

PLYMOUTH HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION

80 MAIN STREET
TERRYVILLE, CT 06786
(860) 585-4028

March 18, 2014

Meeting Minutes
Human Service Meeting
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, March 18, 2014 – Assembly Room – 7:00 p.m.

1. **Call to Order. – 7:05 p.m.**

Attendance: Chairman Heidi Caron, Sally Bain-Picard, Helena Schwalm, Rev. Chris Drew, Karen Saccu, Council Liaison John Pajeski, Human Service Coordinator Abby Egan and Recording Secretary Pam Pelletier.

Absent/Excused: Dickie Zalaski, Tracy DuPont.

Chairman Heidi Caron thanks everyone for their thoughts & prayers, cards and gifts of flowers after the loss of her father last month.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance.** – Lead by the Chairman.

3. **Public Comment.** – None.

4. **Executive Session – to Discuss Personnel**

A motion was made by Sally Bain-Picard and seconded by Rev. Chris Drew to go into Executive Session at 7:10 pm. Council Liaison John Pajeski was invited into Executive Session by Chairman Heidi Caron.

A motion was made by Helena Schwalm at 7:28 p.m. and seconded by Karen Saccu to come out of Executive Session and to continue the meeting. The motion was voted on unanimously.

5. **Human Service Coordinator.**

a) Client Report

Human Services Report - March 2014 - Submitted by Abby Egan

Foot Clinics- Two clinics were held in February, both fully booked! Next clinic will be in early April, 2014.

AARP Driving Course- Will be held in June this year

Energy Assistance-Operation Fuel allocated us additional funds to help with deliverable fuels through the spring. Usually they close early and don't reopen until "shut off time" (May 1st) This year fuel banks can distribute funds as they see fit. The total amount allocated for Plymouth is \$16,000 and \$9000 has already been spent. The fuel bank has also been drastically depleted! This has been the coldest year since I have been here and not counting help from Operation Fuel we have seen the following numbers for the Plymouth Fuel Bank: 16 households helped in January and February, and as of 3/13/14 March has had 20! Human Service Coordinator Abby Egan also reports that she has had to deal with an increased number of propane distributors this year as many are using propane as an alternate heating source; these vendors also come with their own unique problems and issues.

Grants- Received approval from Town Council to move forward with applying for funding for a Tai Chi program for seniors-this is what the seniors requested and will begin (if funding received)Oct 2014.

The Access Health CT grant period is ending on March 31st. As of this report, they will not be extending or increasing the grant.

Triad- Planning is underway for the spring conference- there will be a wellness theme! See flyer attached.

PECC- You are all invited to attend the Roll Out of the Community Plan on April 1st. Dinner and childcare provided! Come and see what the PECC has been working on to develop a community plan to ensure that all Plymouth Children are Healthy, Safe and Successful learners. See flyer!

CT Dept of Social Services- Ongoing problems with people being dropped who should not have. Online application process is working somewhat well and most problems are with renewals not being processed. If we can prove that a renewal was sent, DSS usually resolves the problem immediately. If there is no proof, clients are forced to go in person to DSS to get their benefits reinstated. Another common issue is when people have a change of address, DSS does not process the address, and people don't get their paperwork that way.

Cleveland Trust- First round of "rental assistance" went through already very quickly. 6 people helped so far, 3 have been referred to Salvation Army. Additional funds will be utilized to help a man with a mental disability clean out his residency and were recently also utilized for one week of assistance for Eagle's Nest tenants while it was straightened out who is responsible for re-locating them. (The Landlord is responsible, but if he can't cover it, the town is responsible and can lien the landlord's property to recoup any expenditure) There are four (4) apartments in this building three (3) of which were occupied. Two of the family's qualified for rental assistance and we tried to get them into Gosinski Park as they met the facilities criteria, but we were turned away. As they did not have a place to stay the Town is paying for a room at a hotel until April 1st, which will hopefully give them time to find a new place. The other family has already done so.

REFUSE TO BE A VICTIM class- Because of the support of the Plymouth Police Department, the NRA has generously agreed to provide free materials so that we can offer the REFUSE TO BE A VICTIM full two day course at no charge for up to 30 people. Pending availability of the community room we hope to host it in Mid May.

Access Health Insurance – Enrollment Fairs are being held each week, deadline to enroll into the program to avoid penalties is March 31, 2014.

Holiday Gift Program – We received a letter from Chief Karen Krasicky expressing her department's gratification in assisting with this program and advising that if we ever need assistance in the future not to hesitate to contact her department.

Tunxis Community College – Spring Classes

Grant Writing, Facebook Pages – General discussion on how this could help our department with getting the word out about the help that we can offer.

6. **Old Business**

Budget Update – Met with the Comptroller and then Board of Finance; no recommended changes with the exception of a small increase of \$840 for our part-time help.

Past Discussions:

Elderly Gift Cards – Discussed at a previous meeting, would like to do something similar to what is done during the School Back-pack program with the shoe gift cards. Investigate the possibility of giving \$20-\$25 gift cards to the needy elderly for Adams IGA, CVS, Rite-Aid or Beacon Pharmacy. Possible that vendors may match or discount the cost of the cards or give us some for free. This program would be funded through the Cleveland Trust. We will need to

set up a process and determine how to identify those in need and get updated figures from the Comptroller in the account. We will try to get this program running sometime in May.

Newsletter – Previously discussed regarding donation to Plymouth News and publication of our articles in the Monthly newspaper. Someone needs to spearhead the project and get articles ready and will need to coordinate with Lisa Philmore at the paper. Sally Bain-Picard volunteers to take charge of the project and will contact everyone for possible input, articles, upcoming events and pictures, etc...

(New) Town Website The Town has contracted a new design for our website. We are still working on organizing our information. We have removed information that was not pertinent and added a lot more information.

TAH (Torrington Area Health) - The question was asked and has been discussed as to what this organization does for Plymouth. We have tried to run Flu Clinics in the past but due to low attendance this is not a program that they are interested in providing any longer. Councilman John Pajeski explains that TAH also provides a Sanitarian to the Town for review of septic and private wells, approval and sign-off of Land Use and Building Permits, inspection of all local restaurants and sign-off on vendor licenses, including inspections are the Terryville Fair.

Community Wellness Committee – This Committee has disbanded and no longer meets. The funding received was only enough to cover the Community Health Assessment that was conducted on the Town last year. The schools received a PEP grant that they are using. TAH has offered to pay for signage at Town buildings/facilities to designate them as “No Smoking” areas.

Wheeler Clinic (New) Resource Center – Wonderful new resource, located in Bristol. Health partnering with Early Childhood Development Council. Other facility CHC in Bristol gave our clients a problem and were requiring that they list them as their primary doctor which was causing a lot of problems with clients.

7. **New Business.**

a) Hospice Funds

A previous discussion with Comptroller Dave Bertnagel indicated that these funds should be used for medical assistance. There is approximately \$20,000 in the account of which \$5,000 is ear-marked for Hospice type care. Human Resource Coordinator Abby Egan made the following suggestions based upon past requests for assistance by clients that we were unable to help.

Hospice fund-ideas for this fund

- Temporary Assistance with prescription copays (usually there are ways to address these issues, but the process can take 6 weeks so to have funds in place to help out temporarily would be good)
- Temporary Assistance with prescriptions not covered by insurance
- Assistance with required deductibles for treatment on a case by case basis (I have a client in the hospital, has private insurance but has a deductible for \$1000 and he cannot go into the convalescent home without coming up with the \$1000) (Another case-someone’s daughter needs to go to rehab for psych/substance abuse issues-insurance will cover but has a \$2000 deductible) Though I don’t often hear about these types of situations, I have had two in the last three weeks
- Some kind of town of Plymouth Employee assistance fund-also for help with copays or deductibles outside of insurance.

An email was received from Tracy DuPont suggesting that we use the funds for Hospice care for In-town and out of town Families.

There is general discussion regarding the recommendations and everyone agrees that help with prescriptions and non-insurance covered prescriptions would probably help the most

people. There is also interest in the employee assistance fund as money was donated to recognize what employees did to help their clients.

The \$5,000 ear-marked for Hospice care will also need to be investigated further, staff will contact the facilities to see what we can do to provide help to our residents.

Human Service Coordinator Abby Egan will develop a policy and email it to the Commission so that it can be reviewed and accepted at our next meeting.

b) Chairman Authorization-Applications/Grants

Since the Commission does not meet on a monthly basis, many times applications/grants may come available that need a signature from the Commission. It would be helpful if the Chairman was given the authority to sign off on this paperwork but the Commission. This would only be on items that do not require the Mayor's signature or Town Council approval and would help us to meet deadlines so that we do not miss out on opportunities.

Helena Schwalm made a motion which was seconded by Karen Saccu to give the Chairman the authority to sign-off on Applications, Grants and miscellaneous paperwork as needed for the department and the motion is voted on unanimously.

Councilman John Pajeski also advises that the town is looking into hiring a full-time grant-writer so that we do not miss out on funding that may be available for various projects for the Town.

c) Fibromyalgia – group has been cancelled due to low attendance, cannot justify meetings.

8. **New Business.** – No other new business.

9. **Chairwomen's Comments.**

Chairwoman Heidi Caron advises she attended a FOI workshop offered by the town and distributed information for the Commissions review. Social gatherings of a Commission do not constitute a meeting as believed by the prior liaison and does not require a notice to be posted with the Town Clerk.

Waterbury Hospital (Eli-Terry Funds) Chairwomen Heidi Caron has been in contact with Waterbury Hospital regarding these funds; they will be sending us the criteria that residents need to meet to access the funds. The funding is similar to the Cleaveland Trust as it is funded by interest received and is approximately \$50,000-\$60,000 per year.

10. **Commissioner's Comments.** – No other comments.

11. **Administrative Matters.** - None

12. **Adjournment.**

A motion was made by Sally Bain-Picard and seconded by Karen Saccu to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 p.m. and the motion is voted on unanimously.

Submitted by,

Pam Pelletier
Recording Secretary



Roll Out, Roll Out, Roll Out

Enjoy great conversation and dinner too!

The Plymouth Early Childhood Council's members will share its Community Plan for Plymouth's children; which many residents and community providers have been working on over the last few years.

Do you live or work in the Plymouth Community?
If so, you will not want to miss this event!

When: Tuesday, April 1, 2014 (5:30 to 7:30 PM)

Where: Terryville High School Auditorium
(33 North Harwinton Avenue, Terryville)

Please kindly RSVP for dinner and childcare by emailing plymouthearlychildhoodcouncil@plymouthct.us or by calling (860) 314-2763 by March 27, 2014.

Please RSVP (# of adults and # children & ages) to reserve your FREE dinner and to be entered to win door prize raffles. Limited onsite childcare will be provided. **Parents must remain on site throughout the event!**

Please register your children early, as each registered child will also be entered to win a door prize raffle. **Every registered child will receive a parting gift!**

To learn more about the Plymouth Early Childhood Council, please visit our website at <http://plymouth.k12.ct.us/PECC> and LIKE us on Facebook.

Stay Strong! Live Long!

Annual Conference

 April 23, 2014 Bristol Public Library



with West Central Connecticut TRIAD

West Central Connecticut TRIAD Mission: TRIAD strives to strengthen community partnerships that help to improve the quality of life, provide access to social service programs, reduce crime and diminish the fear of crime among the older residents of Bristol, Burlington, Plainville and Plymouth/Terryville.