

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 January 7, 2014

Meeting was called to order at 5:30p.m.

Present: Ron Bathrick, Kristen Brandt, Marc Fasano, Carole Franceschet, Kim Karlin, Donna Malley, Chris Orris, Michelle Spader

Absent: Paul Kottage

Staff: Michael J. Freda, First Selectman  
Edward J. Swinkoski, Director of Finance and Administration  
Carla Riccio, Secretary

#### I. Acceptance of Minutes:

Michelle Spader requested that a minor revision be made in the December 3, 2013 meeting minutes under the section discussing the 2013 Holiday Season of Giving. Mrs. Spader asked for the language to read, "In response to this shortage, Mrs. Spader reached out to an organization that she belongs to in order to get the items in the bags that were missing."

Kim Karlin made a motion to accept the Minutes of December 3, 2013 as modified, seconded by Chris Orris. All were in favor.

#### II. Election of Officers:

First Selectman Michael Freda was present to address three orders of business: entertaining a nomination for Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary for the Community Services Commission. Michelle Spader made a motion to nominate Donna Malley as Chairman, seconded by Chris Orris. Chris Orris made a motion to nominate Marc Fasano as Vice Chairman, seconded by Michelle Spader. Donna Malley made a motion to nominate Chris Orris as Secretary, seconded by Ron Bathrick. All were in favor of each nomination.

Chair Donna Malley welcomed newly appointed commissioner, Carole Franceschet. Mrs. Franceschet introduced herself to her fellow commissioners and provided a bit of her personal and professional background. All commissioners warmly welcomed her.

#### III. Correspondence:

None.

#### IV. Director's Report:

a. Director's Report:

*Edward J. Swinkoski, Director of Community Services and Recreation*

## Old Business:

### Community Services:

*Energy Assistance:* Since the start of energy assistance season (October 7, 2013), Mr. Swinkoski reported that 192 applications have been taken and processed. The deadline to apply for oil is March 1, 2014. The last day to apply for gas or electric is May 1, 2014.

*Food Bank Monetary Donations:* Mr. Swinkoski reported the following monetary donations for December 2013: \$400.00 from the Pine Grove Men's Club, \$100.00 from the Quinnipiac Chamber, \$600.00 from resident Suk Kuen Chan, \$143.00 from Fenn Buehler, \$100.00 from Linda Cahill, \$100.00 from David Kyder, and an anonymous donation of \$20.00.

*Fuel Bank Monetary Donations:* Mr. Swinkoski shared that \$1000.00 was donated by the North Haven Congregational Church in December.

*Food Donations:* Mr. Swinkoski reported the following food donations for December 2013: 25 boxes, 20 bags, 12 turkeys, 2 hams, 1 case of assorted cookies, 3 tins of homemade cookies and 7 homemade breads.

*Food Disbursements:* 234 meals were distributed (=26 people) in December 2013.

*2013 Holiday Season of Giving:* Mr. Swinkoski reported that the Holiday food distribution took place on Wednesday, December 18<sup>th</sup> and Thursday, December 19<sup>th</sup> from 1-4pm. 34 holiday meals (turkeys, meal trimmings, pies) were distributed (compared to 46 in 2012).

Additionally Mr. Swinkoski shared that the Holiday toy selection went well. Appointments took place by appointment from Monday, December 16<sup>th</sup> through Friday, December 20<sup>th</sup> from 9am-4pm. 42 families and organizations donated to the distribution (compared to 48 in 2012). 50 families participated in the selection appointments (compared to 55 in 2012).

### Senior Center:

*New Year Celebration:* The Senior Center's New Year's Celebration took place on Thursday, January 16, 2014 and was catered by Zandri's.

*Trips:* Mr. Swinkoski discussed the various trips that the Senior Center has planned for 2014. Trips include Mohegan Sun, as well as "Celebrate Italia" and "Celebrate Polka" at the Aqua Turf.

## b. Finance Report

Mr. Swinkoski distributed budget reports for (year ending December 2013) to the Commission for their review and welcomed any questions.

*Community Services:* YTD snapshot of Community Services expenditures:  
53.6% of budget expended.

*Welfare:* YTD snapshot of Welfare expenditures:  
19.4% of budget expended YTD.

*Senior Center:* YTD snapshot of Senior Center expenditures:  
49.6% of budget expended YTD.

Additionally, reports of the Emergency Fund (Fund 204) and the Outreach Fund (Fund 304) ending December 2013 were also distributed to the Commission for their review.

***Emergency Fund (Fund 204): as of 12/31/2013:***

Food: YTD Balance \$15,232.91

Fuel: YTD Balance \$7,562.37

Misc: YTD Balance \$36,165.24

Toys: YTD Balance \$1,266.92 (plus an additional \$600.00 in Toys R'Us gift cards).

***Outreach Fund (Fund 304): as of 12/31/2013:***

Service Outreach: YTD Balance: \$5,656.44

Project Graduation: YTD Balance: \$25,168.64

Sandy Hook Fund (to be turned over to Sandy Hook): Balance: \$4,756.12

New Business:

*Efforts to Eliminate Potential Abuses with Outreach Programs:* After entertaining the nominations for Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary, Mr. Freda wished to discuss an additional order of business: how efforts can be put into place in order to eliminate potential abuses with the outreach programs (i.e. food and toy distributions).

After the feedback received following the 2013 Thanksgiving and Holiday food and Toy distributions, Mr. Freda worries that there may be a small level of abuse may exist within the recipient pool. Specifically, the worry is that some families may not fall into a hardship status that necessitates the need the food and/or toys.

Mr. Freda asked the Commission for feedback as to how should these abuses be minimized. They reviewed the current procedures for the food and toy selection which include the families complete and sign a one page application, however without furnishing any paperwork to prove income or asset standing (i.e. pay stubs, unemployment, bank statements).

Ms. Riccio reminded the Commission that a formalized process already exists for those residents who seek Emergency assistance throughout the year.

After a lengthy discussion, the Commission felt that the processes that the guidelines, processes and procedures which are already in place for Emergency Assistance be extended to apply to the Toy Bank / Holiday Toy Distribution as well as Food Distribution.

Chris Orris made a motion to extend all current parameters and processes in accordance with the existing guidelines that exist for the Emergency Fund to extend to the Holiday food and toy distributions, seconded by Mark Fasano. All were in favor.

Additionally, Ms. Riccio provided a recap as to how the toy distribution went and she commented that while it was very successful, there was still a difficulty meeting the need of the older children. A discussion took place as to whether the age limit be lowered to younger children, or perhaps whether allowing gift cards as an acceptable donation type be reinstated.

Donna Malley made a motion to reinstate gift cards as an acceptable donation type to next year's holiday gift distribution, seconded by Kim Karlin. All were in favor.

*Second Annual Community Services Commission Recognition Award:* Donna Malley will work with Carla Riccio in order to prepare the press release requesting nominations and submit it to the local newspapers by the end of January.

#### VIII. Public Participation:

None.

#### IX. Adjournment:

Carole Franceschet asked for a Motion to Adjourn, seconded by Kim Karlin. The meeting was adjourned at 6:19 p.m.

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday, March 4<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm in the Conference Room.