

Youth, Family and Human Services Commission Meeting
Olive Chendali, East Lyme Community Center
January 8, 2026 6:00 pm
Regular Meeting

Present:

D. Bull
J. Brush
S. Miller
V. Brush
J. Shelburn
L. McGowan

Absent: J. Hanna, N. Banever, C. Carlson; Ex-Officio

Also present: Director; S. Firmin

Call to Order:

Chairman, Don Hull, called the meeting to order at 6:05pm.

Public Delegation:

No members of the public were present.

Minutes:

J. Shelburn moved to approve the December 2025 meeting minutes as submitted, seconded by J. Brush.

Approved unanimously.

Director's Report:

- a) Director S. Firmin informed the commission about the recent meeting with the First Selectman and the Finance Director. During that meeting, approval was given to expand the Wellness and Prevention Coordinator role to a full-time position. A portion of the YSB grant will be allocated to help fund the increased wages for this role.
- b) Commission members received updated figures for the cannabis grant and the opioid settlement funds.

Ex-Officio Report:

- a) Ex-Officio C. Carlson was unable to attend but sent an email noting that the electronic bike ordinance was approved at the BOS meeting the previous evening.
- b) The commission was informed that a public hearing may be scheduled to consider increasing the late fee for overdue water bills.

Student Report:

- a) Student V. Brush shared that a therapy dog through New London Mental Health will be visiting East Lyme high school.

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Don Hull
Town Clerk

Communications:

- a) None

Unfinished Business:

- a) S. Firmin stated that the state has released new SFY26 calculations for the YSB grant. CYSA convened to review concerns about the revised grant structure and the SFY26 award amounts. During the discussion, directors noted that while the base allocation remains unchanged, adjustments were made to the supplemental and enhancement portions. These changes reflect updated 2020 census data, a revised number of participating YSBs, COLA considerations, a recalculation of DCF's administrative percentage, and updated audit and site-visit requirements.
- b) East Lyme experienced a decrease of approximately \$900.
- c) The commission was informed that, based on discussions at the CYSA meeting, YSBs will no longer be required to return unspent funds and will be permitted to carry them into the next fiscal year beginning with SFY25. CYSA has requested clarification on the procedures for carrying funds forward. Once the state budget is finalized, OPM may adjust funding levels, and unlike in previous years, DCF will no longer be able to absorb any shortfalls.

New Business:

- a) D. Hull introduced the idea of inviting younger speakers who can address topics in ways students may find more relatable.
- b) S. Miller shared information about the "We're Goggles" anti-vaping program, a free initiative Salem is partnering on with Yale. The program focuses on 7th–8th graders, with plans to continue engagement through high school.
- c) A suggestion was made to bring Salem and East Lyme 8th graders together for a joint event, followed by a mixer.
- d) The commission explored potential program topics such as internet safety and substance use, and discussed organizations that could support these efforts, including Courage to Speak, Maggie and Tony, and internet safety programming with Scott Driscoll.
- e) The commission reviewed the proposed FY26/27 budget, which reflects a 26% increase. This rise is attributed to the Wellness & Prevention Coordinator position transitioning to full-time status. A portion of the associated cost will be supported through grant funding, including the YSB grant and opioid settlement funds.
- f) D. Hull and S. Firmin will be seeking clarification on how departmental grants are handled—specifically, whether they are added to the approved budget or placed in the general fund and counted as part of the department's overall allocation. They will follow up with the Finance Director during the meeting with the First Selectman to review the proposed budget.
- g) J. Shelburn requested a detailed breakdown of departmental revenue and emphasized that this information should be included in the budget proposal.

Adjournment:

J. Shelburn motioned to adjourn at 7:00pm, seconded by J. Brush. Approved unanimously.