

Human Services Commission Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday October 10, 2017

Present: Bob Galan, Claudia Coplan, Ken Bernhard, Lee Bollert, Peter Powell, Yvonne Senturia and Dick Sallick

Staff: Elaine Daignault, Kristen Witt, Sue Pfister, Ed Milton, Patty Haberstroh, Kevin Godburn, and Michelle Bottone

Comms: Bob Fatherley, Peter Kolbrener, Les Wolf, Bob Fox, Ned Batlin WPD., Meg George
YMCA, Marina Derman, Diane Johnson,

Guests: Kait Smithson, Sarah Harris,

Bob noted that this meeting includes invitees from the Senior Services and the Westport Youth Commissions as well as from the Commission on People With Disabilities. Subsequently

The minutes of the HSC meeting of Tuesday September 12 were approved.

Elaine introduced a PowerPoint presentation which gives an overview of the Department's services and programs. She noted that this presentation would also serve to reflect recent Department activities.

DHS is divided into 3 major areas: Youth Services, Senior Services, and Social Services providing programs and resources for all populations that are current Westport residents. DHS currently has staff at 4 sites: Town Hall, Senior Center, Toquet Hall and Staples High School

Programs highlighted begin with assessment (psycho-social and financial), information and referral services. DHS programs are funded by Town, State & Federal funds in addition to a great deal of community fundraising & in kind services to supplement financial assistance programs offered.

- State and federal programs including SNAP, Energy Assistance, Renter's Rebate, Tax Abatement and Home Delivered Meals;
- Local programs including financial assistance, Westport Warm up, short term counseling, family assistance programs (ex. Holiday, back to school, campership), youth leadership, prevention, teen center, senior center, student outreach counselor, volunteer opportunities and emergency shelter.

There was discussion of demographic data presented noting in particular the aging of our population and projecting that in seven years 30% of Westport residents will be seniors. There also appear to be a growing number of people with disabilities looking for resources in the community.

There was discussion of referrals, where they come from (schools, police, fire department, WCSA, families, faith communities or self etc), what is involved in the process of assessment (psychosocial, evaluation, resources etc) and of dispositions available. Claudia expressed interest in seeing a mock assessment.

Ken asked what services are unavailable to out of town applicants. Applicants for evaluation would be screened and referred elsewhere if they are not residents and/or they are not eligible for needed services in Westport.

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Bob and Peter suggested making the PowerPoint presentation available to other venues such as the Y's Men, Rotary etc. Yvonne suggested it might be useful to enhance an alternate version for a specific need, e.g. fundraising.

Sue Pfister reviewed some of the enhanced services that will be added to the WCSA - added room for fitness, wet and dry art rooms, lockers and showers. The latter will complement work with Police, Fire and Red Cross during emergency conditions.

Peter commented that services enable most seniors living in Westport to "age in place."

Claudia called attention to the fact that home delivery of meals is available to everyone, not just those with restricted incomes. Elaine stressed that all DHS services are available to young and old regardless of socio-economic status. Yvonne suggested creating a "resource card" to inform affluent Westporters of resource availability.

Dick Sallick

Nov. meeting will be rescheduled from Tuesday, Nov 14th to Friday, Nov. 17th at 9:30am for a joint meeting of the HSC and the Commission on Senior Services featuring an overview of local substance abuse and mental health resources.

December meeting TBD