

## MINUTES

Low Income Energy Advisory Board  
Wednesday, June 1, 2016  
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, Pat Wrice, Operation Fuel, Kate Quigley, 2-1-1, Michael D'O  
nofrio, DSS, Diane Duva, DEEP, Kasia Purciello, OPM, Kelly Sinko, OPM, Nora Duncan, AARP, Brian Biernat, DEEP, Wendy Wanchak, CT Legal Services, Veronica Gomez-Hernandez, Eversource, Ivelisse Velazquez, CNG, John Roberts, SCG, Eddie Swift, Eversource, Rhonda Evans, CAFCA, Chris Herb, CEMA, Linette Jones, DSS, Taren O'Connor, OCC, Brenda Watson, Operation Fuel, Ruth Swift, NPU.

**Welcome:** The meeting was convened at 1:30 p.m. Pat Wrice chaired the meeting.

**Approval of minutes of the April 6th meeting:** The April 2016 minutes were approved with the correction of a misspelled name, a change of date to May 31<sup>st</sup>, correcting the next meeting date and stating on page 2 that funding may be held back by HHS. Frank moved to adopt the minutes and Nora seconded. Approved with Taren abstaining.

**Discussion of Operation Fuel's Apprise Study:** Pat stated that the findings were unveiled at the Op Fuel Power Lunch. It looks again at a discounted affordable rate. Pat advised that LIEAB looked at an affordable rate ten years earlier and it almost got passed back then. Initial funding for this study was given by OPM with additional funds from the Hartford Foundation and others according to Pat. Pat noted that Op Fuel did not feel comfortable releasing the study until DSS and the utilities had a chance to correct or endorse the information presented in the study. Pat also stated that other states have done an affordable rate paid through ratepayer funds. Pat advised that Connecticut has 313,000 households paying more than they can afford and the numbers are increasing.

David Carroll presented an overview of the Apprise Study. He advised that the LIHEAP program is required to collect a lot of information about which

population groups are served and which are not and to learn what the priorities should be. The report noted that a lot of money has been invested in energy affordability and energy efficiency but we don't know which groups are being served. David stated that it would be important to learn which groups are being served and whether those efforts are effective. He stressed that Connecticut is not starting from scratch. Most of the low income programs use LIHEAP eligibility as an entry point to these other programs and DSS has done a great job of creating a database. He stated as part of the core findings it states that a lot of money has been spent on energy efficiency and as you serve these people you need more information for programs such as the HES-IE program. David stated that low income customers live in many types of dwellings so you should determine if it is serving renters or owners of multi-family or single family dwellings. He noted that since all ratepayers are paying, you need to ensure that money is being spent and distributed across all low income groups. He added that it is not clear which income levels are being successful on MPP and which are not. He said that this information needs to be reviewed and they need to discover if there are barriers to making this information available. In response to a question from Diane, David stated that LIHEAP has detailed income level information and also information showing if heat is included in the rent or whether the person pays the utility directly. He stated that MPP shows how many people are enrolled but it should be broken down by income. David advised that since you have to apply for LIHEAP to be accepted into MPP, this information is in the database and these are simple statistics that will tell you which people are succeeding on MPP. David stated that with respect to the Energy Efficiency programs, you get to the question of whether the money is equally divided among single family and multi-family homes. You have to determine if you are serving all the different groups that are paying in through the Systems Benefit Charge (SBC). Eddie stated that the MPP success rate is provided each year but not by income level because Eversource does not have this information. In response to a question from Diane, David stated that utilities in other states do capture this information. He said that Pennsylvania is the most aggressive in capturing the information and doing an evaluation every five years. He did note that in Pennsylvania, LIHEAP and ratepayer programs are not connected so it's not the best model.

Pat stated that a smaller group should be convened to focus on the next steps. A subcommittee will be established and David stated that he would

be happy to help in any way needed. Pat noted that we were blessed this year by low rates and mild weather but this will not always be the case and we all want what is best for low income families.

**Operation Fuel:** Brenda informed the group that the Op Fuel program is closing June 24<sup>th</sup>. She said that the program has served over 4,000 people and the program was a little over \$1.8 million. The summer program will begin July 11<sup>th</sup> and it will be for electric and gas utilities only.

**LIHEAP:** The application period was extended until May 31<sup>st</sup> for everyone. Carlene advised that there was a slight uptick in applications of about 1,400 from May 19 to June 1st. Carlene also distributed the expenditure report that shows the estimated balance of approximately \$30 million. The carryover maximum is \$8 million. Typically the excess is a supplemental program to utility heated households. Carlene requested LIEAB provide recommendations in the next couple of weeks. Carlene added that the supplemental program cannot be overly administratively burdensome and in response to a question from Pat, Carlene advised that a grant to a customer is permitted to be a credit balance .

Carlene stated that the biggest drop was in safety nets. She said that this made a difference of about \$10 million. She also stated that funds must be obligated by September 30<sup>th</sup> but do not have to be spent for 5 years. If the funds are not obligated by the deadline, they must be returned to HHS.

Nora stated that this large amount seems like it could be used for a supplemental program as well as future obligated expenses such as furnace replacement. It would be a blended approach. Taren requested that information concerning the obligations be sent so the board can make recommendations.

Carlene advised that she needs recommendations fairly soon. Nora asked what the parameters are concerning what they can recommend and she asked Carlene how long it would be before she received guidance. Carlene stated that it would be fairly soon but in the interim the board can send recommendations and she added that she needs to receive them in the next two weeks.

**Election of Officers:** Pat advised that two names were placed in nomination. Nora for Chairperson and Taren as Vice-Chairperson. Edith

sent out a formal nomination. Rhonda made a motion and Eddie seconded. The motion was so moved. It will be a one year term and meetings will be every other month.

**LIHEAP Subcommittee Recommendations:** This is the last meeting before the August deadline. Wendy stated that more people need to join the subcommittee so it isn't the same people all the time. There was discussion regarding notice of the winter protection program. Each household receives the Notice of Applicant Rights and the information could be added to that. Brenda advised that the subcommittee thinks the additional notice would be good. Brenda also stated that clients are more likely to read an award letter rather than a Notice of Rights. Kelly thanked the subcommittee for the recommendations and advised that they will take them all into consideration. Wendy made a motion to adopt the recommendations and Frank seconded.

**Utility Matching Payment:** Eddie provided the Eversource update and reported that there were 18,314 matches for electric for a total of \$4.5 million. There were 7,834 failures. There was a 57% success rate. The below budget total was 8,383 and 71% were successful.

Eversource reported that for gas there were 17,136 participants and 8,429 were successful. It was a 49% success rate. There were 4,543 below budgets and there was a 62% success rate.

UIL did not have an update. They are in the process of gathering the information for the next meeting.

**Legislative Matters:** Frank advised that the MPP Plan will be submitted at the end of June. Frank will see that Board members are on the Service List

Nora advised that the standard rate offer drops starting July 1<sup>st</sup> and AARP will be issuing a press release. There will also be educational outreach because there is sometimes predatory behavior. .

### **Miscellaneous:**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:14. Nora made the motion to adjourn and Wendy seconded.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting was scheduled for August 3, 2016.