

Community Services and Recreation

DRAFT MINUTES/APPROVED

To: Community Services Commission Members

From: Edward J. Swinkoski, Director of Community Services and Recreation

Re: Commission Meeting November 1, 2011

Meeting was then called to order at 5:34pm

Attendance:

Present: Marc Fasano, Lou Criscuolo, Maggie Jensen, Paul Kottage, Donna Malley, Jim Marshall
Judith Meyers, Christine Orris, Krista Polinsky.

Staff: Michael J. Freda, First Selectman

Edward J. Swinkoski, Director of Community Services and Recreation

Nancy Leddy, Youth Services Administrator

Maggie Goodwin, LCSW, Program Manager, Clinical Services, Harbor Health Services

Carla Riccio, Secretary

Donna Malley welcomed newly appointed commissioner Christine Orris. Ms. Orris shared a little background about herself with her commission and expressed her honor to serve on the commission.

1. Acceptance of Minutes:

Marc Fasano made a motion to accept the Minutes of September 6, 2011, seconded by Lou Criscuolo.

2. Correspondence:

None.

3. Old Business:

Project Graduation: Upon a question raised by Marc Fasano about this annual event at the September 6th meeting, Nancy Leddy attended to provide her historical perspective of this annual event and have a discussion with the commission. Nancy discussed the rationale behind how Quassy Amusement Park came to be the location of choice for this annual event, as well as why hosting this event at an off site location was favorable to ensure safety. Additionally, Mr. Swinkoski reviewed the Project Graduation figures again:

Revenue (ticket sales, business & parent donations): \$16,661

Youth Service Bureau Grant: \$6,250

Total Revenues: \$22,911.00

Expenses: (Quassy, buses, etc.) \$22,054.42

There is currently a balance of \$856.58 in the Project Grad account line to kick off the 2012 annual event.

Old Business: Demographics of the Counseling Center: At the June 7th meeting, the question was raised regarding the exact demographics of the client base being served by the Counseling Center. Mr. Swinkoski provided the commission with a report and narrative from Tony Corniello, Tony Corniello, LCSW, Vice President of Services, Harbor Health Services, in response to a variety of questions posed by Marc Fasano prior to the commission meeting (regarding client enrollment, group counseling, billing, case management and demographics).

Additionally, Program Director Maggie Goodwin, LCSW, joined the meeting to provide additional various updates related to counseling services, including updates with staffing and billing, and the upcoming merger between Harbor Health Services and Birmingham Group, allowing the Town to tap into even additional counseling related services and resources. Regarding basic demographic information, Ms. Goodwin explained to the commission that the functionality of the medical records system has not allowed her to compile this report, but ensured the commission that she will compile rough data for their review by the next meeting.

Ms. Goodwin also commented on the Courageous Parenting Workshop series currently taking place hosted by the Substance Abuse Action Council has already produced two parent referrals seeking counseling services. Also commented on the Prescription Takeback event that took place at Fire Headquarters the prior Saturday, October 29, 2011.

Donna Malley reported that she had attended last week's Courageous Parenting session, and had the opportunity to speak with Todd Stoeffler, Principal of North Branford High School. He spoke with Donna about some of the programs that they have in place, including making attendance to the Courageous Parenting Workshop mandatory in order for students to play sports. Mrs. Malley will get further information from him, which she will disseminate to all commission members and asked that the subcommittee discuss this idea at their next meeting. The idea that Mrs. Malley would like to explore is applying this concept to North Haven high school students who are involved in any extracurricular activity. Following the subcommittee meeting, she would then follow up with the Board of Education.

4. New Business:

a. Director's Report

Edward J. Swinkoski, Director of Community Services and Recreation

Daycare:

Enrollment: Preschool – all slots are filled/ 15 ~ Wait list 4
 School Age – all slots are filled/ 30 ~ Wait list - 2

Updates: Department of Public Health conducted an inspection on September 28, 2011. After a few minor findings and respective adjustments made, all outcomes were in compliance. QVHD (Quinnipiack Valley Health District) also performed an inspection in September. Mr. Swinkoski reported that the outcomes found everything in compliance.

Senior Center:

Mr. Swinkoski reviewed a variety of activities that took place at the Senior Center in October. The annual Flu Clinic was held on October 12th at the Senior Center by the VNA Community Healthcare.

The Seniors participated in this years Show and Sell that was held on Oct 15th.

A Caregiver Support group held on the last Thursday of the month.

Transportation requests for Fridays and Mondays are increasing for medical appointments. The increased days; Monday and Friday is well appreciated by the seniors especially those that normally would have family take them to the VA Hospital.

Following last weekend's storm, the Senior Center became a shelter for Town residents. It was open Sunday night, Oct 30th.

Community Services:

Energy Assistance: Mr. Swinkoski reported that energy assistance appointments began on Wednesday 10/19. Appointments take place Wednesdays 2-4:30pm & Thursdays 9am-12pm. Mr. Swinkoski reported that 51 applications have already been taken in the first two weeks of the program (compared to 48 applications in 2010). Energy assistance appointments are currently booking into first week of January 2012.

September / October Donations: A large donation of toiletries, scarves, hats, gloves were provided by Liberty Community Church on Washington Ave. Mr. Swinkoski reported and acknowledged to Nancy and Frank Brigano and their parishioners. No individual monetary or toy donations were received for the past two months however.

Food bank: Reported for the month of September 2011 was 22 households served, or 405 equivalent meals were distributed. For October 2011, Mr. Swinkoski reported 19 households served, or 306 meals distributed for the month.

Holiday collection efforts: A press release for the Annual Holiday Food Drive was distributed to the commission. Mr. Swinkoski highlighted that the Thanksgiving collection will conclude November 14th and Christmas collection will conclude December 12, 2011.

Additionally Mr. Swinkoski announced that Dave Yaccarino's office coordinating a hat, scarf and gloves drive this November (11/1-11/30). Drop off locations include: Community Services, Senior Center, the Library, McDonalds, DJ Comics, and River House Tavern. Collected goods will benefit Community Services and other needy groups in town that they identify.

2011 Holiday Season of Giving: As the 2011 holiday season approaches, Mr. Swinkoski opened up the discussion regarding the details surrounding the details of the program, as well as welcomed an interactive discussion and vote by the commission on logistics of these programs.

Mr. Swinkoski reviewed the three areas of the Season of Giving Program, which includes the Thanksgiving Food Distribution (to take place Tues. 11/22 & Wed. 11/23, 1-4pm), Christmas Food and Toy Distribution (to take place Wed, 12/21 & Thurs, 12/22, 1-4pm), and the Holiday Match Program.

A lengthy discussion was conducted among the Commission as to how the programs should be conducted this holiday season in light of the current financial climate.

The Department has begun to see an increase in the number of families in need this year, while there has been a decrease in the number of donors and donations this year. Without the same commitment of donors, the concern was raised as to whether the Town would be able to accommodate the needs of all families facing financial hardship this holiday season. In order to ensure that the Toy Bank is fully stocked to meet the needs of the growing number of North Haven residents in financial need, the Commission felt that they would like all interested donors this year to contribute to the Toy Bank for the 2011 toy selection. The commission unanimously agreed that this rationale would be a fair and accommodating one for all involved.

Additionally, the commission had agreed to put new guidelines into place this holiday season in order to ensure fairness for all. These guidelines included income and asset limits, age restrictions and number of items available per child. It was agreed upon by all members of the commission that this year *all* residents interested in participating in toy selection will be asked to show their drivers license as well as complete a one page application. Information to be collected in the application will be first names and ages of all children in the household, a statement regarding the household income and assets. The income and asset limits will follow the same guidelines as the Town Emergency Assistance guidelines. The commission agreed that the age limit of 13 years old. Residents are welcome to select two items per child in the household. Toy selection will take place by appointment.

Judith Meyers made a motion that the 2011 Holiday distribution efforts be streamlined in this manner, temporarily suspending the Family Match Program, seconded by Donna Malley. All were in favor. The success of the program will be assessed by the commission in January 2012.

b. Finance Report

Mr. Swinkoski distributed the YTD snapshots for the Emergency Fund, the Outreach Fund, Daycare Center, as well as department budget reports (reports ending October 2011).

5. Public Comment:

None.

6. Adjournment:

Jim Marshall made a Motion to Adjourn, seconded by Judith Meyers. The meeting was adjourned at 7:02pm.

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday, December 6th at 5:30pm *in Room 3*.