



Minutes - August 7, 2024

Call to Order: Supervisor Wilson called the hybrid Ad-Hoc Rock County Youth in Governance Program Exploratory Committee to order at 4:30 pm.

Roll Call: Committee Members Present: Supervisor Wilson, Supervisor Sutterlin, Supervisor Towns, Mark Dykstra, Max Olson, Mary Gut

Committee Members Absent: Julie Grandeffo

Staff Members Present: Brad Meier

Others Present: Supervisor Sue Ryan

Approval of Agenda: Max Olson moved approval of the agenda as presented, seconded by Mary Gut. ADOPTED

Approval of Minutes of the July 17, 2024 Meeting:

Approval of Minutes of the July 17, 2024 Meeting: Supervisor Towns moved approval of the July 17, 2024 Ad-Hoc Rock County Youth in Governance Program Exploratory Committee minutes, seconded by Supervisor Sutterlin. ADOPTED.

Citizen Participation, Communications and Announcements: None.

Updated Report from Supervisor Wilson on contacts with Standing Committee Chairs regarding interest in participating in a proposed Youth in Governance program: Supervisor Wilson explained that the agenda attachment includes a list of standing committees that meet at times that would likely work well for school students. The list also includes the name of those committees that are willing to consider program participation as well as the name of the chair for each of those committees. Supervisor Wilson stated that within the list of 8 committees, the program should be able to find appropriate home committees and mentors for the program to move forward.

Review, Discussion and Possible Action:

Review of DRAFT Youth in Governance Program Outcomes. Discussion, and Possible Action on components and content needed for completion of this section: Supervisor Wilson introduced the attached list of program talking points and led the committee through each talking point to confirm overall committee approval or agreement on the inclusion or exclusion of the topic and language presented to be used in the development of the program outcomes.

The Ad Hoc Rock County Youth in Governance Program Exploratory Committee (YIG Committee) reached consensus to recommend the following:

WHAT IS YOUTH IN GOVERNANCE (YIG)

An effort to:

- increase civics awareness,
- enhance civics education,
- instill a sense of civic responsibility in youth participants, and,
- encourage youth participation in local government both now and in the future.

The YIG Committee also reached consensus to recommend the following outcomes for the program.

The Youth in Governance Program provides:

- an opportunity for youth to gain hands-on civics education,
- a forum in which youth can share their insights, an opportunity to encourage youth to actively participate in community life, opportunities for leadership development, and,
- opportunities for youth to develop specific skills (e.g., parliamentary procedure, public speaking, etc.).

Review of DRAFT Youth in Governance Program Description. Discussion, and Possible Action on components and content needed for completion of this section: Supervisor Wilson again led the committee through each talking point on the attachment, to confirm overall committee approval or agreement on the inclusion or exclusion of the topic and language to be used in the development of the program description. Topics discussed by the committee included: recruitment efforts for public, private and home school students; future student incentives; program term and duration; communication between student and mentor; and attendance, both in-person and virtual requirements.

The YIG Committee reached consensus to recommend a program calendar for an initial (“pilot”) year that would run from April 2025 through April 2026 to enable youth participants to experience a full budget cycle.

The YIG Committee also reached consensus to recommend that the program should begin with a modest number of participants (4 - 8 youth during the pilot year.)

The YIG Committee reached consensus to recommend that potential participating committees be limited to "standing committees" during the pilot year.

Furthermore, the YIG Committee reached consensus to recommend that two youth participants be placed on each of the standing committees taking part in the pilot. (Two youth participants in each of two participating committees - a total of four youth, OR two youth participants in each of three participating committees - a total of six youth, OR two youth in each of four participating committees - a total of eight youth).

The YIG Committee reached consensus on recommending the following elements of the recruitment process:

Efforts should be made to recruit participants throughout Rock County by:

- creating a promotional piece for wide distribution,
- contacting all public, private, and alternative secondary education providers in the County,
- making an effort to make the home-schooling community aware of the program,
- providing information to a wide-variety of youth-oriented advocacy and service organizations, and,
- assuring potential applicants that appropriate efforts will be made to address ADA and other access concerns that might create barriers to participation.

The YIG Committee reached consensus to recommend an application process for the pilot program that would begin in January 2025 for the April 2025 - April 2026 pilot year. The YIG Committee agreed to recommend that the program be limited to youth who are Rock County residents.

The YIG Committee also agreed to recommend that youth could apply as early as January of their 8th grade year to participate from April of 8th grade through April of 9th grade.

The YIG Committee also came to consensus to recommend that potential participants could apply no later than April of their 11th grade year for participation as a Junior and as a Senior (April of 11th grade through April of 12th grade).

The YIG Committee agreed to recommend that youth participants be required to attend an orientation session at the beginning of their April – April term (April 2025 for the pilot year).

The YIG Committee reached consensus to recommend that youth participants agree to attend 75% of the meetings of the committee to which they are assigned; however, the Committee also agreed to recommend that this 75% could include virtual participation and, at the discretion of the participating committee chairperson, youth representatives could also be allowed to “make-up” for a missed meeting by viewing the recording of the meeting.

The YIG Committee reached consensus to recommend that youth participants be required to communicate regularly with their assigned mentor. Monitoring of what constitutes “regular” would be at the discretion of the individual mentor.

The YIG Committee discussed the idea of providing reimbursement for travel for youth participants. However, the group consensus was to recommend that participants arrange for their own transportation at their own expense, at least for the duration of the pilot year. There was general agreement that reimbursement for travel expenses could be considered in the future if the program was continued.

The YIG Committee reached consensus to recommend that student participants be required to complete an evaluation form provided by the County at the end of their program year. It was felt that a modified version of evaluations used in similar programs in other counties could be presented as part of the YIG Committee’s recommendations to the Rock County Board for consideration.

The YIG Committee reached consensus on recommending that youth participants be required to attend a County Board Meeting at the end of the program year to provide a group report of activities and the youth participant’s perceptions of program results.

The YIG Committee discussed the application process and reached consensus on recommending the following:

- Youth in Governance program candidates would apply in January for consideration for participation in the April to April program year.
- Youth in Governance program candidates can nominate themselves, however, applications must include:
 - o A letter of recommendation from an adult other than their parent or guardian who can attest to behaviors that demonstrate the nominee's level of responsibility.
 - o A sign-off from the applicant's parent or legal guardian authorizing the applicant's participation in the program if selected.
 - o A sign-off from a school official (can be parent or legal guardian if applicant is home schooled) acknowledging that the applicant is applying for the YIG program.
 - o Applicants who are not selected for participation would automatically be rolled over for consideration the following program year (if the program continues beyond the pilot year) unless the candidate is applying in their Junior year (final year of eligibility).

The YIG Committee discussed requiring a sign-off from the applicant's parent or legal guardian authorizing contact with school officials if necessary to ensure applicant is "in good standing"; however, consensus was not reached on whether this could be achieved in some other way.

Further Discussion and Possible Action on Youth in Governance Program Roles & Responsibilities and Possible Action on components and content needed for completion of this section: Supervisor Wilson led the committee through each talking point on the attached list, to confirm overall committee approval or agreement on the inclusion or exclusion of the topic and language presented to be used in the development of the program Roles and Responsibilities. Topics discussed by the committee included: details of the application process; details of the roles and responsibilities between mentors and students; nomination/application form content, nomination criteria and evaluation process; student good standing; and a recommendation for an Ad Hoc committee to be created for at least the first program year management.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Extension – Rock County

The YIG Committee discussed asking the Extension-Rock County office to consider:

- Handling primary distribution of applications
- Conducting the initial screening of applications for completeness
- Forwarding eligible applications to the County Committee charged with overseeing the YIG pilot program.

Ad-Hoc Youth in Governance Pilot Committee

The YIG Committee reached consensus to recommend establishing an Ad-Hoc Youth in Governance Pilot Program Committee for the 2025 – April 2026 period. The YIG Committee discussed the following roles and responsibilities for the recommended Ad-Hoc Youth in Governance Committee; however, specific details are still a work in progress.

- Working with potential host standing committees to establish procedures and protocols
- Coordinating the identification of mentors
- Evaluating applications that were screened for completeness by the Extension-Rock County Office

- Identifying participants to recommend to the full County Board
- Monitoring the pilot program and refining procedures and protocols into a complete program guidelines document
- Evaluating the benefits and liabilities of continuing the Youth in Governance program on an ongoing basis
- Recommending either the continuation or discontinuation of the Youth in Governance program based on an objective evaluation of the pilot program's results

Mentor Supervisors

The YIG Committee reached consensus to recommend that Supervisors serving as mentors for youth representatives be charged with the following responsibilities:

- Provide mentorship for two youth representatives assigned to a standing committee on which they are a member.
- Serve as a monitor of student attendance and level of participation.
- Meet on a regular basis with mentees to answer questions and discuss committee activity.
- Answer or serve as a conduit to find answers to student representative questions about committee activity and/or Rock County government.
- Complete and evaluation form at the end of the pilot program offering their assessment of the benefits and/or liabilities associated with continuing the program.

Youth Representatives

The YIG Committee reached consensus to recommend that youth representatives would have the following responsibilities: (NOTE THAT SEVERAL OF THE CORE RESPONSIBILITIES WERE ALREADY DESCRIBED EARLIER.)

Youth Representatives will:

- Attend a Youth in Governance Orientation session at the beginning of their April 2025 – April 2026 program year.
- Attend 75% of the meetings of the committee to which they are assigned (can include virtual participation).
- Communicate regularly with their assigned mentor.
- Participate in discussions in the standing committee to which they are assigned.

The YIG Committee discussed whether or not to recommend that youth representatives be allowed to cast advisory votes in their assigned committees. The YIG Committee reached consensus to NOT recommend advisory voting during the pilot project; however, the Committee also felt that this was an issue that could be considered by the Ad-Hoc Youth in Governance Pilot Program Committee for possible incorporation if the program is continued beyond the pilot year.

Discussion and Possible Action on Schedule for Completion of Committee Recommendations to County Board: Supervisor Wilson asked the committee to come back to the September meeting with drafts of an outline and a written draft with suggestions about what ought to be included in the presentation to the County Board.

Discussion and Possible Action on Requests for Additional Resources Needed and Next Steps:

Supervisor Wilson acknowledged that Mary Gut would come to the next meeting with more information about reaching homeschooled children, and he'd look further into the "good standing" question.

Determination of Next Meeting Date and Time - Tentatively Wednesday, September 4, 2024 - 4:30p: The committee discussed and agreed to meet next, on Wednesday, September 4, 2024 at 4:30pm, and also plan to meet again on Wednesday, September 18, 2024 at 4:30pm if necessary.

Adjournment: Mary Gut moved to adjourn at 5:45 pm, seconded by Max Olson. ADOPTED by acclamation.

Name of person who took the Minutes: Brad Meier

NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVED BY COMMITTEE.