

## MINUTES

### Low Income Energy Advisory Board Wednesday, April 1, 2020 GoTo Meeting Webinar Operation Fuel

#### **In Attendance:**

Brenda Watson, Lissette Andino, Frank Augeri, Joanne Balaschak, Nora Benson, Brian Biernat, Tasheenah Brown, Nora Duncan, Rhonda Evans, Nelida Handy, Chris Herb, Steven Hernandez, Joy Hollister, Nancy Joaquim, Tracy Kelsey, Nickey Kollie, Gail Lucchina, Ken Millerd, Matthew Pellowski, Tyra Peluso, Linette Pisani, Tasha Perrault, Deb Polun, Kate Quigley, Ruth Swift, Carlene Taylor, Wendy Wanchak, Kathleen Wasilnak, Guy West, Alyson Ayotte

**Welcome:** The meeting was convened at 1:31 PM, Brenda Watson chaired the meeting

**Approval of Minutes of the February 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting:** Wendy Wanchak moved to approve the minutes with edits. Frank Augeri Seconded the motion. Edits: Taren actually took a new position at PURA, not OCC.

**LIHEAP:** Carlene provided an update. This year's LIHEAP: 83,000+ applications taken, 69,000+ approved. Since COVID crisis began, CAAs have moved to phone calls and mail-in applications, not face to face. Decrease in applications from prior year, because some agencies went through personnel issues, and now because of the COVID crisis. Will likely see an uptick in people applying because of crisis.

Fuel deliveries extended to 4.30.2020 for those who have not exhausted benefits. Have sent info by social media, through agencies, web sites, etc. Price of oil has dropped, which has extended the use of funds. Expect ~7,000 deliveries through end of April.

There is still some unallocated federal funds. Each state will get 1% of it; CT will get about \$100,000. DSS decided today to extend the application date to June 1. DSS will send information to CAAs.

To date, have allocated about \$800,000 for heating system replacement.

In the CARES Act passed a few days ago, \$900M was allocated to LIHEAP. \$225M will be allocated at the regular tier; rest will be allocated at 2nd tier. So, southern states will be helped more than northern states.

CT has not yet been told what portion of the \$900M we will receive in supplemental funds. Carlene will let us know. The funds run through 2021 and are to deal with what is currently going on in the country. To determine use of the funds will review current plan to see how it should be interpreted

DSS is not sure if a public hearing will be required around receipt of extra funds. Will also speak with legislative staff around CT-specific requirements for hearings by committees of cognizance.

DSS would welcome recommendations from LIEAB. Might establish a LIEAB subcommittee on this and/or merge with LIEAB Planning Subcommittee.

**Operation Fuel:** Operation Fuel has staggered staff of 9; half are working on-site. Operation Fuel has received 60 applications yesterday. As of December, served over 2,000 households; allocated \$1.1M in direct assistance. Prioritizing deliverable fuels because of moratorium on utility shut offs. Applying for foundation grants to expand programs to people outside the income guidelines. A number of intake sites have moved to phone and mail. Working in lockstep with DSS. Looking to extend the end date as well, to 4.30.2020 for deliverable fuel.

**Matching Payment Program: UIL:** Through 3.31.2020, UI – 3,069 customers, SCG – 12,257, CNG – 11,290. Great turnout at community events. Thanks to Tasheenah from OpFuel for providing training for the customer service people! **Eversource:** Went through data for 2018-2019 program year for MPP and NewStart Forgiveness

**Legislative/Docketed Matters:** Regulated utilities extended moratorium through PURA order, and most unregulated utilities are also extending moratorium. There is not one centralized place for the municipal/ unregulated utilities to report on this

**2020/2021 LIHEAP Plan Recommendations:** No update yet. Subcommittee has not met due to COVID crisis.

**Other:** PURA is not in office, but customers can leave voicemails and they will be returned

**Adjourn:** Motion to end by Deb Polun. Motion seconded by Wendy Wanchak. Meeting Adjourned at 2:29PM