

Low-Income Energy Advisory Board Meeting
Wednesday, August 6, 2014
HRA/Human Resources Agency
180 Clinton Street
New Britain, CT

Members/Designees/Others In Attendance: Edith Karsky, CAFCA, Chuck Anderson, DSS, Carlene Taylor, DSS, Joseph Rosenthal, OCC, Gail Lucchina, DEEP, Joy Hollister, CLASS, Joanne Balaschak, New Opportunities, Kelly Sinko. OPM, Kasia, Janik, OPM, Wendy Wanchak, Connecticut Legal Services, Cherlynn Villano, SCG, Dalyn Delgado, CNG, Frank Augeri, PURA, Kate Quigley, 211, Brenda Watson, Operation Fuel, Eddie Swift, NU-Yankee Gas, Veronica Gomez, NU-CL&P, Linda Foreman, DEEP

Welcome: The meeting was convened at 1:30 p.m. Joy Hollister chaired the meeting.

Approval of minutes of the June 4, 2014 meeting: It was noted that two corrections to the LIHEAP update were needed. The sentences referencing 102,000 and 80,000 people needed to be changed to households rather than people. With those changes, Wendy approved the minutes and Edith seconded.

LIHEAP Update: Chuck Anderson stated that the Draft Plan had not been published yet but Kelly advised that it would be distributed after the meeting. The group was informed that the tentative hearing date is August 25th. Chuck stated that he could not ask the Board to support it yet due to the fact that members had not yet seen it. Carlene agreed and said that members can support it by submitting comments electronically.

Chuck informed the group that most states are anticipating a level funding year but he reminded the group that Connecticut's carryover is \$6 million less than the previous year. Joy noted that the copy distributed was not the latest version and that the Board made minor edits and some additions. Chuck advised that he would get the latest version. Chuck verified for the group that the suggested changes and additions had been incorporated. Chuck also stated that Chris Herb reminded that starting July 1st low sulfur fuels will be required by Public Act 10-45. Chuck also stated that the energy burden is mentioned in the plan. The consumption information will

determine the energy burden. This data will be collected over a period of years to eventually help people that need it the most.

Kelly noted that OPM and DSS very much appreciated the Board working with them cooperatively.

Joanne asked Chuck about the new computer system. Joy stated that she had not yet used it. Joanne's office has now rolled over to the new system. Chuck said that TEAM was testing the system and there were some problems. Carlene stated that it was an Internet based platform. Chuck and Lorraine have been working on it with Brian. Testing began on this system in the spring. In April, May and June there were five agencies testing it on a voluntary basis. Ellen at TEAM purposely put in incorrect data to see how it would handle bugs. Originally, everyone was migrating to the new system, however, now CAP agencies are migrating to the old system first and then to the new one. The new system should capture case management data in an easier and better fashion according to Chuck and Carlene. Joanne stated that some people don't use it for case management so they don't care about it. Edith stated that if problems continue, we may want to look at staying with the old system. Chuck informed the group that they are staying on top of the issue. Edith cautioned against rushing the energy program due to case management. Carlene offered to talk to the New Britain folks to find out their experience with the new system.

Carlene gave an update on the NEON situation. She advised that NEON filed bankruptcy in June. ABCD will be doing the LIHEAP program for 2014-2015. They will handle everything from intake and certification to payments. There were many conference calls with both mayors and everything is fine. ABCD started taking applications on Friday. She also noted that ABCD is not permanently taking over. It will just be for one year. The 98 South Main Street office in Norwalk is also being used for Stamford. They have hired staff and some are former NEON staff members. NEON's other programs are being handled by the Community Action Agency of Western Connecticut. A new CAP agency will eventually be selected and DSS will provide some of the other services in the interim.

Operation Fuel: Brenda reported that Operation Fuel opened its doors on July 21st. It served nearly 700 households. It is attempting to stay open until November 7th. It has funding of \$1 million for the summer program.

Wendy says she gets an average of seven calls a day. Joanne also stated that many people are calling. Brenda also stated that New Haven and Waterbury have high demand.

Utility Matching Payment: Eddie reported on NU and Yankee Gas. He stated that CL&P had 49% of participants receive matches for its non-below budgets and Yankee had 41% receive matches for its non-below budgets. It provided \$5 million in matching payment funds. The total was 34,900 customers overall. Joy noted that less than half received matches. Carlene suggested that the company should negotiate lower amounts. Joy informed the group that the subcommittee did meet to discuss payment arrangements and a second meeting will be scheduled. Eddie stated that the Company is partnering with NOW to get the word out about available resources. There is a new NUStart program. The program used to be 36 months and is now only 12 months to reduce part of their delinquency. PURA approved this and there has been a lot of success with this change. They are contacting customers to get the word out. Wendy said that clients are excited about it and happy they can pay their bills. Eddie reported that in Phase I there were over 9,000 below budget worksheets and for Phase II, CL&P had 7,000 and Yankee had 5,000. Frank Augeri mentioned that the new MPP docket is No. 14-07-01. Interrogatories have been issued and no hearing will be held unless someone requests it.

UI and CNG had no updates but said they have seen an increase in shutoffs.

Questions on Conn. Gen. Stat. 16a-40m: Frank discussed Dkt. No. 14-05-40 and CEFIA's proposal to have on-bill repayment. This was established as a means to help customers make energy efficiency measures more affordable. Frank asked the group if Energy Assistance money could be used to pay for these purposes. Carlene and Edith stated that 15% could be used but Connecticut has never done this because it has limited funding and heat is the primary concern. Edith stated that in the past legislators have opposed this because we are a cold weather state and anything that reduces payments for heat assistance doesn't fly. Carlene added that many states use DOE standards and no conversions are allowed. Wendy stated that the Board will look at the issue and discuss it when they reconvene. Frank added that on-bill repayment allows for less risk to the lenders.

Miscellaneous: CL&P rate case Dkt. No. 14-05-06. Public hearings are scheduled for Aug. 27th and 28th and September 3rd. Edith noted that the magnitude of the requested increase is frightening. Joe stated that retail suppliers started charging much more. Much of the suppliers will increase their prices in January and February. Joe also advised that a lot of things such as storm costs are already built-in and then you have to add in the supply problem. Joe said the storm cost and storm hardening cases were already held and approved. Edith asked how dependent Connecticut is on fracking. Joe replied that the state is very dependent on fracking and you would not have seen price reductions in natural gas without fracking. Frank said that the proposed increase in the customer service charge is generating a lot of calls to PURA's Consumer Services Unit.

Frank noted that PURA just issued a Draft in the new supplier contract. He stated that a fixed rate would have to be at least four months so this should help the situation.

Edith brought an article concerning the Farm Bill. Connecticut used the opportunity for the benefit of its citizens.

Operation Fuel has sent out Save the Dates for the Joint Social Services Agencies Forum Meeting. There will only be one meeting this year. It will be held October 22nd at the Aqua Turf in Southington.

Next Meeting: The meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m. and the next meeting is scheduled for September 3, 2014.