

Date: July 6, 2022

Time: 2:00 to 4:00pm

Location: City of Suffolk
*City Hall
442 W. Washington Street
Conference Room 3*



July 2022 Commission Meeting

Members Present

Tamie Rittenhouse

Lori White

Mark Furlo

Henry Dixon

Shawna LoMonaco

Kelly Donnell

Members Absent

Gin Staylor

Sarah Townsend

Carol Wilson

Catherine Pichon

Marie Baker

Bonnie Maki

Terrance Johnson

Guests Present

Melvin Bradshaw

Stacey Prine

- I.** **Introductions/Welcome** – Tamie Rittenhouse called the meeting to order.
- II.** **Review Minutes** – The commission reviewed the minutes from May 4, 2022. A spelling error was noted in the name of a guest present; Jennifer Connor was changed to Jennifer Conner. Lori White made the motion to approve the minutes, Tamie Rittenhouse seconded the motion. The vote to approve the minutes was unanimous.
- III.** **Coordinator's Report:**
 - A. Child Care Numbers:** Shawna LoMonaco reported 42 licensed and 13 unlicensed facilities in Suffolk.
 - Shawna LoMonaco noted the addition of College and Career Academy for the summer. Suffolk Public Schools staff Melvin Bradshaw added that was the summer AlphaBEST program.

- Shawna LoMonaco shared that Main Street Day Care and Preschool achieved VQ Level 3 in June.

B. ECDC Update – Shawna LoMonaco shared the following:

1. Growing Up Suffolk – Both events were successful and we are already looking forward to expanding next year’s Growing Up Suffolk by planning early. Sentara is working to possibly bring a mobile unit with them next year.
2. Ready, Set, Grow bags – Materials for the bags were given to Lori White today with Sentara Obici Hospital. Bags will be distributed to new mothers who deliver at Sentara Obici Hospital. ECDC supplied materials to fill 1500 bags. Shawna shared “The Power of Play” parent resource booklet created by Zero to Three. “The Power of Play” is available as a free printable resource online and ECDC obtained permission to have 1500 printed in booklet form to include as a parent resource.
3. Mini Grants – Kaplan resource materials were awarded to 8 Suffolk Early Educators to include 5 centers and 3 family day homes. Recipients have shared photos with the commission to express their gratitude. Commission members suggested highlighting the recipients in the Suffolk News Herald in Press Release format in the future.
4. Community Engagement – Shawna LoMonaco and Kelly Donnell hosted a virtual Parent Workshop in June for The Children’s Center about learning at home through play and normal daily routines. Several parents were in attendance and expressed how helpful the information was.
 - Sarah Townsend with Suffolk Public Library is working on an ECDC rack card.
 - Suffolk Public Library has formed Advisory Teams within the library, specifically an Early Childhood Advisory Team. The purpose of the teams is to gain information pertaining to the Suffolk community and to ensure we are providing appropriate resources. Shawna LoMonaco and Kelly Donnell both participate in the Early Childhood Advisory Team. Tamie Rittenhouse shared that relevant community assessment data may be found on The Children’s Center’s website and also noted that The Children’s Center Head Start has interpreters throughout their staff to meet the needs of the ESL/ELL community.
 - Shawna LoMonaco continues to promote public ECDC meetings and encourages the commission to do so as well.

IV. Other Business:

A. Finance Report: Shawna LoMonaco provided the final budget for the end of the fiscal year. She shared that only \$1.12 remained as of 6/30/2022.

B. Partner Update:

- Suffolk Public Schools – Melvin Bradshaw shared information regarding summer programs through Suffolk Public Schools. Summer Explore Program allows students in grades K-12 to explore Suffolk virtually. Summer Bridge Program is a self-paced online program for students in grades K-8 that bridges their most recently completed grade and their upcoming grade level in Math and English. The Summer Food Program provides breakfast and lunch to children Monday-Thursday. Stacey Prine with Suffolk Public Schools, filling in for Catherine Pichon, shared information regarding the Early Start Program. There are currently 442 VPI spots and Suffolk Public Schools is in the process of reviewing applications. So far, 360 children have qualified for the upcoming school year. Early Start classrooms are located in Kilby Shores Elementary, Southwestern Elementary, Booker T. Washington Elementary, and Nansemond Parkway Elementary. Stacey noted that the amount of children that qualify based on income alone has increased. Early Start acceptance letters should go out next week.
- Suffolk Parks and Recreation – Mark Furlo shared that summer camps are full, noting that there has been a decrease in available slots due to shortage of staff. Registration has begun for before and after school programs.
- Suffolk Public Library – Shawna LoMonaco shared on behalf of Sarah Townsend information regarding Suffolk Public Library’s Mess Hall. Children under 18 are invited to enjoy a complimentary lunch and daily activities at Morgan Memorial Library, Monday through Friday 12:30 pm – 1:30 pm.
- Children’s Center – Tamie Rittenhouse shared that The Children’s Center is currently recruiting heavily, noting the current staffing issue. The Children’s Center is also undergoing a change in curriculum to STREAMIn3.
- Obici – Lori White shared that after her presentation for Sentara, she now is classified back under the Community department which allows her to be a better service to the community. Previously, she had to adjust on the clock hours based on productivity in the hospital, making it difficult to meet the needs of the community.
- Henry Dixon updated the commission on his progress with the City of Suffolk regarding start-up fees for Family Day Homes. It was explained to Henry that the fees were previously set and there may be some differences in how/where the fees are classified vs. where the fees fall. A follow up meeting is scheduled and Henry will provide further updates to the commission.

V. New Business:

- A. Shawna LoMonaco shared the budget for the new year and plans for the funds. There have been slight adjustments to different categories of the budget.
- B. Shawna LoMonaco shared a monthly breakdown of upcoming ECDC activities, outreach, and primary focus and will send to the commission via email. The commission suggested that we send a press release and photo each time we participate in an outreach event in order to build our connection with the community.

VI. Action Items:

- A. Shawna LoMonaco will share with the committee the monthly schedule and informational flyers regarding community events. (i.e. Mess Hall, Summer Food Program)
- B. Shawna LoMonaco will plan Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion training for the Commission.

VII. **Adjourn:**

Our next meeting will be August 3, 2022.