

MINUTES

Low Income Energy Advisory Board
Wednesday, October 4, 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, Diane Duva, DEEP, Nora Duncan, AARP, Linda Foreman, DEEP, Joanne Balaschak, NOI, Taren O'Connor, OCC, Brenda Watson, Operation Fuel, Ruth Swift, NPU, Kelly Sinko, OPM, Suannette Galarza, UIL, Kathy Wasilnak, UI, Carlene Taylor, DSS, Edith Karsky, CAFCA, Linette Jones, DSS, Eddie Swift, Eversource, .

Welcome: The meeting was convened at 1:34 p.m. Nora Duncan chaired the meeting.

Approval of minutes of the August 2nd meeting: Several changes to the minutes were discussed. Edith moved to approve the minutes with the noted changes and Frank seconded. Nora abstained. The August 2017 minutes were approved with the noted changes.

Operation Fuel: Brenda informed the group that Karen has resigned for personal reasons. She advised that the annual conference is next Wednesday and Elin Swanson Katz is the guest speaker.

Brenda advised that they are no longer taking applications as they are waiting for a state budget to be approved. She stated that they normally stay open until the end of October. Brenda stated that if there is no budget until the next session, the Op Fuel program will be an approximately \$1 million dollar program.

Diane suggested and all agreed that the board will send a card thanking Karen and wishing her well.

LIHEAP: Carlene advised that the LIHEAP Block Grant was approved on August 31st. She stated that applications started being taken on August 1st and she stated that there is a decline in applications.

The Agency was advised that they had to submit their application to HHS by October 4th and they are meeting the deadline. Carlene stated that in the past, 90% of funds have been released but there is a Continuing Resolution so it is unknown at this point what the percentage will be.

Carlene advised that Community Action of New Haven had not been able to pay all of their vendors. There is an outstanding balance of \$108 thousand owed to 14 vendors. Carlene advised that this agency is waiting for a grant from the City of New Haven. This year they will not be making deliverable fuel payments and they are looking for a third party. Carlene stated that the vendors are unsure whether to participate because some of them have not been paid for last year. She also stated that some eastern Connecticut vendors are concerned due to a ripple effect from New Haven. She stated that the first vendor meeting is next Thursday.

Carlene advised that supplemental payments were sent out in the amount of \$295 to eligible households. There was approximately \$200,000 given to homeless shelters for heating bills and \$200,000 for heating to domestic violence shelters.

Kate asked if people can still be referred to New Haven and Carlene said they could.

Subcommittee Update: Nora stated that at the May meeting it was decided to set up a subcommittee. Today is the meeting where more refined recommendations would be given and Nora noted that Karen was heading that up. Nora stated that the theory is that today we will start talking about recommendations and decide if we want to set up legislative meetings. Nora stated that the goal is to make solid decisions at the December 6th meeting of how to move forward.

Diane presented on three topics they looked at:

- 1) Discount rate
- 2) Landlord permissions
- 3) Water bills

Diane stated that the primary topic the subcommittee thought was worth pursuing was discussion of a discount rate. The subcommittee suggested that the Board could ask the Office of Legislative Research to look into

what the qualifying criteria are in other states and is the discount applied to the entire bill. They also want information on how much money is spent on such programs in other states.

Kelly asked about the premise of the discount rate. Eddie stated that it is to reduce the current bill but it does nothing to address arrearages. Edith stated that the concern with the Matching Payment Program is that only 50% of those participating are successful in getting the match.

Taren stated that the goal could be to have this rate eliminate other programs. Carlene asked who pays for this program and Frank responded that ratepayers pay for it. Diane noted that the Apprise Study recommended being more proactive about arrearages. The subcommittee suggested that PURA or OCC might do a presentation on arrearages and Taren stated that she could do that.

Diane advised that regarding landlord permissions, current statutes provide for some energy conservation measures without landlord permissions, though utilities' programs may have legal concerns about acting without landlord permissions and we should ask about this. She recommended that they invite the Conservation and Load Management Program Administrators to attend a future LIEAB meeting.

Diane stated that with regard to water bills the subcommittee did not recommend a "to do" item with this. There was discussion about some water companies offering assistance programs for people falling behind in bill payments..

Nora stated that the group can draft questions and vote in December. She stated that the questions can be shared with the distribution list. Edith advised that a position paper is needed along with the questions to describe and frame the issues properly. Nora said there will be a comment period. Edith, Eddie and Joanne will draft eh memo and the entire Board can comment on it and then it will be sent to key legislators. Properly moved and seconded. All agreed.

Nora stated that if there is not enough time in the December meeting to get to the regular agenda items we can carry them over to February. Nora stated that we will approve the October minutes and LIHEAP update will be

left on the agenda. The other updates can be sent out via email or brought the day of the meeting.

Edith stated that she would like to remove water as an issue. Nora stated that it is a trending topic that has been raised as an issue and should be looked at. Brenda stated that Operation Fuel is looking at low income programs for water customers and would like the Board's support.

WAP: Diane advised the group that Connecticut's application to the U.S. Department of Energy had been updated and DEEP held a supplemental public hearing on August 31st. Diane presented the overview provided at the public hearing. She explained changes in the delivery of the program for the new program year, and emphasized that the proposed plan does not preclude any previous service providers from being considered in the future. Taren asked if the review was the same every year. Diane said it is the same process every year and that it is a one year DOE grant.

Edith stated that CAFCA and NOI of Waterbury presented very strong opposition to this plan. Edith stated that there is a statewide demographic formula that determines the budget. Edith stated that she felt the last two years were disastrous. Joanne stated that there has been no monitoring. Joanne asked if DOE has approved yet of CT's plan. DEEP explained that a conditional approval had been received, with DEEP needing to provide supplemental information and they have submitted the supplemental information which was requested. Kelly stated that the Governor's Office is aware of the issues and they want to streamline the process. She advised that DSS, DEEP, and OPM are continuing conversations.

Utility Matching Payment: Suanette distributed the information and advised that the numbers for Phase II were not available.

Eversource did not provide a report.

Legislative and Docketed Matters: Frank advised that the MPP plan was approved and the only change was including geographic data. He stated that the below budget success rate was 60-80% while MPP success rate was in the high 40s-mid-50s %. Eversource requested that the Authority

create a workgroup on uncollectibles and how to best recoup these funds per Frank.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 3:08. Edith made the motion to adjourn and Frank seconded.

Next Meeting: The next meeting was scheduled for December 6th as agreed upon by the board.