

Minutes of the Human Services Board of Director's meeting of June 13, 2012.

1. Roll Call

Present: Diane Candido, Alan Chapin, Paul Geer, Gary Johnson, MaryLou Kecko, Donna Nunno and Sue Stango.

Also Present: Lisa Diamond-Graham, Melissa Dubiel, Hillary Burr and Erica Bento.

Johnson called the meeting to order at 5:10 p.m.

2. Minutes

A motion was made by Chapin, seconded by Geer to accept the minutes of the April meeting as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Staff Report

Introductions were made; **Hillary Burr and Erica Bento Community Outreach Workers**. Brochures were distributed.

Hillary reviewed that the Energy Program runs from September – May and the Rent Rebate Program runs from May – September. There are 6-9 appointments per day for intake/eligibility. Each family receives between \$100 - \$395 per winter to assist in paying for their main heating source. Lisa stated that 878 applications were processed this year as of 5/15/12. Hillary stated that they work with TEAM, Community Action Agencies and Utility Companies in order to maximize resources. They assist with mortgage/rent struggles and refer for resources. Lisa stated that it is difficult to separate services per person for the purposes of statistics, because each client receives multiple services.

Erica reviewed a case scenario where they negotiate with utilities and refer for energy, food bank referral/voucher, review of budgets, assist to apply for Food Stamps and mortgage modifications. They seek out resources and now have diapers for those in need. They refer and assist with applying for free lunch with the schools for kids.

Lisa reviewed eligibility and paperwork required and scheduling appointments.

Hillary stated that in summer months they go out to all of the Senior and Disabled housing sites for the Rent Rebate Program with lap tops. Most seniors/disabled do not drive and applications are processed on site.

Erica reviewed food referrals; they are prescreened over the phone, referrals are made within 24 hours either for vouchers or the Food Bank. Nunno asked about the amount of rent rebate that is received. Hillary stated that it is bracketed in levels and the percentage of income to rent ratio. Services are applied for annually.

Lisa stated that Hillary and Erica are very creative with accessing resources and they have built relationships with these resources and utility companies. Lisa reviewed Relocation Services; to find a solution; a lien is put on property when needed. There is always an emergency on a Friday at 4:15 p.m.

Hillary reviewed the Farmers Market Program. \$15 booklets are distributed. This is coordinated with the Rent Rebate Program on site. Barbara Lambert brought this program to Milford.

Geer stated that he was thankful for the presentation. Chapin suggested having a client attend /present at the Board of Aldermen budget hearings.

Lisa's Report:

- The 24th Annual Mayor's Youth Award was held in May. Over 625 people were in attendance. Christie Roche did an amazing job organizing the program this year. It had to be relocated to the Parson's Complex due to the amount of people in attendance. The 25th is already being planned.
- The Spring Family Event with the Boys and Girls Club was held. The Mayor and his family attended. Pictures of the event were distributed.
- The first program of the Juvenile Diversion Program with the Milford Police Department has been completed. The assessment phase for the second group has begun. There is now a total of 15 youth that will have been diverted from the courts. This program is funded through a United Way grant to the Police Department.
- There will be a spring/summer Rent A Kid open enrollment sign up night.
- Mindy participated as a speaker at Foran High and Jonathan Law Family University Forums. Over 500 seniors participate in this event, in small groups where they are able to listen to the presentations and ask questions. Mindy's area of expertise was in leaving home, launching, and the challenges accompanying that for both the student and the family.
- Staff also attended and manned the Academy's Open House for Families and the YMCA's Presentation on Community Needs. The Health and Wellness Fair was manned as well.
- There were 26 new intakes (families calling to start family therapy) for Family Therapy this month. 14 were from the school system, 2 were from the city web site, 3 were self referrals, 4 were Police Department referrals and 3 were from Bridges. There are presently 267 clients in treatment.
- Melissa has been taking Camp Happiness applications. Melissa reviewed that there is just under \$1,700.00 available for scholarships and there are more applications than there have been in the past. She is working with Marlene Sanchez to try and serve as many people as possible.
- Lisa presented the budget at the Board of Aldermen with Melissa and Christie with a Power Point presentation that Christie and Sue Stango created. The presentation went well.

- Dr. Barbara Lynch – Head of the Family Therapy Program at Southern CT State University; who was instrumental in Human Services' family therapy program (Lisa was referred to HRD thru this program) passed away in May. Lisa would like to make a donation. A motion was made by Kecko, seconded by Candido to make a \$50.00 donation. The motion carried unanimously.

4. **Fiscal Report**

- The financial report was reviewed. Lisa met with the Finance Director regarding the reserve account. This is apparently an accumulation over the years of small amounts of money per line item that has been used for special programs as they came up. Geer asked if this fund could be used to offset the health care deficit. Lisa stated that it could. A motion was made by Chapin, seconded by Geer to accept the financial report as presented and carried unanimously.

5. **Old Business**

Geer researched the role of the board and stated that the Board's role according to the By Laws is to oversee agency policy and management and to bring issues from the community is part of that. He stated that he is trying to help the agency and if it is not staffed to take on new programs then it shouldn't and he would like to know all information in order to make decisions and he appreciated the staff presentation. Lisa stated that she follows the Board's direction and each member is welcome to come into the office any time as well as come to events.

6. **New Business**

Nominating Committee – Chapin was appointed to the Nominating Committee and will report at the next meeting.

Budget – the Board of Aldermen kept the cut because of the reserve account; they thought that there was a large amount of money in reserve. Lisa met with the Finance Director and found that Good Shepherd grants were being included in this figure and is not part of the reserve account (in the amount of \$280,000.00). Lisa is to meet with him again to sort this out. The city's system made some accounts inaccessible and Lisa did not know of their existence so the amount is in question. It was discussed that staff positions were not filled when Lisa became the Director and Lisa requested restructuring positions a few years ago and this was denied. There are residual funds from this. A new fringe account is being created to cover the overage and this is still being worked on. There was concern by the Board if this money can be used. After some discussion, a motion was made by Geer, seconded by Candido to not spend any money from this account until there is a decision in writing from the City Attorney. Chapin discussed giving the money back. The motion carried unanimously.

Geer stated that there is a Planning Committee and a Personnel Committee in the charter and asked that this be discussed at the next meeting.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Streit

MaryLou Kecko, Recording
Secretary