

MINUTES

Low Income Energy Advisory Board
Wednesday, May 17, 2017
HRA/Human Resources Agency
75 Charter Oak Ave
Hartford, CT

Members/Designees/Others In Attendance: Alyson Ayotte, PURA, Frank Augeri, PURA, Gail Lucchina, PURA, Kate Quigley, 2-1-1, Nora Duncan, AARP, Wendy Wanchak, CT Legal Services, Brenda Watson, Operation Fuel, Ruth Swift, NPU, Karen Adamson, Operation Fuel, Linda Foreman, DEEP, Suanette Galarza, UIL, Kathy Wasilnak, UI, Linette Jones, DSS, Carlene Taylor, DSS, Rhonda Evans, CAFCA, Joanne Balaschak, NOI, Michelle Lawson, CNG.

Welcome: The meeting was convened at 1:30 p.m. Nora Duncan chaired the meeting.

Approval of minutes of the April 5, 2017 meeting: Kathy Wasilnak moved to approve the minutes and Wendy seconded. The minutes were approved with the correction of one typographical error. Nora reminded the group that the next meeting was scheduled for August 1st.

Operation Fuel: Brenda informed the group that the Op Fuel program has served over 4,000 households since December and has spent \$1.9 million. Brenda also stated that the program would remain open until May 31st. The program will be closed for the month of June and will reopen July 5th. Kate asked about the online tool. Brenda replied that they are updating the website now and stated that the contact list would be updated before they reopen in July.

LIHEAP: Carlene distributed the latest caseload report. She advised that the numbers were down from last year which were down from the previous year. Carlene stated that they will not hit 100,000 applications this year. They might get to 85,000 eligible households. She added that they extended fuel deliveries until March 31st. The total funding was \$80.3 million and they have a carry forward of \$30 million. Carlene advised that approximately \$22 million would have to be obligated before the end of September. She stated that the amount was similar last year. Last year

there was a supplemental payment of \$375.00. They also paid the heating cost of homeless shelters last year. Carlene stated that approximately \$144,000 would cover this expense. There is a possibility that funds may be used to pay the heating costs of domestic violence shelters. They are also setting aside money for a feasibility study. Michelle asked if any money could be used for outreach. Carlene responded that it could but it would have to come from funds that would have been designated for clients and it's hard to know ahead of time what dollar amounts will be needed in a given winter.

Carlene advised that one round of utility payments had been done and a second round should be received by utilities in two weeks for the match.

The Repair/Replace program had \$1 million allocated and they expended \$570,000. Carlene stated that last year the program ran until July 1st and they will probably do the same this year. There were also 450 servicing and cleanings done as part of the program. She noted that some of the applications were foreclosures and those are not eligible and there were a couple of fraud cases.

Carlene informed the group that last year there were 3,290 safety nets and this year there were 12,182. They will be submitting a plan to OPM by mid-July. Kate asked if the people eligible for supplemental payments have already been identified. Carlene stated that they have been identified. Carlene advised that DSS has been asked about cooling but the agency has not really contemplated it. She stated that New York and New Jersey do provide funds for cooling.

Utility Matching Payment: Kathy reported for UIL for the period through May 15, 2017. For UI there were 3,388 customers, CNG had 13,469 and SCG has 14,549. She stated that they are halfway through the matches and they will be completed by May 31, 2107. UI is in cycle 8 and it provided \$200,000 in matches with 814 customers successfully completing the program. SCG provided \$530,000 in matches to 3,300 customers and CNG provided \$332,000 to 3,600 customers. SCG and CNG are in cycle 11. Rhonda stated that CAFCA was concerned about the success rate. She stated that a subcommittee should be put together to study the issue further. Kathy stated that this issue was discussed at the Power Summit. Carlene advised that DSS now needs to report the success of the MPP program. They have to provide the information to HHS by zip code.

Wendy asked about the utilities stating that they planned to put together a cheat sheet. Suanette replied that a cheat sheet had been done and has been distributed. Suanette has been tasked with looking at the success of this program. She is looking at MPP right now and next will be MAT.

Legislative and Docketed Matters: Frank advised the group that the MPP plan will be submitted by July 1st. Frank will send everyone a copy of the Application. He told the group to contact him if they wished to be added to the Service List.

Nora stated that AARP continues to work on the Dominion Bill. The bill has not changed since proposed. AARP continues to oppose it as unnecessary and they believe it will raise rates. Nora also stated that it went to the Appropriations Committee and it may go to the Finance Committee. AARP will continue to work against it. Nora stated that a lot of people dislike it for a variety of reasons and it is very controversial.

Nora also spoke about the Governor's bill to not permit credit reporting. She stated that Eversource has dropped their credit reporting pilot. UIL stills does credit reporting. It was noted that Eversource was in discussions to look at uncollectibles and the issue of serious illness/medical shut offs. Frank stated that the municipal utilities had looked at an assets test but that went nowhere.

Frank advised the group that the Marketing Standards hearing would take place at PURA on Friday, June 23rd. He stated that they would like to create standardized practices for all suppliers.

Power Summit – Operation Fuel: Karen Adamson thanked everyone for coming and she commented on the great participation by all the attendees. They have sent out a summary of the different ideas that came out of the discussions and the survey. The theme was “How do we share information?” Karen stated the need to work together whether private or public agencies. She noted that there were a number of people from the Green Bank in attendance and that was good. Karen stated that Operation Fuel was working with the Green Bank to make programs affordable. Karen also stated that they are looking at water issues and people falling behind with their water bills. Karen noted that we also need to look at consumption data and conservation. She said that another important issue was that of how to work better with landlords and multi-family properties.

She stated that it is a big frustration and a barrier for renters to be able to lower their costs. She concluded by noting that Operation Fuel would be establishing a Public Affairs Committee.

Miscellaneous: Nora stated that when LIEAB last met they talked about the fact that MPP and Below Budgets are not working as well as they could or should be. Nora said the group needs to look at what can be done and to re-look at who is eligible and do we look at level of income instead of historical usage. She also stated that more outreach was needed. LIEAB needs to learn why some people do not apply and we need to look at overcoming barriers. Nora offered that once recommendations are proposed, the group should get together and lobby. She noted that there are June and July deadlines but there are opportunities going forward. Brenda stated that LIEAB should put together a subcommittee to look at it for next year since they will not have recommendations by June or July. Rhonda agreed there is not enough time right now. Rhonda advised putting together the subcommittee and then figuring out what the legislative piece is.

Nora referenced the report that LIEAB put together and suggested that the group pick items of consensus and meet with the Energy and Technology Committee. Kate suggested picking the top three items. Nora advised to go with as many items as they could. Carlene stated that there has already been movement on one of the items which is the dual application. Nora acknowledged that many of the items were about communications and data sharing. Nora recommended establishing a subcommittee and seeing what items of agreement can be reached. She stated that realistic deadlines need to be established in order to meet with the Energy and Technology Chairpersons in January. Nora stated that anyone who wants to be on the subcommittee should volunteer by May 31st. The subcommittee should provide recommendations by the October meeting. Solid decisions will need to be made by the December 7th meeting. Nora will send out an email regarding this subcommittee by close of business tomorrow.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 2:45. Karen made the motion to adjourn and Frank seconded.

Next Meeting: The next meeting was scheduled for August 2nd as agreed upon by the board.

