

Minutes of the Human Services Board of Director's meeting of May 18, 2021.

Meeting held via Audio/Tele Conferencing.

Sue Stango called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Present: Donna Nunno, Brendan Casey, Rev. Karl Duetzmann, Joy Duva, Sue Stango, Joan Campbell, and Barbara Genovese.

Absent: Jessica DeYoung, Aldermen Ellen Beatty, and Aldermen James Tranquilli.

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 February 16, 2021 be approved as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Director's Report

The Department of Human Services (DHS) Community Outreach Workers continue to respond to and work with clients in need of assistance. In terms of outreach and case management, the DHS staff follows COVID-19 protocol by servicing clients remotely, utilizing telephone appointments, email and drop box for documents. From February through April, there have been 50 outreach meetings conducted via telephone, covering the typical areas of need: food, utilities and rent and mortgage assistance. New clients have reached out for assistance due to situations that resulted from the pandemic.

The department works with the Storehouse Project, Cornerstone Christian Center and Kingdom Life Christian Church to promote the Farmers to Families Food Box Distribution program.

Outreach Staff is wrapping up the Energy Assistance program and required paperwork. For this heating season, there was an extension to the application deadline. Residents who heat with gas or electric have until June 15th to apply.

The Renters' Rebate program runs from April 1 – October 1, 2021. The Outreach Workers began taking applications for this program on April 19th. They have processed 39 applications. The process is the same as last summer.

The department has received additional COVID-19 related grant funding. DHS also received regular grant funding. Therefore, the staff has 2 separate funding avenues available to help residents. The COVID-19 funding is being utilized for those clients who can demonstrate their need resulted from a COVID-19 impact, whether health or economically related.

The department is still an intake site for Dollar Energy Fund applications where Milford Residents can receive up to \$175.00 credit, annually, on their water bill. The staff has been working with TEAM and making calls to pro-actively reach out to residents that may qualify.

Specific to rent and mortgage assistance, Unite CT is a program administered by the State. The Outreach Staff has helped in coordinating the applications between our clients and the State. The process is complex. For tenants to apply, landlords also have to agree to participate in this program.

J. Duva asked if the traditional grants, along with the additional COVID-19 related funding, has been enough funding for the department to meet the additional needs due to COVID.

D. Joseph responded that the funding is sufficient for the requests received at this time. However, the actual need will only be truly evident when the current moratorium on rent/mortgage and utilities is lifted. The staff has been encouraging clients to work with providers (i.e. landlords, utility companies) before the moratorium is lifted to get on payment plans if needed.

Rev. Duetzmann inquired about staffing within the department.

D. Joseph explained that the Outreach Worker positions are fully staffed, with Sandra Carmichael and Sandra Morales. On the Youth and Family Services side, Lesley Darling is the Program Coordinator. The Human Service Manager (formerly Clinical Coordinator) position is vacant. Lisa Streit, Director of Employment and Training, has been assisting on the Outreach side.

Youth and Family Services (YFS) is very busy, particularly relative to activities under the Youth Services Bureau funding. Lesley has coordinated a number of programs pertaining to youth related concerns. It is clear that this pandemic has impacted mental health. Lesley partnered with the Health Department and created the webinar series: "Strong Families Create Strong Minds." The program consists of 3 online workshops designed to help families navigate the challenges of transiting through the "COVID Home Stretch." Presenters include Alicia Farrell, Ph.D., Lisa Damour, Ph.D., and Jennifer Ju, M.D. They will provide practical tips and strategies to support parents and kids. The next webinar is scheduled for June 3rd. YFS also coordinated a program with the Boys and Girls Club called "Hello, Best Self!" which will be facilitated by Dr. Jennifer Ju.

This year, as well as last year, YFS has partnered with the Recreation Department by assisting with additional supplies needed due to COVID-19 protocol.

Tomorrow is the 33rd Annual Mayor's Youth Award. In prior years, the ceremony could have potentially included over 600 participants. Last year, the ceremony was a virtual event because of the pandemic. This year's event will be held in person but it had to be re-worked to meet COVID health & safety protocols. There are 151 nominees. The event will be held outside at

the Milford Academy Upper Field. In an effort to keep the numbers small, individual nominees are limited to 2 quests. Group nominees will be represented by the Group Advisors, a few selected group members and limited guests.

The next Human Services Board of Director's meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 21, 2021.

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.

S. Stango adjourned the meeting at 5:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Beth Simpson
Recorder