

Minutes of the Human Services Board of Director's meeting of February 15, 2022.

Meeting held via Audio/Tele Conferencing.

Donna Nunno called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Present: Donna Nunno, Rev. Karl Duetzmann, Joy Duva, Melissa Tranquilli,
Barbara Genovese, Brendan Casey and Aldermen Matt Arciuolo

Absent: Joan Campbell and Aldermen Dan German

Also Present: Deepa Joseph and Beth Simpson

2. Public Comments

None

3. Minutes

A motion was made by Rev. Duetzmann, seconded by J. Duva, that the minutes of November 16, 2021 be approved as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Director's Report

D. Joseph stated that when the Board last met the Department of Human Services (DHS) had just begun the holiday season programs. These programs were very successful. Within Adopt-A-Family (AAF), 69 families received assistance for the holidays, through the generosity of 62 donors. Last year, due to COVID-19, AAF was primarily a gift card program. This season, we pivoted back to coordinating gifts, as well as gift cards, for these families in need.

The DHS Community Outreach Workers continue to provide services in the areas of emergency rent/mortgage, utility and food assistance. The majority of this assistance is funded through the Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). We also receive a small portion of the EFSP grant to assist with emergency hotel/motel lodging.

The DHS is currently in the process of applying for EFSP Phase 39 and EFSP ARPA-R funding. Within both EFSP and CDBG, there is separate grant funding for COVID-19 relief. DHS applies for these additional funds to provide another avenue of assistance for those impacted by COVID-19.

This is the time period when the department reviews statistics. Regarding the Renters' Rebate program, 12 additional applications were processed as extensions, before the program officially closed on December 31st. Within the Dollar Energy Program, during the months of December

and January, 11 applications were processed, with benefits totaling \$1,925.00 in water assistance.

Regarding Energy Assistance, the program for Milford residents is administered through TEAM, Inc. in Derby. Milford DHS continues to be an intake site for TEAM, Inc. The application process has been streamlined to include telephone and email applications. This change, from in-person to remote, which began as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, has proven to be convenient to residents and effective in completing applications.

The DHS agency continues to see the impact of COVID-19. New clients have reached out to the agency for help because of COVID-19, whether it's due to the resident or family member contracting the illness, job loss, reduced hours or having to quarantine. EFSP and CDBG COVID-19 funding is utilized for this assistance.

J. Duva asked if there are pamphlets or cards that can be distributed to someone who is in need. She mentioned that she saw someone outside, who was cold and looked like they needed help. D. Joseph responded that Milford has a Have a Heart, Give Smart campaign, which began relative to panhandling. Palm cards were created as part of this program. DHS also has a brochure. These cards and brochures will be made available to the Board.

The Youth and Family Services (YFS) Program Coordinator partners with many agencies throughout the community, such as the Salvation Army and the Milford Food Insecurity & Healthy Lifestyles Workgroup. The focus of these partnerships is to coordinate services, not duplicate services.

The Homeless & Unsheltered Multi-Agency Network (H.U.M.A.N.) was started by the Mayor's Office and the Health Department, but is now run through Beth-El. The Program Coordinator is part of this group, as well.

The YFS department is gearing up for the Mayor's Youth Award. This event is one of the larger programs organized by the Program Coordinator.

Regarding DHS administration, the department's budget was submitted to the Mayor and approved for flat funding, with no cuts. The budget will go to the Board of Finance on February 28th and the Board of Aldermen a few months after that.

J. Duva asked if the department is involved with refugee settlement. She also heard that there was a taskforce.

D. Joseph responded that if refugees have students, the YFS Program Coordinator is available for assistance. The Clergy Association is also involved with some refugee work.

Rev. Duetzmann confirmed that there is a sub-group within the Clergy working with IRIS. They are actively bringing 1-2 families into the City.

Rev. Duetzmann shared that at a recent Clergy meeting, information pertaining to Fentanyl was presented by Kara Sepulveda. Rev. Duetzmann commented that this presentation is eye-opening and would like to open it up to a larger audience.

Rev. Duetzmann thanked D. Joseph and the Health Department for putting the N-95 mask and COVID-19 at-home test kit distribution together for local faith-based organizations. D. Joseph responded that the Emergency Management Director and Health Department partnered with the Clergy and several agencies to ensure that vulnerable populations in Milford have access to at-home test kits.

5. Old Business

None

6. New Business

None

7. Adjournment

B. Genovese made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Rev. Duetzmann seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

D. Nunno adjourned the meeting at 5:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Beth Simpson".

Beth Simpson
Recorder