

PLYMOUTH HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION

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May 12, 2014

Agenda Human Service Meeting Regular Meeting

Tuesday, May 20, 2014 – Assembly Room – 7:00 p.m.

1. Call to Order. By the Chairman.
Attendance: Chairwoman Heidi Caron, Dickie Zalaski, Rev. Chris Drew, Helena Schwalm, Fred Schwalm, Sally Bain Picard, Karen Saccu.
Absent: Tracey Dupont

2. Pledge of Allegiance. Lead by the Chairman.

3. Public Comment. - None

4. Executive Session – to Discuss Personnel

Helena Schwalm made a motion which was seconded by Sally Baine Picard to go into executive session to discuss personnel and the motion is voted on unanimously.

7:25 p.m. – The Commission members adjourned from executive session and resumed the meeting.

A motion was made by Dickie Zalaski to send a letter to the Mayor regarding personnel, the motion was seconded by Helena Schwalm.

5. Human Service Coordinator.

- a) Client Report

Human Services Report May 2014

Personnel- It is with deep regret that I accepted Erin Kennedy's resignation. Due to her childcare situation she is not able to cover the hours that she initially agreed to and is unavailable to work on the days she is needed. This has caused a delay in the change in my hours and increase in staffing hours for the office. She will continue her 5 hours per week until the new person is hired. We hope that we will be able to hire someone soon so that my hours can change at the end of June. New staff person will be 15-20 hours per week. Interviews conducted two candidates are being considered we are hoping to hear more from the Comptrollers office.

Foot Clinics- April and May clinics both fully booked. Should we consider charging a fee so that we can offer a clinic monthly? There seems to be a definite need. We can't keep up with the demand and we are considering charging a minimal fee of \$5 to \$10 to help with the cost; most people could afford this and for those that can't we can consider waiving the fee. Cost is approximately \$50 per hour, clinics run 3 hours (\$150) – we get at least 9 participants which help to cover over a portion of the cost of the clinic and be able to help more residents.

AARP Driving Course- Would commission like to provide lunch for attendees? We normally have covered the cost of lunch for the program which costs approx. \$100

Energy Assistance-\$1000 left out of \$16000 from Operation Fuel. Additionally, 15 other household received assistance from the town fuel bank. Several households have had electricity shut off, and because they did not call for a payment arrangement ahead of time, their situation is fairly bleak- most people do not have \$2000 to come up with to pay their bill in full which in most cases is the only way to get services turned back on. CL&P is willing to work with resident on a payment plan as long as their power is not shut off. Some client reported issues with BCO, one person has even sent a letter to the Executive director at BCO and CC'd the mayor and the state. Updated: Balance on Energy Assistance: \$250

Grants- Will presented to deciding board on Tai Chi grant on May 20th, went well. There were some questions regarding the "numbers" and they were referred to the Recreation Dept. Hoping to hear from them soon. We assured the committee that there is definitely interest by Plymouth seniors.

Thomaston Savings Grant – still trying to figure out what we need that might be approved by them; we have not been successful in the past with our applications. TSB DAN likes to give "equipment" type items; they gave the Fire Marshall five I-pads. We might consider applying for gift cards from them for Senior's, they may be more inclined to approve those. Abby will investigate this further. They do give us \$2500 for our fuel bank every year.

Triad- Spring conference was a huge success! About 30 Plymouth seniors attended. It was wonderful, we offered all kinds of events and it was well received by everyone.

PECC- They are doing two fundraisers- One is "Drive Like your Kids live here" Signs that are made right here in town and cost \$10, profit will go toward the PECC Scholarship fund. I have some in my office if anyone would like one. They are also going to be selling "Pinwheels for prevention" to bring awareness to child abuse. Wheeler clinic will be providing a class for local agencies that work with families regarding child abuse.

CT Dept of Social Services- some decrease in issues with DSS. I learned about a great job training program that is available to people on food stamps, but there are no providers in our region. However, people can travel to Hartford to receive this training and DSS is working on getting Naugatuck Valley Community College. Biggest issue currently is that Access Health CT has taken over all medical (HUSKY aka Medicaid) and this has not gone smoothly, I had one person in my office for 3 hours, then back 3 more times before getting her coverage for her and her daughter.

REFUSE TO BE A VICTIM class- Class was held 14th and 15th. I am not sure exactly what happened but the Chief had to withdraw their support for this the class, however I told the instructor that I would rather cancel the class then have to tell people they have to pay for something that was advertised as free. The instructor said he could accommodate 15 free. I would like the commission to consider possibly giving him some sort of stipend to help offset the costs associated with this issue. Fifteen attended, three were repeats and did not need the materials, cost for nine would be between \$100-\$150. Rev. Drew made a motion to pay the instructor \$100, the motion was seconded by Dickie Zalaski and voted on unanimously.

Rev. Drew also commented on some of the cute vehicle stickers seen on many cars with children that may alert criminals to families circumstances and give them an idea of when no one might be home. There is general discussion regarding tell-tale signs that criminals look for; i.e. presence of pets, signage etc.

Technology- We have purchased "Charity Tracker" which is wonderful case management tool. It is far less expensive of the options we considered and will allow networking if the food pantry decides to join. It is great for tracking in person assistance and I am learning how to use it to track everyone phone call received. The attached report is services provided from 4/10-4/30.

We also have a new phone system in place, with an extra line and fax in the human services office. I am pleased that all these changes are making my job somewhat easier. Unfortunately, we are back down to one computer in my office. Operation Fuel will be giving us a laptop through a grant program but not until July.

Hospice fund- See attached I talked with Bristol Hospital HomeCare Hospice Program. They state that are often things that are not covered by insurance the patients and their family need. They have a fund of their own but would be happy to reach out to us for any Plymouth/Terryville residents. For example: massage therapy, assistance with burial, transportation for family members, giftcards for anything from take out, fun activities for a child, birthday gifts, and also homemaking services (someone to come and clean, prepare meals, grocery shopping etc). She suggested there should be an application; we can send it to them and other hospice providers. Dickie Zalaski also feels that we should consider adult daycare and homecare/family caregiver in addition to Hospice also be considered in the program. We also shouldn't limit the maximum to \$250, depending on an individuals circumstance. Dickie Zalaski made a motion to accept the policy with discussed revisions and the motion is seconded by Helen Schwab and voted on unanimously.

Meetings- see attached. Would like commissioner's thoughts on what is priority, etc. Have not yet had meeting with mayor to discuss meetings and hope that with increase in staffing hours, that I will be able to continue to attend those most important ones. The part time person will be scheduled for Thursday and Fridays so hopefully she will be in the office so that I may attend the more important meetings.

Small Wonders- Have not yet had anyone expressed interest in being on the committee. Specifically needed is someone who can be the donor contact person, and I will continue to handle the sign ups from clients. I hope to have the first meeting in June.

6. Old Business

Approval of Holiday/Small Wonders Program procedure's, never approved procedures. Rev. Drew made a motion which was seconded by Dickie Zalaski to approve the procedures and the motion is approved unanimously.

Cleveland Trust – Fund was used for three people displaced by fire. There was a question as to who was responsible for tenants. The Town is responsible for victims and have to cover the cost and put a lien on the property owners. It was suggested that we go after reimbursement to the fund from the Town. It was approximately \$1,000. We covered shelter for a week and all tenants found alternate housing.

Rev. Drew feels we should let this go for this event, but will follow the proper procedures for all future events.

Budget Update – no update

7. New Business. - None

9. Chairwomen's Comments. – Chairman Heidi Caron comments that she is very happy with the newsletter that has been going out.

10. Commissioner's Comments. Helena Schwalm is happy that staff is getting part-time help but feels that eventually the Town will realize that they need an additional full-time person.

11. Administrative Matters. Welcome to Fred Schwalm, as our new alternate member. Fred will need to be sworn in by the Town Clerk. The website will also need to be updated to reflect the changes.

Meeting Dates: Abby will no longer be available on Tuesday for meetings, the Commission reviewed the published meeting schedule to determine the best dates for everyone and a consensus for the first

Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm. Starting on August 7th which will be a Special meeting. New notification will need to be sent to the Town Clerk advising of the change in meeting day.

12. Adjournment.

A motion was made by Sally Bain Picard and seconded by Helena Schwalm and voted on unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Submitted by,

Pam Pelletier
Recording Secretary