WCCY MINUTES

Wakulla County Coalition for Youth

Date | time 10/07/26 12:30 pm-1:30 p.m. | *Meeting called to order by* James Lewis

In Attendance

James Lewis, Karen Zak, Lottie Roy, Bonnie Wertenberger, Caden Gruebel, Amanda Gruebel, Stacey Bian, Lisa Sherry, Carl Roach, Chandra Godwin, Ta'leea Hicks, Sameenah Aqeel, Brett Surace, Chase Savary, Nancy O'Farrell, Stephanie Cash, Tamika Rich, Casey Kimbrell, Byron Wade, Amanda Madden, Felicia Fowler

The meeting was held at the UF/IFAS Extension Office. James Lewis thanked 4-H and the Extension Office for hosting, as the coalition opted to meet there in case the new library building was not yet ready. The library held its open house the previous day, and WCCY plans to meet in the community meeting room at the library's new location beginning in November.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes from September 2026 Meeting – A motion was made by Stacey Bian and seconded by Lottie Roy to approve. The motion carried by acclamation.

Agenda Items/Presentation

1. **James Lewis on Officer Elections:**
   - Nominations for all officer positions were opened at prior meetings, with the Vice President seat (recently vacated by Kimberly Mattox) open for nominations over the last several meetings.
   - James Lewis self-nominated to serve another year as President.
   - Amanda Gruebel nominated Caden Gruebel for Secretary; seconded by Lottie Roy.
   - Bonnie Wertenberger nominated Karen Zak for Vice President; the nomination was seconded and further supported by Lisa Sherry.
   - Lottie Roy self-nominated for Treasurer; the nomination was seconded.
   - With no further nominations, Lottie Roy moved to elect the full slate of officers by acclamation; seconded by Carl Roach. The motion carried.
   - Officers for the coming year: James Lewis, President; Karen Zak, Vice President; Caden Gruebel, Secretary; Lottie Roy, Treasurer.
2. **Karen Zak on Drug-Free Communities (DFC) Grant Update:**
   - WCCY requested $25,000 from the county's opioid settlement funds and was awarded approximately $43,286.75.
   - WCCY is working with NWF Health Network to complete the paperwork needed to begin drawing down funds.
   - Once funds are available, a committee will be called as soon as possible to decide how to use the amount awarded beyond the original proposal.
   - This year's posters continue the Truman the Turtle campaign, now as a superhero. Based on input from community youth and the Social Norms Marketing Committee, the campaign uses a superhero/cartoon theme and adds QR codes linking to helpful resources.
   - Posters and printed resource guides are available; Karen will deliver copies to partners on request (including DISC Village). The resource guide is intended to be a single, central guide to community resources and is also available on the WCCY website.

- Karen attended the resource fair at the community center the previous weekend, which was well attended, and distributed resource guides to participating agencies.
- WCCY is exploring additional grant opportunities; more information to come.

3. **Bonnie Wertenberger on OJJDP Grant Opportunity:**
   - Bonnie and Karen are reviewing a $250,000 grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). The applicant must be a 501(c)(3) and cannot be a university, so WCCY would need to apply as the prime, with FSU as a partner.
   - The application would require a memorandum of understanding (MOU) from the Wakulla County School District to provide services.
   - Deadlines: budget due October 29; application due November 5. Bonnie has prepared a rough draft of the question-based application for review.
   - James Lewis noted that no school district representative was present; he will convene a discussion with the officers and partners and get briefed on what the MOU must cover.
4. **FLOW (Future Leaders of Wakulla) Update:**
   - No video update this month due to technical difficulties; a recorded update from the FLOW president is planned once meetings return to the library.
   - FLOW held its October meeting the previous evening with 26 youth in attendance, using a "Shark Tank" theme in which groups developed and pitched a product while practicing presentation skills.
   - Engagement is strong this year, with a larger roster than the meeting attendance reflects.

County Report

No report given at this meeting.

Sheriff Report

Brett Surace – Wakulla County Sheriff's Office: Christmas in the Park is scheduled for December 11, 6–9 p.m. (setup begins at 5:30 p.m.). Gift distribution grew from about 200 to about 500 children last year, and the event is expected to grow again. The Sheriff's Office met with Deputy County Administrator Summer Pell about adding vendors on the south side of the park. Shop with a Cop is planned for December, with approximately $7,000 to be spent at Walmart. Tom has returned to road patrol, and Jeff Yarbrough will return to the community engagement role.

School District Report

No report given at this meeting.

Treasurer Report

Lottie Roy presented the WCCY Treasurer's Report, noting a correction: the balance-forwarded date should read 8/29/26 rather than May. The balance forwarded was $4,386.61. There were no receipts during the period. Disbursements totaled $146.97 for online fundraising/payment processing (Elavon), including a $105 charge listed as a fee that does not match the regular $35/month service charge. Lottie has emailed the vendor representative (copying Karen Zak and James Lewis) for an explanation and will evaluate whether the contract remains cost-effective, as costs currently exceed income through the platform. She suggested revisiting a small membership fee and reminded members that the online donation link remains active. As of October 2, 2026, the coalition's account balance was $4,239.64.

Partner Reports

Chandra Godwin (Florida Department of Health – Wakulla, SWAT): Isabelle Scott of Riversprings Middle School was elected by peers from across the state to the SWAT Youth Advocacy Board; she was elected as a seventh grader, making her the youngest member. Introduced new Department of

Health staff Ta'leea Hicks (Tobacco Prevention Specialist) and Sameenah Aqeel (Community Health Education). The Department of Health will host its annual Movie Night on November 6 at Hudson Park, featuring Moana 2 with a Hawaiian theme; gates open at 6 p.m. Food trucks have committed, and middle and high school clubs are invited to sell non-food items such as candy or cotton candy as fundraisers.

Caden Gruebel (Keep Wakulla County Beautiful): Youth Board meetings are moving to Wednesdays, 5:30–6:30 p.m.

Carl Roach (CareerSource Capital Region): "Find a Job Friday" will be held Friday, October 9, 9–11 a.m., at the Leon office, 2601 Blairstone Road, with direct access to employers. The Wakulla Hiring Fair, a larger-scale event with more employers than usual, will be held Tuesday, October 13, 9 a.m.–12 p.m., at the Tallahassee State College Wakulla Center, 2932 Crawfordville Highway.

Lottie Roy (LWREA): Reported via chat that the Leon-Wakulla Retired Educators Association has nothing new to report, except that its fifth-grade essay contest will be presented to the Wakulla County School Board for approval to enter schools and seek participation within the next month.

Bonnie Wertenberger (FSU FCPR): No further update beyond the grant discussion above.

Nancy O'Farrell (NAMI Tallahassee): With NAMI Tallahassee since 2011, Nancy is leading a legislative grant received through NAMI Florida to expand capacity into surrounding counties. NAMI offers free programs for students in grades K–12 as well as adult programs, and hopes to revive NAMI Wakulla. She would like to become a member of WCCY and attend next month's meeting in person, and shared her contact information in the chat. As a 501(c)(3), NAMI Tallahassee is available to provide letters of support or partner on grant applications. James Lewis invited her to send materials to hello@wccy.org for inclusion in the follow-up newsletter.

Stacey Bian (DISC Village): Introduced herself as a Certified Recovery Peer Specialist at DISC Village in Wakulla, 85 High Drive, near the courthouse, and deferred to Lisa Sherry for the upcoming resource fair.

Lisa Sherry (DISC Village): The Second Harvest Neighborhood Empowerment Resource Fair will be held Wednesday, October 14, 2–4 p.m., at the Tallahassee State College Wakulla Center in Crawfordville. Second Harvest of the Big Bend will provide food and cooking demonstrations, and close to 20 nonprofit vendors will offer information, referrals, and giveaways. Lisa also expressed support for bringing NAMI back to Wakulla.

Stephanie Cash (Healthy Families Franklin/Wakulla/Gulf): The program is interviewing to fill a home visitor vacancy in Wakulla County. October is National Safe Sleep Awareness Month; suffocation and strangulation in an adult bed is the leading cause of injury-related death for Florida infants under age one. A link to Prevent Child Abuse Florida's safe sleep information was shared in the chat.

Tamika Rich (Wakulla County Christian Coalition / FRESH): The MLK Day celebration will be held Monday, January 18, with speaker Greg James; flyers will be sent for the newsletter. February save-the-dates will follow. On behalf of FRESH, Tamika noted that shoes, clothing, backpacks, and school supplies are available year-round, not only at the annual event; families in need should reach out.

Casey Kimbrell (Wakulla Giving Hands): A baby pop-up will be held November 14; resource providers are welcome to set up a table. The Christmas event is December 12, and resource vendors are welcome; everything in the building is free to the community. Wakulla Giving Hands is seeking businesses or organizations to donate stockings for Santa to give each child, and to adopt one of 70 seniors through Adopt-a-Senior by fulfilling their wish lists; gifts will be delivered before Christmas. The organization will be closed this Sunday due to weather, with a replacement day to be determined.

Byron Wade: No update; attending to learn about activities in Wakulla County and opportunities for collaboration.

Amanda Madden (Capital Area Healthy Start Coalition): October is SIDS, Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month, and the Wakulla County Board of County Commissioners issued a proclamation in recognition. In 2025, 51 families in Leon and Wakulla counties experienced a fetal loss, infant loss, or miscarriage. The 24th annual Walk to Remember, open to the Big Bend region, will be held Thursday, October 8, in Leon County, with fellowship, memorial quilt squares, an angel blanket, a non-denominational memorial service, and a candlelit walk around Lake Ella. The Par for Parenthood golf fundraiser will be held November 6 at Hilaman Golf Course.

Felicia Fowler (Department of Juvenile Justice): Introduced herself as the new Chief Probation Officer for Circuit 2, invited by Chief Ash. No updates at this time; interested in attending Wakulla events.

Next Meeting

November 4, 2026 at 12:30 pm at Wakulla County Public Library (new location, Community Meeting Room) & Virtually

Adjournment

James Lewis reminded members to monitor the approaching storm and be prepared for possible power outages and downed trees. A motion to adjourn was made by Caden Gruebel; seconded by Carl Roach. The meeting was adjourned at 1:10 PM.