



Town of Fairfield
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION

MINUTES

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AzSZQkULrh8>

A virtual meeting of the Human Services Commission was held on Thursday, June 25, 2020.

PRESENT: Linda DeLorenzo-Secretary, Laura Incerto-Vice Chair, Loretta Jay, Bernard Lynch-Chairman, George Markley, Rabbi Barbara Paris, Nhi Tran

ABSENT: Carolyn Durgy, Suzanne Testani

ALSO PRESENT: Julie DeMarco-Director of Human and Social Services

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Chair Bernard Lynch at 4:05 p.m.

A brief moment of silence was held for those who experienced a loss during the pandemic and for the work done by our first responders.

2. Approval of February 27, 2020, Meeting Minutes

Laura Incerto motioned to approve the minutes. Linda DeLorenzo seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

3. Update on Board of Health – no update.

4. Department Update

Social Services

- Ms. DeMarco reported they have had a reduced staff but are back up to normal. They have been rotating part-time social workers and are busier than ever processing applicants for COVID-19. Along with Operation Hope, they distributed \$5,700 to applicants and processed 23 applications. The maximum one-time payment to cover bills is \$2,500. Applicants are required to exhaust all other resources and forms of assistance to be eligible. A panel of community members reviews the application and once approved a check (no cash) is sent.
- They are also offering energy and financial assistance appointments. There is currently a moratorium on utility shut offs. Unemployment and stimulus checks are helping.
- Since there are no summer camps, social workers put together 50 activity boxes for children.

- The “Fairfield Faces Racism” program was outstanding. It covered dealing with underlying issues and is a great start to preface future conversations, discussions and actions. Ms. DeMarco will share the FairTV recording with the Commission.

Bigelow Center

- The Senior Center bagged and delivered 3,000 emergency groceries and lunches to Fairfield homebound seniors.
- Ice cream socials were held as well as and zoom exercise programs.
- The Friends are sponsoring lectures and the drive-through barbeque.
- We have resumed transportation for medical appointments along with GBT for those who don't live at the senior living facilities.
- We have applied for a Grant to expand transportation hours.
- Rabbi Paris will assist with the greatly needed bereavement group.
- The Task Force will include community engagement. The overall town response with all departments coming together was amazing. Ms. DeMarco gave some background on the Emergency Management meetings that included the First Selectwoman, Social Services, Health Department, Fire Department as well as other Department Heads. They met in person or by phone sometimes daily depending on need. She is proud to be part of team and the Town.
- We are in good shape with CERT and drivers.
- NIMBY affordable housing zoom meeting was discussed.

5. Commission Planning

Retreat

Mr. Lynch said its purpose will help define the Commission's role and the Town needs. His initial thoughts are to work on developing a plan for the retreat, review at the September meeting and hold the retreat in October or November. We need to work out possible goals, objectives, next year's Agenda and how the commission can support the work of the department.

Ms. Incerto said it is a good idea to move forward particularly since we have new members and she is happy to help. Ms. DeLorenzo said she is in favor of it and said we need to think about who the moderator will be. Rabbi Paris said it should be an outside person. Mr. Markley is all in favor of and said we need to develop some structure moving forward, hopes staff is included and thinks it's critical not to impose on their time and doesn't like setting goals without including people who are executing as their input would be critical with what is reasonable. Mr. Lynch agreed and strongly recommends that. He would like an option of having a small number (3-4) key community stakeholders such as Operation Hope to contribute to the discussion and others could be identified. It wouldn't be a large group and they would not to be involved in the planning. The

Commission will determine players and extend an invitation. Mr. Lynch nominated Ms. Incerto to coordinate planning this so we could present a plan at the September meeting. If any other commission member has the time, please reach out to Ms. Incerto or Mr. Lynch in the next week.

Commission Meetings

July will be virtual

August no meeting

September possibly still virtual

There was a discussion on the status of the Disabilities Committee becoming a stand-alone Commission. Ms. Jay said no action has been taken by the First Selectwoman or Town Attorney. Ms. DeMarco will reach out to them and ask if them to attend the July meeting and how they would like us to proceed.

6. Adjourn – George Markley motioned to adjourn the meeting at 4:41 p.m. Laura Incerto seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheila Tesei
Recording Secretary

**The next Commission meeting will be on July 23, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.
Minutes are subject to review, correction and approval by Human Services Commission.**