

HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION MEETING OF MAY 9, 2017

ATTENDANCE:

COMMISSIONERS: Lee Bollert, Claudia Copeland, Bob Galan, Pete Powell, Yvonne Senturia

Staff: Elaine Daignault, Patty Haberstroh, Susan Stefenson, Kristen Witt

Guests: Craig Adler, Wendy Gerbier, Lynn Goldberg, Kim Hein

Minutes: The minutes of February 14, 2017 were approved (there was no meeting in April)

Guest Speakers: Lynn Goldberg CSA Enhancement Committee

Lynn spoke about the plans for the enhancement of the CSA and requested that the HSC members write letters/emails of support for the \$3.9MM enhancement budget to the Board of Finance (BOF) as well as to encourage others to do the same.

Craig Adler, Wendy Gerbier, Kim Hein, Norwalk Housing Authority (NHA)

Craig started the presentation saying that the best housing subsidy is a good job and a good job requires good education. Wendy Gerbier, head of the Learning Center at NHA, presented the program that the learning center provides which gives students both academic and enrichment support. The Center works closely with Norwalk schools to ensure the students get precisely the educational support that they need individually. The program is a year around program which keeps the children and families engaged through the summer months as well giving both literacy and swimming programs in the summer months. Kim Hein spoke to the Scholarship Program which is aimed at college and graduate studies. All funds raised for the Scholarship Program go to scholarships with no administrative or other costs being charged to that program. Students must maintain a good academic standing and are tracked proactively to ensure that they get help as they need it and not after they are in trouble academically.

New Business:

Budget Planning FY18

Elaine, looking forward to next year's process, is observing how things are done, but optimally wants to use the staff's skills to help people avoid financial problems rather than resolve them once they happen.

Transportation-Door to Door

Working with Norwalk Transportation Authority on possible programs/solutions.

Old Business:

Update on CSA Enhancement Committee

See above

Report on the Commission on People with Disabilities

Elaine reported that the Commission is still in its organizing stages and continues to make progress

TEAM Westport Essay Contest

All three finalists chose to present their papers individually and had impressive essays.

Department Reports:

Energy Assistance Stats

Approximately 215 households were helped this year which is about the same number as last year. Program ends May 15.

AARP Tax Assistance Program Stats

Two sites provided: Town Hall and CSA. 748 returns prepared of which 97% were "e-returns". This is a 3% increase over prior year and a 66% increase over two years ago.

Tax Relief Program Update

Deferral process goes until the end of July.

HSC Minutes of May 9, 2017 (continued)

Department Reports

Renter's Relief

Program began on April 1 start. Letters just sent out. Usually get 80 households. Program closes in Oct.

Campership Program

About 60 families have applied so far. Cost of program is approx.. \$20,000 which is usually how much is raised.

Respectfully submitted, Bob Galan

