

Minutes of the Human Services Board of Director's meeting of February 20, 2024.

Meeting held via Audio/Teleconferencing.

Brendan Casey called the meeting to order at 5:38 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Present: Brendan Casey, Donna Nunno, Joy Duva, Barbara Genovese, Rev. Ashley Grant, Mallory Nugent, Melissa Tranquilli and Alderman Jason Jenkins.

Absent: Joan Campbell and Alderman Matt Arciuolo.

Also Present: Deepa Joseph and Beth Simpson

2. Public Comments

None

3. Minutes

A motion was made by M. Tranquilli, seconded by B. Genovese, that the minutes of September 19, 2023 be approved as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Director's Report

D. Joseph greeted and welcomed new Board members. The Board members introduced themselves to the group. Deepa explained that the department is split up into two major divisions: Outreach Services and Youth & Family Services. Staffing consists of two Community Outreach Workers, a Youth & Family Services Program Coordinator and the department Secretary/Bookkeeper. There is a Human Services Manager position that is open and has not been posted yet. There also is a Part-Time Community Outreach Associate position that helps both Outreach and the Program Coordinator. We are currently looking to fill this position.

On the Department of Human Services (DHS) side, the Community Outreach Workers completed 56 outreach cases from November 2023 through January 2024. These cases covered the traditional services of emergency rent/mortgage, utility and food assistance. The outreach staff provides case management services in additional ways including helping residents complete state assistance applications for a variety of programs. The department also partners with the CT diaper bank for residents in need to access diapers locally. The City of Milford budget funding is primarily utilized for department staffing. DHS uses grant funding and donations to provide financial assistance to residents. The Emergency, Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) and the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) are the main sources of grant funding for DHS assistance. The agency also receives a variety of donations from community events and faith-based organizations.

DHS is in the middle of the Energy Assistance (EA) Program. TEAM, Inc. in Derby is the Community Action Agency that administers this program for the City of Milford, with DHS serving as an intake site for Milford residents. Applications taken through the Milford office are sent to TEAM, Inc. for processing. DHS is also an intake site for the Dollar Energy Fund through the Regional Water Authority. This program provides a one-time assistance, annually, for eligible residents' water bills.

During the months of November and December, the staff was busy with holiday programs. Throughout the Thanksgiving season, DHS partnered with the Boy Scouts, W.O.M.E.N., Inc., Knight of Columbus, Napoli Motors and Precious Blood Parish. A variety of thanksgiving meals were provided including: 240 baskets, 30 individual hot meals, food gift cards and boxes of pre-cooked meals from Shoprite.

The Adopt-A-Family Program was a huge success in celebration of the winter holiday season. Deepa thanked the Board members who participated in the program. 68 Milford families were adopted totaling 257 individuals. 37 donors, individuals and groups, supported this program.

A smaller holiday food basket and gift card program was coordinated, sponsored by the Milford Elks.

The spring holiday food basket program has begun for the Easter season.

Throughout the year, DHS staff provides food vouchers and food resource information to residents in need. The Community Outreach Workers are part of the Food Insecurity Workshop facilitated by the Health Department. This group is currently conducting a Food Provider survey to determine current services and any potential gaps/needs identified. A survey of consumers will follow.

On the Youth & Family Services (YFS) side, the YFS Program Coordinator has ramped up this partnership within the Milford Public Schools (MPS) and is conducting therapy groups at two elementary schools. The groups meet once a week at each school. Through this partnership with the MPS Social Workers, the groups were initially geared to 4th and 5th grades but have recently started to include Kindergarten at one of the schools.

In addition, YFS has a partnership with Bridges, Inc. whereby a Bridges Clinician sees students from the Milford Academy at the YFS office location. Bridges bills the family's private insurance for these services. If the youth/family is uninsured or underinsured, YFS subsidizes the remaining costs using grant funding received through the Department of Children and Families (DCF).

The YFS Program Coordinator recently presented a parent/child talk called "What Every Boy Needs to Know" facilitated by Jeff Baer, LCSW. This program was similar to the mother/daughter talk that YFS coordinated in November called "What Every Girl Needs To Know" facilitated by Diane Frankel-Gramelis. Both programs were very well received by the participants.

Tomorrow night, YFS will be hosting a program in partnership with the Milford Police Department pertaining to online safety. "Keeping Children Safe Online" will be held at the Milford Public Library.

J. Duva asked what schools the therapy groups were being held at. D. Joseph responded that the groups were conducted at Pumpkin Delight and JFK. Kids that need individual help work with the school Social Worker.

5. Old Business

None

6. New Business

- **Set Meeting Dates for 2024**

The following 2024 meeting schedule was presented for vote:

- February 20, 2024
- May 21, 2024
- September 17, 2024
- November 19, 2024

A motion to approve these dates was made by D. Nunno. Seconded by B. Genovese. The motion carried unanimously.

- **Memorial Donation in Honor of Kathleen Hurley**

D. Nunno was asked to speak about Kathleen (Kitty) Hurley. Donna shared that Kitty was on the Human Services Board for a long time and chairperson for many years. Kitty was a lovely woman who served on the Board and was very dedicated to the work done by this agency. The Board has an account with money set aside for certain things. In the past, these funds were used for memorial contributions.

D. Joseph stated that there is currently a balance of \$3,919.11 in the account. Kathleen Hurley's obituary indicated that: memorial donations may be made to the St. Mary's Church Ladies Guild (now called the Precious Blood Ladies Guild).

The Board discussed typical amounts of memorial donations granted by other Boards.

B. Casey made a motion to donate \$300.00 from the Board account to the memorial choice of Precious Blood Ladies Guild in Kathleen Hurley's honor. M. Tranquilli seconded this motion. The motion carried unanimously.

7. Adjournment

M. Nugent made a motion to adjourn the meeting. M. Tranquilli seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

B. Casey adjourned the meeting at 6:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Beth Simpson
Recorder