

Minutes of the Human Services Board of Director's meeting of May 16, 2023.

Meeting held via Audio/Tele Conferencing.

Donna Nunno called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Present: Donna Nunno, Brendan Casey, Joan Campbell, Barbara Genovese and Melissa Tranquilli.

Absent: Rev. Karl Duetzmann, Joy Duva, Mallory Nugent, Alderman Matt Arciuolo and Alderman Dan German

Also Present: Deepa Joseph and Beth Simpson

2. Public Comments

None

3. Minutes

A motion was made by B. Casey, seconded by J. Campbell, that the minutes of February 21, 2023 be approved as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Director's Report

D. Joseph informed everyone that there is a new board member, Mallory Nugent. Mallory couldn't make the meeting tonight. There is still one more board vacancy to fill.

Youth & Family Services (YFS) Program Coordinator, Douglas Mills, started employment and immediately began working on the 2023 Mayor's Youth Award (MYA). The ceremony was held last Tuesday, May 9th, with newly appointed Mayor Richard Smith. A total of 243 youth were nominated, encompassing students from Elementary, Middle and High Schools. There were 34 individuals nominations, with the remaining nominees being part of a group. The Foran High School Wrestling Team won the group award for their community service. Mayor Smith and Dr. Anna Cutaia did a great job of honoring all students who received an award.

In addition to this event, Doug is working on getting to know the Social Workers throughout Milford Public Schools. The Social Workers have expressed interest in having therapy groups formed to address depression, anxiety and stress.

The YFS Program Coordinator is also working on educational opportunities and partnering with other departments and agencies, including partnership with the Milford Health Department on the Spring 2023 Walk and Talk Series. The Spring Walk and Talk series covers topics inclusive of sexual assault, mental health and youth, mindfulness & wellness.

The YFS Program Coordinator has also hosted tables at school events, communicating with parents and students about programs available to Milford residents through the Department of Human Services (DHS).

On the Outreach side of the department, Outreach Staff conducted 65 case management evaluations assisting residents with the emergency services including rent/mortgage, utility, and food assistance.

DHS staff kicked off the Renters' Rebate program. This program runs from April 1st through October 1, 2023.

The Outreach Workers continue to take applications for the Dollar Energy Fund, a program where Milford residents can receive \$175 credit on their water bill. This filing period will run through September 30, 2023.

The Energy Assistance (EA) program, for this heating season, is ongoing until May 31, 2023. EA applications are taken over the telephone, electronically and through paperwork drop off. DHS staff took 30 applications during the months of February, March and April. Residents can apply by working with DHS staff or with TEAM, Inc., directly.

DHS is preparing for the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP). The State of Connecticut has made some adjustments to the program. In past years, paper vouchers (Farmers' Market Vouchers) were distributed as funds for vegetable purchases. This year, an electronic card system has been set up for distributing Farmers' Market benefits. DHS staff will be distributing coded cards and giving pin numbers to eligible participants. Right now, the staff is compiling a list of residents that meet the criteria for this program.

The Salvation Army (SA) Milford Service Unit was run by a board of volunteers. Individuals on this board have essentially stepped down from their positions. In past years, Milford SA worked closely with DHS staff to provide assistance to Milford residents. A former SA board member is working with the Hartford office of the Salvation Army to determine how DHS can access Milford Salvation Army funds for Milford residents in need. This impacts Farmers' Market funding as well. In previous summers, Milford SA had created vouchers that were available to those residents that did not meet the State of CT criteria but were in need of fresh produce. DHS staff is working with SA to create a system for this year. If DHS and SA are not able to come up with a system, Bridgeport Hospital Milford Campus has expressed that they are willing to expand their Farmers' Market Program in order to try to fill the gap.

Regarding department administration, the Board of Aldermen passed the budget as we submitted. The Human Services/Youth & Family Services budget stayed flat, with no cuts. There is still a spending freeze through the end of this fiscal year. Purchases are being reviewed and approved accordingly.

5. Old Business

None

6. New Business

None

7. Adjournment

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

D. Nunno adjourned the meeting at 5:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Beth Simpson
Recorder