

MINUTES

Low Income Energy Advisory Board
Wednesday, February 6, 2019
HRA/Human Resources Agency
75 Charter Oak Ave
Hartford, CT

Members/Designees/Others In Attendance: Frank Augeri, PURA, PURA, Alyson Ayotte, PURA, Gail Lucchina, PURA, Kate Quigley, 2-1-1, Taren O'Connor, Nora Duncan, AARP, OCC, Kathy Wasilnak, UI, Carlene Taylor, DSS, Linette Pisani, DSS, Linda Foremen, DEEP, Julia Dumaine, DEEP, Ruth Swift, NPU, Tasha Perreault, Eversource, Guy West, Clean Water Fund, Eddie Swift, Eversource, Edith Karsky, CAFCA, Wendy Wanchak, CT Legal Services, Tasheenah Brown, Operation Fuel.

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

Approval of minutes of the December 5th meeting: Wendy moved to approve the minutes and Frank seconded. Minutes approved with Nora and Edith abstaining.

LIHEAP: Carlene distributed the latest caseload information. She advised that when the federal shutdown occurred they thought there would be an increase but they have not seen this. Other states have seen no impact either. Carlene added that when the shutdown occurred they already had all the funds for the federal fiscal year. The total in the account was \$75,290,878.

Carlene advised they have been working with 211 to publicize the program. Kate stated that the texting pilot has been a success. She noted that some of the texts may be due to the DMV slides. Per Carlene and Kate, they may also be able to use the slides at Department of Labor job centers.

Carlene stated that the first round of utility payments will be in the next couple of weeks. She also advised that normally the last fuel delivery is March 15th but in the last couple of years they have extended this.

Operation Fuel: Tasheenah advised that the budget is fixed at \$1.5 million. She stated that 21 out of 108 fuel banks are closed at this point due to expending their funds. She advised that if one fuel bank is closed then people can call and go to the next closest fuel bank. Linda asked if they keep track of people that apply to another fuel bank and Tasheenah said they do refer people to other fuel banks and they update 211 as well. Edith asked if people are advised to go to LIHEAP first and Tasheenah stated that they are.

Tasheenah gave an update regarding the water assistance program. She stated that there were 1200 applications and a little over \$50,000 allocated. They have also received a grant from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving and this will encompass a 29 town area.

Tasheenah advised that MDC has committed to continue the program and will fund it to the same amount or a similar level.

MPP: Kathy (UI) handed out information for UI, CNG and SCG showing last month and this month as well. It shows a breakdown between \$50 and \$75 per month budgets. She advised that she would provide a comparison to last year at the next meeting.

Eddie advised the group that Eversource has 13,690 electric customers in the program and 5,312 below budget. He added that for gas customers there 10,721 enrolled and of this number 2,306 were below budget. He also stated that he will provide a comparison to last year.

Eddie noted that there are a large number of customers that have received Energy Assistance but are not in the MPP. Edith inquired if this was confined to one particular area and Eddie responded that the Company is currently researching this. They will be targeting these individuals.

Legislative/Misc: Nora stated that Chris Herb sent an email about proposed legislation. Chris stated in the email that since his motion did not get a second he provided a link to the proposed legislation on the matter. Carlene and Taren confirmed that everyone was paid within thirty days.

Wendy asked if there was similar legislation last year and Carlene stated that there was not. She advised that there was a problem in New Haven last year and the situations were not similar. Edith stated that many

companies are small vendors and they cannot front the payments. She added that in New Haven many vendors did not get paid in a timely manner and most of them cannot wait one month for payment. Nora added that Chris spells this out in the proposed legislation about there being a problem if payment is delayed. Carlene noted that contracts had to go through the CORE System which was never done before. She does not believe this will be a problem ever again. Carlene noted that payments are done every other week. She stated that the problem was not with DSS but with not getting complete information. Carlene requests that agencies make the payments in ten days. She noted that they have thirty days but they make every effort to get payments done in 10-14 days. Carlene stated that agencies can process payments in 10-14 days and Edith noted that one agency does it in 72 hours.

Frank advised that the uncollectibles docket, Docket No. 18-04-25, has a technical meeting in March. Frank added that if anyone wants to participate just let him know. Wendy told the group that she got some great assistance filing comments.

Taren and Nora stated that OCC and AARP held a press conference to ban third party electric suppliers. Taren stated that 50% of staff time is spent on this issue. They noted that Connecticut has instituted the tightest reins and it doesn't work. They added that the most vulnerable customers are being preyed upon. There are two pro-supplier bills they both intend to testify about. Frank stated that ten years ago they created the purchase of receivables so they are guaranteed to be paid even if the customer does not pay. Taren said that Massachusetts and Illinois have similar proposals.

Wendy stated that Legal Services is going to support OCC and AARP and they are looking for customers who have been impacted. Taren said it is difficult to get people to speak because the people who are often selling them the service are their friends or neighbors.

Nora advised people that AARP has a 34 page PowerPoint on how to understand your electric bill. She offered that if anyone wants to do a group presentation she can provide it.

Linda reminded everyone that the WAP Plan needs to be on the agenda for April.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 2:38. Edith made the Motion to Adjourn and Kate seconded.

Next Meeting: The next meeting was scheduled for April 3rd.