

Community Services and Recreation

DRAFT MINUTES/UNAPPROVED

To: Community Services Commission Members

From: Gerardo Sorkin, Director

Re: Commission Meeting June 2, 2009

Meeting was called to order by Vice Chairman Walter Heinig at 5:30 p.m.

I. Attendance:

Present: Walter Heinig, Maggie Jensen, Donna Malley, Judith McKay, Judith Meyers

Staff: Gerardo Sorkin, Director, Lauren Montano, Director, Community Services Daycare and Carla Pelliccio, Secretary

Absent: Thomas Balga, William Carey, Laurie-Jean Hannon

II. Acceptance of Minutes:

Judith Meyers made a motion to accept the Minutes of May 5, 2009, seconded by Donna Malley.

III. Correspondence:

No correspondence.

IV. Director's Report:

Report by Lauren Montano, Director, Community Services Daycare

Ms. Montano began by providing a snapshot of highlights from the month of May:

- Preschool – all slots are filled (15 children) / School Age – all slots are filled (30 children).
- The children celebrated Cinco De Mayo and learned a bit about the Mexican culture.
- Preschoolers went on field trip to Lyman Hall High School in Wallingford. The Vocational Agricultural Students annual Vo-Ag Fair was filled with farm animals, dogs and rabbits for the children to see first hand.
- Children currently waiting for caterpillars to hatch and they will be making observations and keep a diary as they change and grow.

Personnel: Currently job postings for the School Age Head Teacher and Substitutes are listed on town website, the Job Bank and CareerBuilder.com. They have received good response so far. The job posting for the School Age Head Teacher position has produced over 40 applications from candidates with various backgrounds (teaching, law, physical therapy, psychology, sociology). The position was upgraded from Teacher's Aide to Head Teacher as the new position will require a teaching degree. The salary is approximately \$31,000. The goal was to bring someone on board who is equipped to address school age children who present challenging behaviors. They have also begun interviewing candidates for the School Age Head Teacher Position, as well as have begun calling candidates for a part-time Teacher Aide position.

Staff training/development: Ms. Montano attended The Bingham Early Childhood pro-social Curriculum Training in New London. In addition, staff completed the three part series, *Challenging Behavior*

Workshop given by ACES. In light of the professional development framing that the program has taken on, Mr. Heinig asked Ms. Montano if any feedback had been provided to staff. She stated that in addition to literature and posters were given, several examples of strategies were discussed.

Linda Flach, a consultant from Advanced Behavioral Health, came for a discussion about how previous trainings (in the area of challenging behaviors and behavioral issues) and methods are being used. This program called, Early Childhood Consultation, is a state funded program. Ms. Flach was brought on board in response to a situation with a child presenting challenging behaviors. She provided a case assessment, she visited the child's parents at home, and met with the daycare staff to discuss strategies that they could utilize when children present challenging behaviors.

The final training that Ms. Montano attended this month was an accident investigation workshop given by CIRMA.

Announcements: Ms. Montano participated in the planning and execution of the Community Conversation follow up meeting, which took place on May 26th at North Haven High School. She reported that the event was a great success. In addition, people are eager to keep the momentum going working on an information booklet about what is available in the community and a series for educational programs for our town cable tv.

Special Person Day will take place on June 18, 2009 at 11am: for Preschoolers and their guests to see a short performance of "Bugs, Bees & Butterflies" followed by a brunch. Ms. Montano encouraged all commissioners to attend.

Public School ends on June 23rd. Summer Program for full time school age children will begin on June 24th.

Ms. Montano went on to provide an overview of the Daycare program.

The Daycare has been operating through a grant provided by the Department of Social Services for the past 31 years. They are flat-funded, in the amount of approximately \$228,000 to service 45 children per year. DSS provides the criteria that the Daycare is mandated to follow, and monthly reports are submitted to the state monthly. The funds are provided for the before and after school programs, as well as preschoolers year round.

Funds are collected through parent fees, Care 4 Kids and the state subsidy. A fully functioning staff consists of 7 full-time and 1 part-time staff members, however they are in the process of filling the vacancies. The ratio of staff to children is roughly 7:1. The full-time preschool program is a full day program, serving the children breakfast, lunch and a snack. Those preschoolers who are at the daycare all day take an afternoon nap, and during that time, the school-age after school program is in full-swing. The children use the pool twice a week.

The Daycare is licensed by the state, and accredited by NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children). Fees are based on a sliding scale, which have been set by DSS. Fees range from \$8.00-\$95.00 per week for full-time preschoolers. Fees range from \$4.00-\$44.00 per week for school age children. The program is targeted to serve low-income families. Eligibility guidelines based on annual household income and number of people in household. Applications and tours are available in Daycare. A waiting list currently exists (6 school age, and 9 preschool). Preschoolers are used as feeders into the school age program, to which priority is given.

Due to space restrictions, infant and toddler care is not offered. Currently there is no plans for expansion. The focus is to trying to develop and improve the infrastructure to maintain the current operations.

In response to a question posed by Ms. Meyers regarding whether the daycare has a health consultant to address children with special health care needs, Ms. Montano discussed that a visiting nurse once a month, who reviews records, health care plans, makes suggestions, educates the staff on certain medications. 4 staff members have received medication administration training; 3 are certified to administer medication.

Town and State audits take place annually. State audits can take place at any time. Reapplication for licensure takes place every 4 years. The daycare manual is currently being redesigned. Once it has been revised, Mr. Sorkin would like to receive feedback from the commissioners.

Report by Gerardo Sorkin, Director

Youth Services:

Workforce Alliance Year Round Program: Four additional students have been placed in after school work sites. One student is working at the Finance Department, and three students are members of the maintenance department, helping to clean the classrooms at the end of the school day.

Workforce Alliance Summer Employment: This program is intended for youth between the ages of 14-24 years of age who have income eligibility or special needs. Sixteen students from low income families have applied for positions for summer employment, being paid through the Workforce Alliance Grant (12 positions have been budgeted for). We continue to have student applications certified, enabling the student to be eligible to be part of the program. Once certified, students will be able to begin working starting the week of June 8th.

To date, the work sites for the above program are Public Works (4 spots available), Recreation (4 spots available), and Daycare (2 spots available), in the Finance Department (1 position available), and some local businesses (remaining available spots).

Prevention/SAPC: The last meeting during the academic year for the SAPC took place on May 27th. Efforts will be put forth to have more students join the council during the 2009-2010 academic year in order to organize a forum and to engage their peers to potentially help and present some solutions for this program. Ultimately the SAPC would like to develop a much longer term substance abuse prevention plan.

Vision Goggle demonstrations took place in all of the ninth grade Health classes during the week of May 25th.

Finally, Project Graduation planning continues. The event will take place on June 23, 2009.

In response to letters sent to parents of members of the class of 2009, and local businesses, a total of \$12,826.00 has been received to date.

Senior Center:

Copies of the June 2009 *Senior Happenings* brochure of activities and events were distributed to each Commission member. Renovations commenced on May 18th and is moving along. The seniors appear to be adjusting to their new environment nicely. Operations during the transition continue to move smoothly. Mr. Sorkin mentioned that every Wednesday morning he has met and will continue to meet with the construction company, the architect, engineer, building inspector as well as members of Public Works and Finance to review the various planning aspects. A groundbreaking ceremony has been scheduled for the morning of July 15, 2009. All commissioners will be invited to attend.

Community Services:

Monthly Food Bank Statistics for May 2009: 207 meals were distributed in the month of May 2009.

Early Childhood Education Follow Up Community Conversation: On May 26th, a follow up conversation took place at the high school and was quite successful. Ms. Meyers shared her overview of the meeting, commented on the various useful resources as well as the useful statistics that had provided, and summarized the major takeaways from the session. Regarding next steps, she stated that two projects had been conceptualized: 1.) to develop a town resource guide and 2.) assemble a speakers bureau, bringing in a series of experts for public broadcast. She suggested that the data and resources distributed at the follow up meeting be provided to the commissioners as well. A follow up meeting with the planning committee will take place on 6/8/09. Finally, on June 30th at the Graustein Memorial Fund headquarters in Hamden, various community conversation participant groups will share with the group something unique about their respective community conversation and their respective follow up.

Counseling:

Counselor IV Jennifer Gosselin is no longer with the department. The Counselor IV position has been posted on the town website & CareerBuilder.com. Mr. Sorkin has received approximately 50 resumes so far, of the 50, only a few have the credentials and one interview has been scheduled for this week. He is looking for a Licensed Clinical Social Workers, Licensed Marital Family Therapists, Clinical Psychologists with experience in outpatient services who possess experience working with a broad range of ages and respective issues, ultimately with supervisory experience. The hiring salary range is \$20.33-\$28.41 per hour. Mr. Sorkin encouraged the commissioners to please pass this opportunity along. Ms. Meyers suggested a couple of networks that may be a good forum to post the opportunity. All clients have been reassigned and inquiry calls will be triaged appropriately. Clients continue to be provided the utmost quality services during this transition time.

United Way Days of Action (June 22-28, 2009): Project Idea submitted on 5/29/09. Waiting on approval from United Way. The goal of proposed project is to assist disabled or elderly residents in yard cleanup, such as weeding, watering plants and picking up branches or other yard debris. Once approved from United Way, will begin promoting this opportunity and accepting requests from North Haven residents who are eligible through June 17th. Once we have the list of requests, our hope is that we can provide this list to our assigned group of volunteers, and the residents will be helped on a first come-first served basis. The intention is to also contact local landscaping companies to see if they would be interested in volunteering their services through the Days of Action. If they agree to participate, our hope is that they would be willing to mow lawns at no charge.

V. Finance Report:

The March 2009 budget reports were reviewed by the Commission (report ending March 31, 2009).

Community Services: Current snapshot of Community Services expenditures:

April 2009: bottom line under budget YTD = 70.9%

Welfare: Current snapshot of Welfare expenditures (eviction related expenses):

April 2009: bottom line over budget YTD = 81.0%

Senior Center: Current snapshot of Senior Center expenditures:

April 2009: bottom line under budget YTD = 81.4%

Special Funds : Gerardo asked the commissioners to review the monthly snapshot of the Special Funds, as of April 31st.

Emergency Fund: balance of \$47,507.03
The Outreach Fund: balance of \$24,353.74
Project Graduation: balance: \$31,979.49

Daycare: Current snapshot of expenditures through the Daycare grant were reviewed.

VI. Old Business:

None to discuss.

VII. New Business:

Ms. Jensen received a call from an elementary school social worker seeking resources that would assist three of her students who come from families facing certain hardships. This social worker feels that they may not be utilizing all of the resources that the town has to offer. Ms. Malley suggested that the social worker direct these students to the Special Education department. Mr. Sorkin suggested that Ms. Jensen encourage the social worker to contact him to discuss the scope of the interventions that the department can provide. Certain emergency funding may be available to assist in certain circumstances.

VIII. Public Participation:

No participation.

IX. Adjournment:

Walter Heinig asked for a Motion to Adjourn accepted by Judith McKay, seconded by Donna Malley. The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

The Commission will break for the months of July and August. The next meeting will take place on September 1, 2009.