available from all sources and also make recommendations about what types of non-local government organizations and resources can be utilized and included in our community response. City staff will complete this task as budget season demands wane during Spring 2018.

It is clear that different strategies are needed for different age groups and different geographic regions. The best solution will have multiple components and parts managed and organized by a multitude of different organizations and individuals.

Suggested Immediate Action Steps:

1. Designate a Youth Solutions Coordinator

I'd like to suggest that the City designate or select a person (or persons) to serve in this capacity. I believe that the community would benefit from tapping someone to take the reins and be responsible for coordinating, synthesizing, advocating, cajoling, encouraging, fostering, connecting, developing and promoting solutions. One of my mentors advised me years ago that if you want to make sure that something gets done, you should put someone in charge. I believe this is true.

Accordingly, we need a coordinator that will clearly help us identify what success looks like for City Council, our various partners, and the citizens of Burlington. The community must help us define the goals and outcomes over a 1-5 year timeframe.

- It will be important to have someone that can focus on this initiative and not be constantly juggling other projects and demands. It needs to be on the top of someone's priority list instead of (or in addition to) their regular work demands and tasks.
- It will be important to have someone that understands community resources and demonstrates and ability to work with people towards common goals.
- It will be important to have a clear leader of the project that is motivated, empowered, and committed to success. We will need to give this person enough latitude to make pertinent, independent decisions to be successful and deliver results.
- It will be important to provide adequate resources (connections, funds, materials, technology, cooperation, and encouragement) to ensure success.
- It will be important to provide clear guidance on the resources available and timetable for seeing measurable results.

2. Compile a Comprehensive List of All City of Burlington, Alamance County, ABSS, State of North Carolina, and Area Non-Governmental Programs that Contribute Positively to Youth Quality of Life

This step can be initiated quickly using existing City staff resources. The findings of this research will help guide and inform the work to follow.

3. Evaluate the Usefulness and Value of a Task Force or Advisory Committee to Serve as a Sounding Board and Source for Advice and Recommendations

This could materialize as: 1) a newly City-appointed group, 2) utilization of an existing organization (non-City) already organized and functioning, or 3) be drawn in an entirely different manner. I envision this as operating similar to one of the City's existing advisory boards (Traffic Commission, Recreation & Parks Commission, etc.) or a typical non-profit committee structure (United Way, etc.).

If this action step is pursued, we will need to establish firm guidelines defining the duties and responsibilities of the task force. It is critical to determine how the members will be selected, duration of terms, etc.