

**MINUTES**  
**Low Income Energy Advisory Board**  
**Wednesday, February 21, 2018**  
**HRA Board Room**  
**180 Clinton Street**  
**New Britain, CT**

**Members/Designees/Others In Attendance:** Carlene Taylor, DSS, Diane Duva, DEEP, Kasia Purciello, OPM, Rebecca Zeuschrus, OPM, Nora Duncan, AARP, Chris Herb, CEMA, Taren O'Connor, OCC, Ruth Swift, NPU, Karen Adamson, Operation Fuel, Linda Foreman, DEEP, Kathy Wasilnak, UI, Edith Karsky, CAFCA, Michael D'Onofrio, DSS, Linette Jones, DSS, Eddie Swift, Eversource, Kate Quigley, 211, Joy Hollister, CLASS/Ellington, Wendy Wanchak, CT Legal Services, Inc., Suannette Galarza, UI-SCG, Frank Augeri, PURA, Ally Ayotte, PURA, Joanne Bayaschak, NOI, Kelly Sinko, OPM, Michele Lawson, UIL-CNG

**Welcome:** The meeting was convened at 1:35 p.m. Nora Duncan chaired the meeting.

**Approval of minutes of the December 6, 2017 meeting:** The December 6, 2017 minutes were approved with edits from Carlene.

**OLR Request Update:**

Edith spoke on the status of OLR waiting for questions from the subcommittee to begin the report.

**LIEAB Subcommittee Update**

Wendy led discussion: NY Governor set a goal of achieving 6% of income on energy. Diane stated that CES cites strategy of reducing energy burden--closing affordability gap; referenced availability of CES on DEEP website; can search on energy burden to locate strategy on this topic. Wendy stated that she sent out draft on 1/10/18 on discount rate identified New York as an example i.e. low income pay no more than 6% for energy costs. To review discount rates for 12 states and adopt policy and proposed implementation. Subcommittee got draft for review and comments. Much discussion of what should be included in the draft. Draft not completed, will be resent. Diane stated that the CES is out and does not reflect % discount. She will provide an overview of the strategy /policy statement at the next meeting. Wendy suggested we use as part of discussion about CES and the decrease in the affordability gap and to propose to implement administratively. Much discussion on the draft, will be sent out electronically to modify.

**Operation Fuel:** Nora stated that Brenda is now the Executive Director of the organization, looking for new Board members. Congratulations to her. No report.

**LIHEAP:** Carlene distributed the caseload report. She stated that there was a decline in applications from the previous year and she went over each cap (see report). Unexplained reduction in overall applications (except NOI Waterbury has slight increase)--weather hasn't been that warm that long; CAANH issue-money swept up in a warrant; Carlene stated will likely issue DSS Press release--to advertise opportunity to apply for assistance under LIHEAP; Edith stated that CAFCA working with DSS; if CAANH closes, CAFCA will work with DSS to identify another agency to provide

services; CEAP--there has been sequestration waiting for release of funds. Despite president's cancellation in his budget proposal, Congress has bipartisan support and anticipates maintaining LIHEAP. If allocation remains at \$67 million, would have a balance estimated at \$8.7 million; can carry over \$6.7 million. Last year--used carryover funds for shelters; feasibility study and for utility heated households.

Linette reported that heating systems: 61 requests; 7 denied, one for over income, one incomplete, 2 in foreclosure, 6 tank replacements, 3 repairs, 119 Clean tune and test; 2 people came out of foreclosure and reapplied. Numbers low because so many people are renters and statute doesn't allow DSS to provide replacements to renters; \$205,617.81 spent to date- out of \$1m available; available until mid-August; Chris Herb says he will remind his network that this is available; Chris has about \$400,000 to supplement that--for replacement. Carlene spoke on the assurance of payments and payments are going out. Carlene stated that CAFCA is playing an important role and is working with DSS and energy services will continue. Much discussion on the situation, i.e. agency doors closed for a couple of hours, call 211 or DSS, they are working together. There was 70 household delivery and commitment from staff that doors will remain open. Utility call center received calls and referred to 211/CAFCA or DSS toll free number.

Eddie stated that this is an increase in distribution rate at Eversource and stated that outreach about programs is robust, regulatorily, statutorily, administratively. Diane stated that senior citizen outreach is good. Nora stated that meals- on- wheels has very good outreach. Much discussion.

The HHS pilot TVCCA-Norwich Utilities with data collection in the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase on site, technical, project planning and restoration in line with last year report. Mike stated that performance measures to HHS: pilot with TVCCA and NPU for automated process for data; second phase--will meet with utilities--APPRISE is contracted to HHS to work with states--APPRISE will meet with state regarding project planning and best practices; will work with APPRISE on how to catch preventative data; are reporting on 1000 households this year; will next add in utility data; Joan also stated that HH use allocation at level 4/5 benefits are higher (\$600.00), not as many level 5 that use allocation. She stated that the weather has been good. Carlene stated that after March 15<sup>th</sup> no oil delivery, Operation Fuel is there for additional benefit. Edith questioned medical exemption? Eddie said increase funds will be released end of the week. Diane spoke on the weatherization streamline approach DSS data sharing in state plan (WAP) will provide update at the April meeting.

**Utility Matching Payment:** Eddie Swift reported Eversource: 3000 customers less than last year at this time; 14,650 are enrolled in Eversource Electric; Eversource Gas 13,802; but balances are the same [i.e., same amount of money owed, though fewer households; 2014-2016: over 100k households approved in LIHEAP; Discussion about implications of this data; trends across programs, coupled with number of poverty households not declining. Discussion about customers not participating, Carlene stated that the economy is getting better. Balances are remaining or growing or equal with 3k

less customers. There are a lot of things in place to get assistance and the number decrease each year but no decrease in the balances. Diane stated that it may be the same household electric/gas getting heating assistance. In 2016, 34k decrease in participation but disconnect notice increases participation in the programs.

**Legislative/Budget Matters:** Frank spoke about the Eversource/OCC settlement process. There will be 4 public comment hearings, late filed hearing –comments via emails because of short in 3 reps that will be subject to layoffs, May 1<sup>st</sup> moratorium ends and toll free number will be in use. Frank questioned the possibility change in the statute to address/change the decrease in applications for low income customers and change the May 15<sup>th</sup> shut off date given that the average balance (delinquent) is between \$2500.00-\$3000.00. There was much discussion regarding this. Joan wanted to know the legal rights, code violations, and housing role. Taren didn't have luck with housing representatives--barriers--landlords organizations--community housing and wanted to include HUD into the conversation, perhaps visitor/speaker to provide guidance on how to address the issue. Diane spoke on the landlord issue of multifamily, 1-4 unit owners. Wendy will provide association of property owners; Kelly Sinko--will provide information from interactions she has had on topic of rent subsidy.

**WAP Update:** Diane stated that at the April LIEAB meeting she will provide overview of state plan for next program year; will have schedule for public hearing and will be using streamlined process of identifying clients to receive services this year;

**Miscellaneous:** Allocation plan for next year; Joy will organize; DSS plan for presentation in June; sub-committee meet in March and May.

**Adjourn:** The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m. Edith made the motion and it was seconded.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting was scheduled for April 4, 2018