

MINUTES

Low Income Energy Advisory Board
Wednesday, March 2, 2016
Operation Fuel, Inc.
75 Charter Oak Avenue
Hartford, CT

Members/Designees/Others In Attendance: Mary Ellen Zang, PURA, Frank Augeri, PURA, Gail Lucchina, PURA, Carlene Taylor, DSS, Pat Wrice, Operation Fuel, Margaret Bain, OCC, Kate Quigley, 2-1-1, Kathy Wasilnak, UI, Edith Karsky, CAFCA, Chuck Anderson, DSS, Joanne Balaschak, New Opportunities, Joy Hollister, CLASS, Ruth Swift, NPU, Diane Duva, DEEP, Kasia Janik, OPM, Nora Duncan, AARP

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

Approval of minutes of the February 3rd meeting: The February 3, 2016 minutes were approved. Edith moved to adopt the minutes and Kathy seconded.

Update Regarding the Residential Heating Loan Program Status Report: Linda stated that the report is intended to describe the status of the Residential Furnace and Boiler Replacement Program and the Clean Energy On-Bill Repayment Program. She advised that the Green Bank's program is still in development with implementation expected in 2016. Linda informed the group that the utility-based financing program provides financing for the installation of high efficiency heating equipment; furnaces, boilers and heat pumps with low interest, long term loans of up to ten years. It provides for on-bill repayment and it has a qualification of six months of on-time payment of electric bills. The current interest rate is 2.999%. Per statute, the interest rate must be capped at 3%. There is a 10% down payment required. Linda stated that the down payment may be holding some people back and Pat stated that Operation Fuel could perhaps help with the down payment. Linda advised that the full report is available on DEEP's website. Diane added that ratepayers are made whole in seven years except for administrative costs. These costs are \$93 over the course of the loan. The program has been extended to 2019 and the purchase of propane tanks has been added.

Operation Fuel: Pat stated that the winter program opened December 3rd and it has been slow. In previous years they were doing 50 applications a day and now it is approximately 50 applications per week. Pat also stated that as of December 3, 2016, \$549,441 was given in grants and there were 1,221 applications.

LIHEAP: Chuck handed out the two standard reports which he described as the caseload report and the report of where they expect to end up with funding. Chuck advised that they tried to run the report on the same day as last year but it was run one day ahead. The application rate has been steady but they have taken fewer than the previous year. Approximately 14,000 safety net payments were done last year and this year it is 1,433. Chuck stated that the only trend is that deliverable fuel households are making fewer applications.

There is a higher carryover in this year's budget and they will definitely not be running out of money. The money over the allowable carryover will typically be a utility supplement of \$200-\$250 per household according to Chuck.

Chuck stated that as far as next year's budget, the only information they have is that the President's budget has cuts of 10%. The FY 2017 budget proposes a total of \$3 billion for the block grant which is a decrease of \$390 million from FY 2016. It includes the same weatherization language as last year. It also proposes \$560 million in mandatory funding.

Carlene reported on the Heating Repair and Replacement Program. She stated that they have approved almost \$700,000 of replacement/repairs. It was slow and then in February it increased once cold weather hit. Carlene stated that a few applications have been denied and one was referred to the fraud unit. A couple of the denials were not single family homes and one home was in foreclosure. Edith asked how many applications were received and Carlene informed the group that about 50-60 applications were received. Margaret asked if they will spend the entire \$1.5 million. Carlene informed her that the program will not end March 15th. Carlene stated that the program would probably run through June. She said there has been an increase in requests for servicing of heating systems. Diane asked if the program had any fatal flaws. Carlene said the program has not been easy and it took a lot of staff time to implement due to the detail

necessary in verifying things like home ownership or foreclosure. Kate advised that 211 has made 123 referrals to the furnace repair and replacement program between January 1, 2016 and February 29th. There were 16 referrals to DSS and others were referred to similar programs. Carlene added that four repairs eventually became replacements. Pat advised that Operation Fuel was only going to do repair grants but they are thinking of using funds for a down payment on a replacement.

Joy reported that the LIHEAP subcommittee met. Diane added that the group is making good progress and they will meet on March 16th. She added that they are looking at a lot of continuing recommendations.

Utility Matching Payment: Kathy provided a handout that showed that as of February 29th, the total electric enrollment was 3,114 and the total natural gas enrollments was 26,886 for a grand total of 30,000. Joy asked if the Company will still match if someone makes three payments. Kathy responded that she was not sure if UIL will do that again. Frank added that PURA has always supported the 5-6 payment requirement. Joy stated that she thought it was very generous of UIL to lower the amount of payments required.

Carlene advised that she does not get information tracking the success of people on MPP. She stated that if DSS is expending funds to the CAAs to have them provide services to enroll people then they should know how successful the CAAs were in this regard. Edith added that she had asked for this information previously. Frank stated that a filing is submitted to PURA in July and they can issue interrogatories to get the information by CAA.

Legislative Matters: No legislative matters were discussed.

Miscellaneous: Kate advised that 211 is doing a big push to do webinars about the 211 website. Kate informed the group that they can email her and she will coordinate making this happen. Kate stated that she has worked with Joy to do this.

Nora advised that she has not seen any legislation based on LIEAB's report. Nora also mentioned Pat's official retirement announcement. Pat stated that they are in the process of interviewing candidates for her position.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:55. Edith made the motion to adjourn and Frank seconded.

Next Meeting: The next meeting was scheduled for April 6, 2016.