

Community Services and Recreation

DRAFT MINUTES/APPROVED

To: Community Services Commission Members

From: Gerardo Sorkin, Director

Re: Commission Meeting September 1, 2009

Meeting was called to order by Chairman Laurie Jean Hannon at 5:31 p.m.

I. Attendance:

Present: Laurie-Jean Hannon, Walter Heinig, Maggie Jensen, Donna Malley, Judith McKay, Judith Meyers

Staff: Gerardo Sorkin, Director and Carla Pelliccio, Secretary

Absent: Thomas Balga, William Carey

II. Acceptance of Minutes:

Donna Malley made a motion to accept the Minutes of June 2, 2009, seconded by Judith McKay.

III. Correspondence:

Ms. Hannon received a letter from the The Board of Selectmen requesting to all Chairmen/women of Boards & Commissions that public comment sessions be included at every board and commission meeting. While some boards and commissions have previously established a public comment period, many have not.

The Community Services Commission meeting agenda has maintained a public comment period as part of their agenda, so this is not an issue that needs to be addressed.

IV. Director's Report:

Daycare:

Summer trips are complete and have gone very well, the new year's programming is now underway.

The Center was shut down from August 10-14<sup>th</sup> for annual maintenance and cleaning.

A new parent handbook has been printed with a great new look; Mr. Sorkin encouraged the Commissioners to review it and provide and feedback for next year's revision.

*Staffing / Staff trainings:* In service staff training was conducted by Special Education Consultant, Michele Mele, on Diversity, Learning Styles, Classroom management.

New Head Teacher for the School Age Program, Amanda Astarita began on July 13<sup>th</sup>. She will be primarily working with the after school population. Currently still interviewing for a part time Teacher's Aide and substitutes.

Senior Center:

Copies of the September 2009 *Senior Happenings* brochure of activities and events were distributed to each Commission member.

*Renovation Update:* Renovations continue. We continue to meet bi-monthly with the construction company, as well as members of Public Works and Finance to review the various planning aspects. The construction company states that the completion date will be during the second week of November, however they will attempt to stick to the Oct 29<sup>th</sup> target date. Operations during the transition continue to move smoothly. The Senior Center Groundbreaking ceremony took place on July 15, 2009. On August 12<sup>th</sup>, the Seniors enjoyed a picnic on the North Haven Green with the Big Green Pizza Truck. Entertainment was provided as well.

*Staffing:* *Bus Driver* Rich Lewis retired in August and has been replaced by Arelis Adorno. Arelis was previously employed by Greater New Haven Transit District, and possess all the appropriate credentials.

### Counseling:

New Counselor IV, Suzanne McColl, LPC joined the Department on August 10<sup>th</sup>. Suzanne worked at both UCONN Health Center and Yale, possessing supervisory experience as well as experience in research and direct practice.

With Ms. McColl on board, she has begun taking on various responsibilities and new clients are being accepted. Currently there is a short waiting list, however by next week, we hope there will be no waiting list.

Counselors have begun attending Fall DHMAS trainings, which provide credits (CEU's) towards their licensure.

### Youth Services:

*Project Graduation* a success. 293 students attended. The event will take place on June 23, 2009 at Quassy Amusement Park. The largest attendance number to date. 6 buses transported graduates to Quassy. It was a well-organized and a fun event. 110 raffle prizes given away during breakfast (also the largest number of prizes to date). Results from the student and chaperone surveys will be provided at the next meeting. A small incident took place during the event, which was handled very well by chaperones, without any disruption to the event attendees or the flow of the evening. The incident surrounded a graduate who arrived to the park under the influence of alcohol with three non-graduates who attempted to enter the park. The situation was ultimately handled over by the Middlebury Police, who contacted the parents of these youth. The Superintendent of Schools had been informed of this incident. All Project Graduation sponsors had been thanked and acknowledged in the local media.

*Workforce Alliance Summer Employment Program:* The program has ended for the summer. A total of 26 students were placed. Administrative duties to carry out this program and coordinate job coaches were handled in partnership between Nancy Leddy as the Youth Services Administrator and Nancy Ceballos from North Haven High school. Students were placed at 11 work sites: Board of Education, Building Maintenance, Recreation Day Camps, Community Services Day Care Center, Finance Office, NHTV, Library Public Works (Grounds and Office), Prudential Realty, Sunny Side Up Nursery School and North Haven Housing Authority. Student hours worked varied by student ability and by the respective site's need. All students were paid the same hourly rate of \$8.00 per hour. Transportation to the work sites had not been provided for students. The Youth Services Bureau in partnership with North Haven Public School received a \$42,600 grant. This program was intended for youth who are North Haven residents between the ages of 14 and 24 years of age, who meet a certain income eligibility, or are in special education programs. No cost was incurred to the Town to run this program. Mr. Sorkin will provide a aggregate summary of evaluation results at the next meeting, as well as a narrative as to how the program impacted the students who took part in the program.

*Prevention/SAPC:* Efforts will continue increase the number of youth join the council during the 2009-2010 academic year. The next meeting will take place in October. SAPC will look into efforts to enhance the programs that have already been established, as well as continue the search for a wider membership.

Mr. Heinig asked about the status of the documentary that was to be created from footage from interview conducted with a North Haven parent who presented at the 2/11/09 Community Forum. A 21-minute documentary to air on NHTV, however Mr. Sorkin stated that the project had been put on hold. He anticipates that the footage should be finished being edited and the documentary will be released this year.

#### Community Services:

*Monthly Food Bank Statistics for August 2009:* 423 meals were distributed in the month of August 2009. New additions: obtained a freezer during the Senior Center renovations; now able to offer frozen foods to offer clients (turkey, chicken, beef, blueberries, cherries).

*2009-2010 Energy Assistance Program:* The 2009-2010 Energy Assistance season starts 9/8/09 in the Department of Community Services. Press releases have been sent to local media asking residents to begin scheduling their appointments. The season will start one month earlier than in seasons past in order to accommodate more applicants. Appointments will be increased from 1 day per week to 3 days to allow more availability for residents. Currently coordinating visits by Community Action Agency to process energy applications at the Senior Center for three days during the season (2 days were offered in years past). Current clients who utilize Counseling services will be accommodated for their energy appointment around their regularly scheduled counseling sessions.

Mr. Sorkin reported comparative statistics of the 2007-2008 season and the 2008-2009 season.

07-08 Energy Season: 257 applications processed; of those 155 were elderly residents.

08-09 Energy Season: 323 applications processed; of those 171 were elderly residents.

Ms. Meyers asked whether any data exists as to geographical locations in North Haven that may be lower income than others. She felt that if this data were obtained, resources could be explored in those areas to assist those residents. Mr. Sorkin stated that we are not doing it at this time.

*Staffing:* Community Services Secretary Janeen D'Amore submitted her resignation effective 8/28/09. She will continue to work temporarily on a part-time basis.

*2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Energy Forum* – Will take place Saturday, 9/12/09 at North Haven Middle School from 9am-12pm. Breakfast sponsored by Dunkin Donuts; Mr. Sorkin encouraged commissioners to attend and help spread the word. Some new presenters added to roster this year including Operation Fuel, a local CPA to present on tax exemptions for energy efficiency products, and North Haven Public Works.

*June 2009 United Way Days of Action:* A project idea for this campaign was submitted to United Way in May 2009, however due to their project limits, our project idea had not been selected. 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. This project will be resubmitted when the next opportunity presents.

#### V. Finance Report:

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

*Community Services:* June 2009 snapshot of Community Services expenditures:  
bottom line under budget for the EOY = 88.1%

July 2009 snapshot of Community Services expenditures:  
bottom line under budget for the YTD = 5.3%

*Welfare:* June 2009 snapshot of Welfare expenditures (eviction related expenses):  
bottom line over budget EOY =98.3%

July 2009 snapshot of Welfare expenditures (eviction related expenses):  
bottom line over budget EOY =4.6%

*Senior Center:* June 2009 snapshot of Senior Center expenditures:

bottom line under budget EOY = 95.3%  
July 2009 snapshot of Senior Center expenditures:  
bottom line under budget YTD = 4.5%

Mr. Sorkin notes a few changes to the budget for the 2000-2010 year:

1. Each cost center has been placed with its respective department. Thus expenditures related to that particular department will be allocated to the appropriate department. In previous years this had not been the case across all cost centers.
2. Part of the salary for one of the counseling positions, which had previously been paid through an account called Police-Outside Duty, has been moved into the Community Service budget. The same applied for the Youth Services Bureau, and has been moved into its respective position.

*Daycare:* Snapshots of expenditures through the Daycare grant were reviewed:

*June 2009 snapshot:* \$14,625.72

*July 2009 snapshot:* \$502.99

*Special Funds :* Mr. Sorkin asked the commissioners to review the monthly snapshot of the Special Funds, as of June 30<sup>th</sup>:

*Emergency Fund:* balance of \$56,856.19

*The Outreach Fund:* balance of \$23,853.74

Mr. Sorkin reported a trend in the increase in the number of residents seeking utility related assistance over the last couple of months.

#### VI. Old Business:

Ms. Hannon requested that when email reminders are sent to the Commissioners by Carla Pelliccio, please respond to the email with a confirmation of attendance. The request had previously been to respond only if a commission was unable to attend.

Ms. Hannon asked if anyone has heard from Commissioner William Carey. She noted that Mr. Carey has not been to the last several commission meetings. Mr. Sorkin stated that we will follow up on this inquiry.

#### VII. New Business:

None to report.

#### VIII. Public Participation:

No participation.

#### IX. Adjournment:

Laurie Jean Hannon asked for a Motion to Adjourn accepted by Walt Heinig, seconded by Judith McKay. The meeting was adjourned at 6:26 p.m.

The next meeting will take place on October 6, 2009.