



Town of Fairfield
HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION

MINUTES

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6eS6sD1CDtI>

A virtual meeting of the Human Services Commission was held on Thursday, July 23, 2020.

PRESENT: Linda DeLorenzo-Secretary, Carolyn Durgy, Laura Incerto-Vice Chair, Loretta Jay, Bernard Lynch-Chairman, George Markley, Rabbi Barbara Paris, Suzanne Testani

ABSENT: Nhi Tran

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 4:03 p.m.

A brief moment of silence was held for all those who experienced loss during this pandemic and for the caregivers and first responders.

2. Approval of June 25, 2020, Meeting Minutes

Laura Incerto motioned to approve the minutes. Linda DeLorenzo seconded the motion which carried unanimously, 8-0.

3. Old Business

- Update on Board of Health – Ms. Durgy reported nursing homes seem to be very stable at the moment. The new COVID-19 statistics list for Connecticut nursing homes and assisted living facilities is available online, the Fairfield Patch also publishes it. The Board has been meeting virtually monthly. No meeting will be held in August.
- Retreat – Ms. Incerto reported the Commission determined last month they would like to have an internal retreat in person but haven't chosen a date or location. The Retreat Sub-Committee consists of Ms. DeLorenzo, Ms. DeMarco, Ms. Incerto, Ms. Jay, Mr. Lynch, Mr. Markley and Rabbi Paris. The Sub-Committee will come up with discussion topics for the retreat. Ms. Incerto suggested Dorothea Brenna as the Facilitator. She gave Ms. Brennan's experience and would like to reach out to her and supply her with background on past retreats. There will be no compensation for this role. Ms. Incerto believes the number of sub-committee members is a good number. She gave the history on their retreats. She said it's basically a self-examination on our mission, focus and direction, to regroup to keep on track and to develop the next year's agenda. It usually takes place from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Mr. Lynch added they will identify new initiatives. The Sub-Committee will meet in August to discuss the structure, present to the Commission in September and

then hold the Retreat in October/November. Ms. DeLorenzo suggested reviewing the Minutes of the last Retreat. There was discussion on virtual meeting technology.

- Committee for People with Disabilities – no report.
- Friends of the Bigelow Center for Senior Activities – Events currently being sponsored:
 - Weekly two-hour zoom calls with 15-25 participants
 - Hot dog and bbq drive-thrus
 - Assisting Staff in assembling emergency kits for homebound seniors. Kits include flash lights, File of Life's, Ziploc bags, etc. Friends provided the actual bags to put the items in. They are asking assisted living facilities to supply items as well
 - Fall evening zoom programs

4. Department Update

Social Services

- Social workers are working on emergency kits and Staff is updating the at home emergency contact list in preparation for hurricane season.
- COVID-19 Relief Fund applications are continually being processed, none have been rejected. Through this process, they are able to assess other services for applicants as well.
- They've helped about 50 children (down from the usual 75-80) through the Campership program. They attend camps at Parks & Rec, Wakemen's Boys & Girls Club or art camps. This programs helps parents going back to work.
- The Town raised \$110,000 for the COVID Relief Fund.
- They wear masks to speak with homebound clients and use social distancing when picking up or dropping off paperwork. Staff is still contacting citizens via phone and social workers are running zoom support groups.
- The much needed Bereavement Group is being formed.
- A \$6,000 grant was received from the United Way and additional funding from the Salvation Army to be used for rent and utilities for COVID related needs.
- They are working with Operation Hope on the grocery boxes.
- Bus Drivers are reporting families who have lost family members so we can reach out to give them additional support.

Senior Center

- All programing is done remotely except the ice cream and hot dog drive thrus. They coordinate programs with SWCAA (which includes 14 towns in our region) and is a very unified group that meets virtually weekly to discuss shared programming and technology. There is no charge for the programs. The Life-Long Learners are a separate group beginning in the fall and they will charge. The zoom instructors are paid.
- More than 4,500 lunches have been delivered Monday through Friday's to homebound seniors by CERT volunteers. They reach 40-50 seniors a day and haven't had to ask for contributions yet. It is working out very well.
- Cleaning and organizing the Senior Center is ongoing during the closure.
- The Gift Shop is now set up as the Technology Room.
- New membership forms are being mailed out.

- Ms. DeMarco has been discussing and reassessing the Senior Center opening target date with SWCAA and the First Selectwoman. They are following the Health Director's guidance and recommendations.

Transportation

- Ms. DeMarco went before the BOS, BOF and RTM to accept the State and Federal bus grant and operational expenses grant which will enhance the bus schedule.

5. Adjourn – Suzanne Testani motioned to adjourn the meeting at 4:52 p.m. Laura Incerto seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheila Tesei
Recording Secretary

**The next Commission meeting will be on September 24, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.
Minutes are subject to review, correction and approval by Human Services Commission.**