



APPROVED Minutes
Increased Advocacy for Youth with Disabilities
Council Subcommittee
Nov. 8, 2024

Minutes of the Increased Advocacy for Youth with Disabilities Council Subcommittee meeting held on Nov. 8, 2024, 12:00 p.m., Hybrid Meeting - Tempe City Hall, 31 E. 5th St. and virtually through Microsoft Teams.

Members Present:

Councilmember Berdetta Hodge – Chair

City Staff Present:

Keith Burke, Deputy City Manager
Lisette Camacho, Deputy City Manager
Eric Anderson, City Attorney
Tim Burch, Community Health & Human Services Director
Mary Mezey, Deputy Human Services Director
Tanya Chavez, Chief of Staff
Kara DeArrastia, City Clerk
Mariana Pena, Mayor’s Assistant
Vanessa Lopez, Council Assistant

Stakeholders:

Amanda Steele
Amy Pedotto
Brenda Walsh
Genevieve Vega
Jenniffer Jarvis
Jody Hernandez

Agenda Item 1 – Public Appearances

No public appearances.

Agenda Item 2 – Open Meeting Law Review

A video from the City Attorney’s office was presented, providing an overview of Arizona’s Open Meeting Law. Councilmember Hodge raised questions regarding the potential for district governing board members to participate in future meetings, which could result in the formation of a quorum. Mr. Anderson responded that in such cases, the City would issue a joint meeting notice and collaborate directly with the school district’s legal advisor to ensure compliance.

Agenda Item 3 – Subcommittee Mission

Councilmember Hodge presented the proposed mission statement: The purpose of this subcommittee is to explore how the City of Tempe can assist Tempe youth with disabilities, and their families and caregivers, navigate and better understand the resources available in Tempe and the State of Arizona for academic, career, and life success.

Agenda Item 4 – Goal Setting Initiatives

Discussion centered around the following initiatives:

1. Family Advocate

- a. The proposal to retain an advocate who would serve as a liaison between families, students, and schools, specifically for school-aged children from Pre-K through 12th grade (Senior ++).

2. Transition Services

- a. Addressing whether youth will be able to participate in transition services beyond the age of 22.

3. Community Training

- a. Training aimed at increasing understanding of neurodivergent children and those with disabilities.
- b. Target audiences for the training include the city, school districts, after-school programs, parents, and the community at large.
- c. Tailored training for businesses interested in employing youth with disabilities.
- d. Exploring existing training for general education teachers on students with disabilities.
- e. Day Treatment for Adults (DTA) programs focused on independent living, skills, training, and socialization.
- f. Exploring ways to encourage staff participation in training.
- g. The city could explore funding for “Best Practices” training.

4. Clarifying “Resources” in the Mission Statement

- a. Identifying key resources to partner with for developing training, such as Raising Special Kids (RSK), Southwest Human Development, and City of Tempe Community Services (Kid Zone).
- b. Discussing how to make navigating available resources more transparent.
- c. Considering whether the city can administer a survey to assess the number of youths requiring specialized services.
- d. Councilmember Hodge noted the importance of collaborating with the City’s Commission on Disability Concerns and staying aligned with their work.
- e. Councilmember Hodge expressed interest in connecting with charter and private schools regarding services for youth with disabilities and how to reach underserved populations.
- f. Discussing the possibility of schools sharing data to help assess the community’s need for a family advocate and determining how many advocates would be necessary to make a meaningful impact.

5. Policy Evaluation – To be determined

6. Goal Prioritization – To be determined

Agenda Item 5 – Grant Funding Update

Councilmember Hodge reported that she, along with Jonathan Shuffield, City Government Relations Director, met with the City’s federal lobbying firm, Ballard Spahr, on October 23 and

October 31. Representatives from Congressman Greg Stanton's office participated in the October 31 meeting to discuss potential funding for a disability/family advocate at the state level. The proposed advocate would assist families and youth with developmental disabilities in matters related to education.

Ballard Spahr and Congressman Stanton's office will continue to monitor available grants that could help fund the advocate position and will provide ongoing updates to Jonathan Shuffield. Councilmember Hodge also plans to meet in person with representatives from Ballard Spahr and Congressman Stanton's office in March during the National League of Cities Congressional City Conference.

Councilmember Hodge encouraged attendees to bring forward any relevant grant or funding opportunities they may come across.

Agenda Item 6 – Future Agenda Items

- Tim Burch will provide an update on current city programs, services, and trainings, including those offered through the Tempe Community Council (TCC) specific to dealing with disabled and neurodivergent youth.
- The group agreed to invite representatives from the city's Public Safety, Park Rangers, and Community Services departments to a future meeting to discuss the training they receive for interacting with individuals with disabilities.
- Councilmember Hodge noted that future meetings will continue to be held in a hybrid format. Committee members agreed that, for the time being, meetings will take place in the large conference room at City Hall.

Meeting adjourned at 1:12 p.m.

Prepared by: Vanessa Lopez, Council Assistant, (480) 350-8597

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