

DRAFT MINUTES

**Low-Income Energy Advisory Board Meeting
Wednesday, April 1, 2015
Operation Fuel, Inc.
75 Charter Oak Avenue
Hartford, CT**

Members/Designees/Others In Attendance: Chuck Anderson, DSS, Carlene Taylor, DSS, Linette Jones, DSS, Edith Karsky, CAFCA, Eddie Swift, Eversource, Kathy Wasilnak, UI, Alyson Ayotte, PURA, Frank Augeri, PURA, Kelly Sinko, OPM, Kasia Janik, OPM, Kate Quigley, 211, Pat Wrice, Operation Fuel, Joy Hollister, Cromwell, CLASS, Diane Duva, DEEP, Sean Condon, DEEP, Linda Foreman, DEEP, Brian Biernat, DEEP, Joanne Balaschak, New Opportunities, Inc., Nora Duncan, AARP, Dalyn Delgado, CNG

Welcome: The meeting was convened at 1:35 p.m. Ms. Wrice chaired the meeting.

Approval of minutes of the meeting: Ms. Duncan made a motion to approve the minutes as written, Ms. Quigley seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

LIHEAP Update: Mr. Anderson provided handouts of the FY14/15 financial reports. He reported that the program has less than 10% carryover. The case load report total is \$102k with \$85k total eligible applications. That is a 2% increase over last year. Average deliverable of the applications taken was approximately 136 to 166 gallons. Mr. Anderson stated that the President's budget reflected \$3.1 billion nationwide but there is no word on appropriations. Ms. Wrice stated that there is an increase in the President's budget and Ms. Taylor stated that 10% of the budget may go to weatherization work. Ms. Duva asked about the Stamford/Norwalk area data. Ms. Taylor stated that service in Norwalk/Stamford reflect an increase and is improving each week. Ms. Taylor further stated that ABCD has done an incredible job. The request for proposal (RFP) for Stamford should be decided next week. However, the RFP for Norwalk will be issued by 4/21 and the decision should be made by July 1.

Operation Fuel: Ms. Wrice stated that on March 27th the oil clients were reviewed on a case-by-case basis, (see the handout), the report reflects activity for December 14 thru March 27th. Ms. Wrice advised that the lower oil prices have helped a great deal. Ms. Wrice stated that the summer program is not reflected on the Report. There was \$1.1 - \$1.2 million spent on utility households for July 15th thru December 1st. Specifically, the spring/summer program cost approximately \$600k. Ms. Wrice stated that there was an uptake in utility households for winter assistance, an increase of 30% over last year. Ms. Taylor asked what the condition is for Operation Fuel monies and Ms. Wrice stated that the customer should apply for LIHEAP monies first then seek Operation Fuel with the maximum of \$500.00 a year. Ms. Duva asked if there was an increase in requests for assistance for paying utility bills. Ms. Wrice responded that there has been a spike in requests. Ms. Balaschak stated that suppliers' costs are extremely high. Ms. Wrice stated that the money for the summer program went to all utilities, mainly to the electric customers. There was an increase in oil consumption from 40 to 50 extra gallons. Mr. Augeri asked about the status of an enforcement issue and stated that there may be follow up by PURA. Mr. Augeri asked that a letter be sent to PURA regarding this matter so it could be included in any potential referrals to the Attorney General's office for civil enforcement. Mr. Augeri further stated that it may be close to impossible to get extra fees paid. Ms. Wrice responded that the \$35k was written on a personal account and Operation Fuel will send a letter.

MPP: Ms. Delgado advised the group that in the month of March there were 219 new customers that equal a total of 3,044. CNG was 1,470 and total of 16,854, SCG had 1,388 with a total of 15,609 customers. UI was on target with last year number of 3,085 and this year at 3,044. A handout was distributed that reflect number of auto enrolled and total enrollment of customers

Ms. Wrice expressed that new people are having problems, approximately 1,000, and do not know how to apply. Response was that you are automatically enrolled once you get approved by one of the CAAs. Ms. Delgado stated that she will not know how successful the program is until May 1st.

Eversource provided a handout. The auto enrollment is 11,865; new enrollees are 4,741 and the total is 16,606. Gas customer enrollment is 12,127, new enrollees is 4320 and the total 16,447. A record number of

customers on the budget sheet is 1,000, more than last year. There was much discussion about the commitment files that are coded hardship. The old account numbers verses the new account numbers and the issue of the CAAs getting funds via electronic filing instead of checks. Mr. Anderson suggested contacting the agency directly or CAFCA. Ms. Wrice expressed that it should not take 10 days to check an old account number that is in disconnection and the changing of accounts. Ms. Taylor questioned old accounts not being paid and the changing of accounts.

Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) Update by DEEP: Mr. Condon's handouts were distributed. While there was a delay in the audit tool being approved, we now have provisional approval from US DOE. For FY 2015, the DOE is allocating a little over \$2 million for Connecticut. The goal for 2015 is to weatherize a total of 369 units across the five CAAs. Mr. Condon stated DEEP will use the initial multiplier DSS used to distribute monies to the CAAs. Key issues DEEP is looking at in 2015 is training for the CAAs and getting the library and materials in place for the audit tool. The maximum amount DOE allows to weatherize homes will be \$6500.00 annualized per unit. However, the no heat calls are on a case-by-case basis. Ms. Duva announced that the public hearing for the application will be held on April 10th in New Britain to accept comments on CT's WAP grant Application. Written comments may also be submitted. The proceeding will be transcribed. Ms. Karsky moved to approve the Application to DOE and Mr. Augeri seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

LIEAB RECOMMENDATIONS: Ms. Hollister distributed handouts and went over the complete list of recommendations. Ms. Hollister thanked everyone for their subcommittee attendance. There was much discussion on each of the recommendations. Ms. Wrice indicated that the Board should meet in May to vote on the recommendations and stated that this should be the first item on the agenda to vote on.

Miscellaneous: Ms. Duncan provided some legislative updates. She informed the group that Bills 570-573 were voted on and passed by the Energy and Technology Committee. There are proposals that include a lowered fixed rate on consumers' electric bills, as well as a ban on variable rate contracts for 3rd party electric suppliers. This is for residential customers only. The rules about what rate a customer can be placed on if a customer fails to take action at the end of a contract period.

An energy efficiency training/dinner event is scheduled for April 15, 2015 and features Bob Adams, DOE's WAP Director and a speaker from Building Performance Institute [BPI]. The event qualifies for BPI training credits.

Next Meeting: Ms. Wrice stated that the Board would meet on May 6th. Agenda item number 1 will be the LIEAB subcommittee recommendations vote and the Location to have the next meeting is TBD. Ms. Karsky motioned to adjourn and Ms. Duncan seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 2:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Foreman, Lead Rate Specialist, CT DEEP