



**Town of Fairfield**  
**HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION**

**MINUTES**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1wNdiC-tfW0>

A virtual meeting of the Human Services Commission was held on Thursday, October 22, 2020.

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

**ABSENT:** Rabbi Barbara Paris, Nhi Tran

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

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Chair Bernard Lynch at 4:00 p.m.

**1. Pledge of Allegiance** – A brief moment of silence was held for all those who have incurred a loss or pain during these difficult times and for our first responders.

**2. Approval of September 24, 2020, Meeting Minutes**

*Suzanne Testani motioned to approve the minutes. Linda DeLorenzo seconded the motion which carried unanimously, 7-0.*

**3. Old Business**

- Board of Health – Ms. Durgy reported everything this summer up until now has been about problems in the schools with the virus. She said there was not much discussion on the flu season. The focus is on college students. The students who live off campus have been blocked from going on campus creating traffic congestion on Reef Road. The Board has also been meeting virtually.
- Retreat – Ms. Incerto said the Retreat Committee is very robust and credited all for their participation. They included Ms. Brennan, facilitator, in the last two meetings. The net results were they planned to target the next meeting, November 19, for the Retreat but several factors including COVID came into play. There is also some movement in the Commission with Chairman Lynch moving down and others moving over to the Disabilities Commission. The Committee decided to wait until they had the new members together then proceed with a more cohesive Retreat possibly in the second quarter of next year. Mr. Lynch recognized the amount of work put into this and thanked all members who participated and brought us to this point.

- Committee for People with Disabilities – Ms. Jay announced exciting news; last week they met with CAO/ADA Officer Tom Bremer where they presented why they believe their Committee should be a stand-alone Commission. After his discussion with the First Selectwoman, he gave a green light to proceed. They will present to the BOS in December to become a full Commission and with their approval it would become a Commission with a three-year life that would be renewable after they demonstrated need. She congratulated everyone who worked so hard and recognized Kris Burbank who spear-headed the Commission. The Committee has a shared google doc of a Charge to identify mission, model and goals and which department to would sit under; Human Services, Human Resources or ADA Officer Tom Bremer. A phone conference will be held next week to discuss further. They will bring back to the First Selectwoman and Mr. Bremer for their recommendations and suggestions. An informal list of members was created of those interested, candidate suggestions are welcome. Rabbi Paris would like to stay on Human Services and Ms. Jay would switch over. There will be further discussion with the others and ways to stay connected with Human Services and potential ex-officio members. Ms. Jay and Ms. DeLorenzo said there has been extensive review and modeling of other towns. They also need to bring before the Human Services Commission the charge to be approved before presenting to the BOS. They would not need RTM approval under this model. The shared document is for suggested edits on the Charge and an excel spreadsheet that has suggestions for membership. Goal is to have a working draft available for the November Commission meeting prior to the December BOS meeting. November 12 is the Committee meeting where the Draft will be presented for approval. Mr. Lynch reiterated the intent is have members of the community act as Commissioners that will include a broad range of individuals. Mr. Lynch added the tremendous amount of work, time and outreach that has been done on this. Ms. DeMarco urged them to attend the BOS meeting to show the Commission on a whole supports which goes a long way.
- Friends of the Bigelow Center for Senior Activities – Ms. DeMarco reported they sponsored many programs and activities including a BBQ, a weekly current events program with nine sessions, assisted with emergency bags, an outdoor concert, Thursday evenings, a monthly neighborhood focus and online fundraising.

#### **4. New Business**

- Nominating Committee - Mr. Lynch introduced this as nominating Mr. Markley as Chair at the last meeting. He notified them there are four expiring terms in November. Three members are eligible for reappointment and one vacancy. The First Selectwoman asked if they are willing to serve a seconded term. Please submit candidate names to Mr. Lynch or Ms. DeMarco and they will submit to the First Selectwoman. Mr. Lynch suggested Ms. Jay be reappointed to the Human Services Commission then when the Disability Commission is approved they will address her vacancy position when she moves over. She replied that it would be her honor to continue. He explained party affiliation requirements. Mr. Markley spoke with Rabbi Paris who confirmed she would like to continue to serve. Mr. Lynch confirmed appointments must be approved by the BOS then the Commission will elect the slate of officers.

#### **5. Department Update**

- Fairfield Senior Advocates are partnering with SHU Business School students who are doing their Capstone project researching senior housing in Fairfield.
- It is energy assistance season and the First Selectwoman mentioned in her weekly update which generated new clients.
- Open enrollment for Medicare.
- Holiday gift program began. Only gift cards and gift certificates for activities due to COVID.
- The newsletter is starting their online registration database.
- Continuing interviews for Senior Center Directors.
- Meals distributed was at 6,000 in September and they could not have delivered without the CERT team who have been remarkable.

**6. Any Other Business which shall properly come before this Commission – none.**

***Adjourn – George Markley motioned to adjourn the meeting at 4:40 p.m. Linda DeLorenzo seconded the motion which carried unanimously.***

Respectfully submitted,

Sheila Tesei  
Recording Secretary

**The next Commission meeting will be on November 19, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.  
Minutes are subject to review, correction and approval by Human Services Commission.**