

## MINUTES

**Low Income Energy Advisory Board  
Wednesday, April 5, 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, Wendy Wanchak, CT Legal Services, Veronica Gomez-Hernandez, Eversource, Taren O'Connor, OCC, Brenda Watson, Operation Fuel, Ruth Swift, NPU, Karen Adamson, Operation Fuel, Linda Foreman, DEEP, Suannette Galarza, UIL, Kathy Wasilnak, UI, Chuck Anderson, DSS, Edith Karsky, CAFCA, Linette Jones, DSS, Eddie Swift, Eversource, Brian Biernat, DEEP, Tasha Perreault, Eversource.

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

**Approval of minutes of the February 1<sup>st</sup> meeting:** Diane stated that the minutes should reflect the Weatherization "Plan" instead of Weatherization "Report". Frank noted that the meeting location was identified incorrectly. The February 2017 minutes were approved with the noted changes. Edith moved to adopt the minutes and Frank seconded.

**2017 Weatherization Assistance Program:** Brian made a presentation to the group regarding the 2017 program. He stated that the funding is \$2,450,480 with no carry forward from fiscal year 2016. The service area from the previous year will be used. Brian also advised that there will be a public comment hearing on April 12, 2017 at PURA and written comments will be accepted through April 24<sup>th</sup>. Edith asked if the presentation could be emailed to the Board and Brian said he would provide it via email.

**Operation Fuel:** Brenda informed the group that the Op Fuel program will run until the end of May. She stated that it was a \$1.2 million program that served 2,600 households.

Brenda reminded the group that the Power Summit invitations have gone out. She stated that if anyone had not received an invitation she would send one.

**LIHEAP:** Chuck distributed the Energy Caseload Report and the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program Report (CEAP). Chuck stated that there were 74,000 applications approved as eligible. He said that these numbers are behind last year. He noted that they recently extended the deliverable fuel date from March 15th to March 31<sup>st</sup>. Chuck stated that crisis and safety nets have increased in a healthy way from the prior year.

Chuck informed the group that the CEAP has a year-end balance of \$19.5 million. He stated that this is due in large part to fewer applications than the previous year. Chuck stated that there is a Continuing Resolution in place. There is speculation that there may be a claw back of discretionary funds. It could be all or part of the \$19.5 million. Regardless of which potential scenario, Chuck stated that they would still be able to pay all of the costs for the year. If there is a \$19.5 million carryover they will have the standard options of what to do with the overage.

Chuck noted that there will have been over 11 million gallons of fuel purchased and over 60,000 fuel deliveries.

Wendy asked about people who may have transportation problems and can't get their applications processed. She asked if anyone tracked this data. Norwich Public Utilities stated that they try to identify the people from the previous year and make some effort to assist them. Wendy stated that she thinks this is becoming more of a problem. Brenda said she'll do some inquiring to see if this has been a problem.

**Utility Matching Payment:** Veronica distributed the report to the group. Eddie stated that Eversource Electric had 16,904 customers participating. He said that as of March there were over 4,000 new customers added. For the gas customers, there were 16,115 enrolled and about 3,600 were new. There were 7,000 below budget electric and 3,800 below budget gas customers. Eddie informed the group that they will be doing a calling campaign for people that have missed payments.

Kathy reported that for UIL the numbers are down. There were a total of 28,924 enrolled this year and 32,243 for the previous year. Kathy stated

that perhaps there would be a bump in April. She also stated that they will allow people to make up a payment, similar to last year.

Edith noted that with only 55% participation of those eligible, LIEAB should look at how it could improve participation. Taren wondered if there is a need for outreach and education. Kathy and Suannette stated that UIL made two weeks of phone call to people who were enrolled last year but not this year. Eddie stated that Eversource sent letters to people that are coded hardship customers but are not participating. Eddie stated that they all apply for fuel assistance but not all of them enroll in MPP. He stated that you cannot force people to enroll. UIL concurred. Suannette said UIL has auto-enrolled people who have then called and asked to be removed.

Wendy stated that the Board's recommendations call for a written manual so processors would have the information right in front of them. Suannette at UIL said they are developing a cheat sheet that explains how the program works in simple terms. Veronica added that Eversource has YouTube tutorials. Nora stated that the cheat sheet is a great idea and she stated that UIL would share this with Eversource.

Nora and Edith recommended that a subcommittee be established to look at this issue and she asked if the utilities would be part of the subcommittee. The utility representatives stated that they would participate on the subcommittee. Edith asked about hiring a consultant and Nora stated that there was no budget to do so. Karen advised that this issue is central to the Power Summit and she said they are trying to develop an action plan.

**LIHEAP Subcommittee Recommendations:** Nora introduced the topic and stated that everyone had a week to review the report. Kate walked the group through the recommendations and the group provided comment. Kate stated that she would make the agreed upon changes. Edith moved to accept the discussed changes and Wendy seconded. Kate said she would send the document with the changes to everyone. Nora stated that she would forward the formal submission to the Commissioner of DSS and will cc Carlene.

**Legislative and Docketed Matters:** Frank advised that Eversource withdrew its Application for the Credit Reporting Pilot so that docket has been closed.

Taren stated that OCC is looking to gather complaints about third party suppliers so she stated that any such complaints should be forwarded to her. Frank noted that he might have to recuse himself if LIEAB discusses Docket No. 17-01-33, Petition of OCC to Investigate Abusive Electricity Market Supplier Practices. Nora stated that AARP is trying to get the word out to have people contact OCC directly with their information.

Frank stated that the Governor's bill to eliminate credit reporting is still moving and Nora added that it may be a study ultimately. Kathy advised that UIL and Eversource were meeting with the Governor tomorrow.

**Miscellaneous:** Nora advised that Dominion wants to sell directly to UIL and Eversource and they want to be reclassified as a renewable energy provider. AARP believes this would not be good for ratepayers and would give Dominion an unfair advantage. AARP wants Dominion to open its books. Karen stated that Operation Fuel is remaining neutral on this matter.

**Adjourn:** The meeting was adjourned at 3:10. Wendy made the motion to adjourn and Frank seconded.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting was scheduled for May 17<sup>th</sup> as agreed upon by the board.