

**Darien Human Services Commission  
Minutes  
March 9, 2023**

Room 206

Time: 8:30 AM



Commission Members Attending: Janet King, Michael LeMoult, Byrne Pozzi

Staff Attending: Ali Ramsteck, Cynthia Hall, Michelle Varrone

Absent: Kate Durocher, Christina Fay, Gina Gromelski



Acting-Chairman Pozzi opened the meeting at 8:35am.

Review of Minutes of January 12, 2023 meeting

As there was no quorum, the minutes are tabled until the next meeting.

Mental Health Task Force & Mental Health First Aid Training Updates

The entire Task Force met in February and are working on a virtual Resiliency training/program for parents to be held in the evening of May 4.

Ali noted that the school's Mental Health Director will be starting on March 20.

*Mental Health First Aid Training*

Ali and Paula had their first MHFA Training on January 31 and February 2, offered to Town Hall Department Heads and employees, Post 53 and Library staff. These classes are paid for by ARPA funds so they are free to anyone who attends. They plan to offer another class to the community soon, likely in May. Ali has a list of several interested individuals.

Evictions

There was one eviction to report from February. Luckily the individuals signed that they did not need any items that were not taken so there was no need for storage.

There are no pending evictions.

Current Programs:

✓ Filing in the Blanks Updates

This program is assisting 20-25 families in town by providing weekend lunches. As the program is offered over the summer when school is not in session, information will be put in the school wires before the year ends.

FITB is trying to get into communities more – more information should be coming.

✓ Energy Assistance

The program is ongoing and unfortunately, most clients have already exhausted their benefit.

Janet inquired about clients switching energy suppliers due to the Eversource rate increase. Ali responded that any inquiries are directed to EnergizeCT.

✓ OpFuel

The program has temporarily closed to new applications due to being inundated. They will open back up on April 3 and the plan has been reduced back to 1 submission every 12 months, \$500 for electric homes and \$1000 for oil homes.

Ali reported that when the initial \$5,000 was exhausted, she requested more funds and was granted another \$5,000, which has almost all been spent.

Recently Completed Programs:

✓ Emergency Call List event 2/27/23

The department reached out to the Call List prior to the anticipated snow and wind storm. If not snow/winter events, the list is also commonly used for hurricane/power outage events.

Upcoming Programs:

✓ Renters Rebate

Cynthia reported that Renters will be running May through September. This program is for seniors/over 65 years old or disabled renters. The refund goes directly to the applicant and is usually received in November.

**New Business**

Ali reported that there is still one vacancy on the Commission. Should anyone be interested they should reach out to Linda O'Leary in the Selectman's office. There was also a brief conversation about current members with expired terms.

Janet mentioned that the Community Fund is hosting their Volunteer Day.

Adjourn

There being no further business, upon a motion by Michael LeMoult, seconded by Janet King, the meeting was adjourned at 8:58am.

Respectfully submitted,

*Michelle Varrone*

Michelle Varrone