

MINUTES

Low Income Energy Advisory Board
Wednesday, October 7, 2015
Operation Fuel, Inc.
75 Charter Oak Avenue
Hartford, CT

Members/Designees/Others In Attendance: Alyson Ayotte, PURA, Frank Augeri, PURA, Gail Lucchina, PURA, Carlene Taylor, DSS, Linette Jones, DSS, Kasia Janik, OPM, Pat Wrice, Operation Fuel, Nora Duncan, AARP, Wendy Wanchak, CLS, Kelly Sinko, OPM, Edith Karsky, CAFCA, Brian Biernat, DEEP, Veronica Gomez-Hernandez, Eddie Swift, Eversource, Dalyn Delgado, Joanne Balaschak, New Opportunities, Inc., Jeff Brining, Norwich Public Utilities

Welcome: The meeting was convened at 1:30 p.m. Wendy and Ms. Wrice chaired the meeting.

Approval of minutes of the meeting: The August 5, 2015 minutes had no proposed corrections. Wendy moved to adopt the minutes and Frank seconded.

LIHEAP UPDATE: Carlene stated that applications have been accepted since August 1st. They have already taken 25, 939 applications and would like to take as many as possible before temperatures drop. To date there have been 17, 187 people approved for benefits. Even though applications have been processed, eligibility letters could not be sent out until after the hearing on September 3rd. Carlene advised that the Notice of Applicants' Rights was included in the letters. Carlene reported that the LIHEAP compliance audit by HHS went very well. She noted that there were a few minor recommendations and there were no gross erroneous findings found. HHS was actually very impressed with Connecticut's program.

Carlene advised that the LIHEAP plan was approved and they are currently busy getting things out to the agencies. Carlene brought copies of the plan and distributed copies of the CEAP Desk Guide. Certain definitions have been updated and the assets limit has been increased. Carlene stated that one major change is the Heating System Repair/Replacement. Sometimes

a repair can be accomplished and they are drafting procedures for this. When the final procedures are in place Carlene will email them to the group. She also stated that some newspapers picked up on this aspect of the plan. The allocation is \$1.5 million and it will be tracked in-house. The program is open to everyone until \$1 million has been spent and after that threshold, only vulnerable households will be eligible.

Carlene noted that vendor documents have been sent out. They are emailing them out and asking that the documents be emailed back. They will mail the documents when necessary. The margin has increased by two cents. Carlene also stated that vendor meetings were held in Willimantic, Hartford, Milford and Bridgeport. Wendy asked if additional staff will be dedicated for furnace repair/replacement. Carlene said there would not be additional staff. Carlene said the contractors must be licensed and insured and they are working with DEEP to see if they have a contractor list. They are asking everyone to work with their weatherization agencies. For example, in the Western region it is New Opportunities, Inc. This agency is already knowledgeable about the process and have experience.

Carlene stated that there was some concern about a government shutdown. They are once again requesting 90 percent of the funding initially. There are some carryover funds which could pay for the first round of deliverable fuels.

OPERATION FUEL: Pat stated that the program is still in the off season. It was a \$1.2 million program and \$906,000 has served approximately 2,800 households. There is still some funding available. Pat said that any remaining funding would be rolled over but they probably will go through all of the funding. The amount of the assistance is up to \$500.

UTILITY MATCHING PAYMENT PROGRAM: UI, SCG and CNG will have Phase II matches on November 1st.

Eddie reported that there will be 12,788 Phase II matches at the end of October. Customers will get the letter by the first or second week of November.

Frank advised that the Matching Payment Plan for 2016 was approved by PURA. Edith stated that they used to get reports concerning how many people signed up for MMP at each agency. Eddie stated that it could not

be provided by agency but he might be able to get data by town. Dalyn stated that she would check concerning UI's ability to provide the information. Eddie said Eversource would have to compile the information and he offered that if customers got Energy Assistance, they are most likely on MPP. Edith inquired about below budgets and Veronica stated that she provides those to each agency if requested. Edith stated that she wanted all agency reports and Veronica said that would provide this information in January and May.

How to Monitor Legislation: Nora advised that the topic involves legislation concerning the Board. She said that we cannot rely on the Agencies to tell us what has been proposed or passed. She said it isn't efficient and additionally, an Agency might be proposing something that LIEAB would not be in favor of. Nora said a process is needed that will give LIEAB plenty of advance notice of proposals or changes. Edith stated that the Board did not have money for a lobbyist so she stated that we should ask LIEAB members that are lobbyists to check on matters of interest. Carlene said she gets information from her legislative liaison. Wendy stated that many of the Agencies have lobbyists and we all need to make sure we pass info on to the Board. Kelly stated that the particular change that occurred was in the Implementer and it got watered down. Wendy said that the Board needs to be collaborative so that they remain aware of all legislation. Edith said that each of the voting members should share information from their lobbyists. Wendy said a cooperative agreement is needed. Pat and Nora believe the topic should be a regular agenda item in order to trigger discussion of something that is current. It will be called Discussion of Legislative and/or Docketed Matters. Wendy proposed the motion and Edith seconded. Pat offered that we all come from different perspectives so it will be advantageous to have many sets of eyes.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS: When informed the group that the subcommittee would meet at the conclusion of the LIEAB board meeting. Pat stated that she would like benchmarks concerning where the subcommittee is in the process. Wendy stated that they have been gathering information and from this they will talk about efficiency recommendations. Pat requested an email summary of where the subcommittee is at. There is a November 4th deadline for the rough draft to be presented to the Board. The final draft is due by December 2nd and

between December 9-11 it must be submitted to the Legislature. Kelly thanked the subcommittee members for their work.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: Wendy nominated Pat for Chairperson and Nora seconded. There had also been an electronic vote regarding the nomination of Pat for Chairperson. The electronic vote was unanimous with the exception of Wendy who did not respond to the email vote. Nora was nominated for Vice-Chair by Wendy and Edith seconded. The motion carried.

MISCELLANEOUS: Joanne advised the group that Docket 15-06-25 was approved and there are some changes that people should be aware of. Frank stated that UI and Eversource have the conference at Aria coming up and that these changes will be explained at this meeting. He also advised that the docket was approved on September 30th. Joanne asked if there is now automatic enrollment now due to these changes. Frank and Eddie both responded that if they have a \$50 below budget worksheet they are automatically enrolled. Edith stated that they need a fact sheet explaining these changes. Frank advised that there is not a fact sheet. He stated that there used to be a hearing but now a hearing is held only if requested. OCC requested a hearing so one was held. Frank advised that the decision pulls out the important highlights and changes. Carlene added that DSS is impacted by one major thing which is that they no longer have to do winter protection mailings. Joanne and Edith both stated they wanted a heads up or notification on September 30th about the decision. Frank stated that this is not a contested case so anyone can seek participant status. Aly and Gail stated that Frank did notify the board at its last meeting about this docket. Pat asked if PURA can provide a fact sheet. Frank stated that when the plan is submitted he will provide it via email.

Jeff informed the group that he is the new member representing Norwich Public Utilities. He advised that Norwich historically handles the customer efficiency programs and gas expansion program. He has a lot of experience. He stated that PURA's contact is still Ruth Swift and he is the second contact. Carlene stated that DSS will soon be contacting Norwich to get information regarding performance measures and consumption measures.

Veronica reminded everyone about the conference. She informed the group that Art Marcelynas of PURA would be speaking about suppliers.

She also stated that about 300 people had registered for the event. The date of the conference is October 13th.

Nora informed the group that the PURA docket regarding variable rates from electric suppliers has gone final. She says it is a huge victory. Wendy agreed with this assessment. Ratepayers had been overcharged collectively as much as \$10 million a month. Nora also stated that on October 20 at the LOB at 6:00 pm there is a hearing scheduled which was requested by AARP to settle matters such as cancellation fees. Nora said this is a small matter compared to the larger issues. Frank advised that it was an Interim Decision and that an actual report has to go to the Legislature on things that PURA still thinks need to be changed. This must be issued by January 1st. The Dkt. No. is 15-06-15 Frank also advised that customers will now see the generation rate. It was also mentioned that Art plans to speak about outreach assistance to Community Action Agencies. Nora stated that OCC and AARP will do presentations to groups on electricity. It is a 45 minute presentation to perhaps an hour. It is intended for groups of 20 or more and could even be presented to your staff members.

Pat stated that she liked AARP's media campaign and Nora stated that the entire market was fraudulent. She said that AARP does a fraud prevention presentation. It talks about the psychology that fraudsters use. Wendy stated that Connecticut Legal Services has a hot line to the Consumer Law Project for Elders and it has no income restrictions.

It was stated that Eversource and Operation Fuel have a partnership to get customers onto the NuStart program. They believe that the more people helping clients in need the better. Eddie informed the group that J.D. Powers rated Eversource #1 in the entire Northeast in providing information about programs.

Carlene reminded that all DSS offices have the ability to show a video or slideshow and Veronica says that they are rebranding so they will get it done as soon as possible. Carlene stated that if the client goes into DSS there is the DSS Network and last year they had the NuStart video. They are now customizing for specific areas of the state. Wendy told Carlene that she would contact her about putting her program on the network. Frank stated that NuStart has had a tweak to the life-threatening rules. Frank reported that anyone with a life-threatening designation will now be

considered hardship. Eversource opened the portal early concerning FAQs, NuStart and MPP and they have designed it based on recommendations from the Board.

ADJOURN: Edith moved to adjourn the meeting and Nora seconded. The meeting adjourned at 2:55.

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting is scheduled for December 2, 2015.