

Minutes of the Human Services Board of Director's meeting of May 17, 2022.

Meeting held via Audio/Tele Conferencing.

Brendan Casey called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Present: Brendan Casey, Joan Campbell, Joy Duva, Melissa Tranquilli and Barbara Genovese

Absent: Donna Nunno, Rev. Karl Duetzmann, Aldermen Matt Arciuolo and Aldermen Dan German

Also Present: Deepa Joseph and Beth Simpson

2. Public Comments

None

3. Minutes

A motion was made by M. Tranquilli, seconded by J. Duva, that the minutes of February 15, 2022 be approved as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Director's Report

The Department of Human Services (DHS) is winding down the Energy Assistance season. The Outreach Workers have been following up on applications and submitting the final paperwork to TEAM, Inc. The Outreach staff has also kicked off the Renters' Rebate program. As in the past two years, this program will be run via mail, over the telephone and electronically. They have sent information to the Senior Housing Sites in Milford.

The staff continues to provide outreach through the client intake process. This includes an evaluation as to whether or not requests are due to impact of COVID-19. If the need is related, COVID-19 funding, through either the Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) grant or the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), can be utilized.

Outreach staff continue to process applications through the Dollar Energy Program. From February through April 2022, thirty (30) applications have been processed. Through this program, eligible clients can receive up to \$175 credit towards their water bill.

Deepa shared her screen and presented 2 brochures in follow up to the prior Board meeting:

- The *Community Services Outreach* brochure summarizes the variety of services and resources DHS provides to Milford residents. This brochure is available at the DHS office and by download through DHS website.

- The brochure titled, “*Panhandling: A Guide to Giving Smart*,” was designed in conjunction with the “Have a Heart, Give Smart” campaign. Information in this brochure pertains to the agencies and resources available to help panhandlers and unsheltered individuals in need of assistance. The brochure also specifies ways individuals can donate to local social services agencies to help combat this issue. Palm cards had also been created at that time, but the Health Department is currently out of them. The panhandling task force has now combined with the Homeless and Unsheltered Multi-Agency Network (H.U.M.A.N.). This group is looking to update these documents.

Deepa stated that if any Board members would like these brochures to let us know and we’ll mail them out or they can pick them up at the office.

J. Duva mentioned that she saw an article in the Milford Mirror that noted the tremendous increase in the cost of rent in Milford and how 30% of renters in Milford are now struggling. She questioned how people who are struggling would know to reach out to the DHS for help.

D. Joseph replied that DHS has seen an increase in new clients to the agency. The DHS brochure is distributed throughout in the community in locations that are frequented by individuals who may be in need. New individuals also learn about DHS services through our partner agencies and by other clients.

J. Duva asked if DHS does anything through grocery stores. D. Joseph responded that the agency has posted information in grocery stores and it is a great idea to revisit that strategy.

The Youth and Family Services (YFS) Program Coordinator partners with the staff at Bridges, and Milford Public Schools, to connect Milford families with outreach services. The Program Coordinator also works with various agencies throughout the community.

In April, Milford Youth & Family Services hosted a very successful in-person workshop called “What Every Girl Needs To Know.” Mothers and daughters participated in this program, designed for 4th and 5th graders to begin conversations on physical and emotional changes during puberty. Thirty-four (34) woman and thirty-nine (39) children attended. Each family received the book titled “The Girl’s Body Book.” Grant funds from the Department of Children and Families (DCF) were utilized. This presentation supports and aligns with the grant objective of “Positive Youth Development.”

This past Thursday, May 12th the HS/YFS held the 34th Annual Mayor’s Youth Award (MYA). A total of two-hundred thirty-three (233) students, grades K-12, were nominated and received certificates signed by Mayor Blake and Deepa. The certificates were presented to both individual nominees and group nominees and representatives. Plaques were award to the winners in each category. This was the third MYA held during the Global Pandemic. In 2020, the ceremony was held virtually. Last year (2021) it was outdoors. This past year, we were able to meet in-person, at Parsons auditorium, where masks and COVID test kits were available to attendees.

The Program Coordinator also works with the Recreation Department and other youth agencies to provide scholarships towards summer camps and seasonal sports. Through the James Mattioli Scholarship, funding is available for youth that participate in baseball, basketball and soccer. Other funding is available for summer programs, such as Camp Happiness.

On the Administrative side, the Board of Aldermen meeting was held in April. The Human Services/Youth & Family Services Department was approved with a flat budget.

5. Old Business

None

6. New Business

None

7. Adjournment

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

B. Casey adjourned the meeting at 5:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Beth Simpson
Recorder