

Minutes of the Human Services Board of Director's meeting of September 19, 2017

Donna Nunno called the meeting to order at 5:36 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Present: Donna Nunno, Sue Stango, Brendan Casey, Kitty Hurley, Rev. Karl Duetzmann, and Aldermen Ellen Beatty.

Absent: Gina Badalamenti, Joan Campbell, Scott Moulton, and Alderman Anthony Giannattasio.

Also Present: Deepa Joseph and Beth Simpson

2. Public Comments

None.

3. Minutes

A motion was made by K. Duetzmann, seconded by B. Casey, that the minutes of 6/20/17 be approved as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Director's Report

Human Services:

Things have been extremely busy at the Department of Human Services (DHS) with some staffing changes and with the starting/ending of various programs. In terms of staffing, one full-time Community Outreach Clinician and the part-time Community Case Worker have left the agency due to relocation. In light of the current spending freeze within the City, these positions have not been posted at this time. As a result, all current staff members have been working tremendously as a team to ensure the agency's mission and services remain intact.

The Renters' Rebate Program is wrapping up. It is estimated that the department will have taken 400 to 500 applications by the end of the program, in September. The staff visited all of the Milford Senior and Disabled Housing sites and took applications. Sean Macauley, Outreach Clinician, is currently handling all rent rebate and outreach appointments.

The staff is shifting into the Energy Assistance (EA) Program. The call volume has been significant and all staff are working hard to ensure all calls are returned. Special note must be given to Beth Simpson, as she has done a tremendous job with fielding the increased volume of phone calls. Due to the current staffing shortage, the number of appointment slots available in Milford has been decreased by approximately 50%. This decision was made in order to enable Sean Macauley to see all Outreach Referrals, as outreach referrals are also increasing at this

time. As with last year, TEAM, Inc. (Community Action Agency) will have a staff member on-site in Milford two days per week to take applications. EA appointments will start on October 3rd in Milford. Additionally, as a result of the call volume, the Director has reached out to TEAM for additional assistance prior to the week of October 3rd. Those clients who are unable to get an appointment for EA in Milford will go to the TEAM office in Derby. It is our hope that DHS will be back to full staffing levels for the 2018 EA season and therefore able to accommodate more EA appointments.

DHS has received an increase in funding from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and the Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP). All CDBG funds have been received and distributed for this year. The department is approved for CDBG funding for next year.

Regarding the EFSP, last year the department received approval for both utilities and food assistance. This year, the DHS applied and was approved for funding in four categories: utilities, rent and mortgage, food assistance and emergency shelter. This additional funding has enabled our department to increase our ability to cost share with partner organizations throughout the community.

DHS staff is working collaboratively with TEAM, Inc and the United Way of Milford to support the recently established Diaper Bank, which DHS clients access. Wipes are also available through the Diaper Bank.

Holiday programs are currently being discussed. As a result of current staffing levels, DHS is taking this opportunity to review similar programs within the community to create efficiencies and reduce duplication of efforts if possible.

K. Duetzmann mentioned that communication around food insecurity has increased within the community, particularly following the Food Summit that was held in the spring.

Youth and Family Services:

The Youth and Family Services (YFS) staff is back into the school season. They are setting up individual and family therapy and school groups.

The onsite therapist role, currently in place at Jonathan Law, may be expanded to Foran as well.

YFS is partially funded through the State of CT Department of Education (SDE). Our SDE grant application was completed and submitted. We are waiting to hear back from the state as soon as the budget is finalized. We are hoping that our grant remains level.

The YFS staff has attended and looking for training opportunities. They are also collaborating with the health department on specific programs, such as youth and suicide prevention programs.

5. Old Business

None.

6. New Business

K. Duetzmann reported that the Clergy Association met and confirmed that the offering at the Thanksgiving Eve Prayer Service will go to fuel assistance for Milford Residents.

The Clergy Association is also looking at food insecurity. Approximately 150 to 200 children are receiving meals to go home with them on weekends through the Milford Food 2 Kids program.

7. Adjournment

K. Hurley made a motion to adjourn the meeting. S. Stango seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

D. Nunno adjourned the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Simpson
Recorder