

HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES for March 7, 2023

Present: Alicia Presti, Mary Reidy, Marcia Shell, Luke Simon, Nan McNicholas, and Dawn Berry. Visiting: David White and Anna Wells

The minutes of February 7 were accepted.

Housing Committee: Anna reported on the history of the committee's development. The Committee has all the responsibilities of a Commission, but will not hold land. The Select Board accepted the charge for the Committee and posted applications for populating the nine-member committee. A grant for land use and zoning was made available for which towns could apply. The first step of the planning is the determining housing need, then a regulatory auditory, and the third phase is a regulatory rewrite. Hopkinton was awarded \$20,000 from the grant, and a consultant was hired to help with the needs assessment. The first phase will wrap up in June. HSAC is a mandatory member to the committee, along with 3 other mandatory representatives and then 5 at large members of the community.

Report of the Human Services Coordinator – Alicia Presti

- Hosted the Park Avenue Valentine Social and approximately 15 attended.
- Attended the NH Nutrition Summit which was very informative: learned how food pantries operate around the state and participated in a brainstorming session on ways to improve pantries, food accessibility, and lowering barriers to accessing pantries.
An information session on SNAP (Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program) included: qualifications, guideline changes, how to assist in filling out applications. Met the SNAP resource person from NH Food Bank. Note: Reduction of SNAP benefits began on March 5th. In response, Alicia began posting on media about the food pantry resource to help recipients offset the reduction.
- Attended the Planning Board meeting on 2/14 where they discussed the adoption of the Housing Committee Draft Charge. Some of the same speakers attended this meeting that were at the 2/1 meeting- expressing concern about development- cost and environmental impact.
- NHLWAA (New Hampshire Local Welfare Administrator Association) quarterly meeting was held. Director of NH Housing presented on the ending of ERAP (Emergency Rental Assistance Program) and dates to be aware of because of the possible impact on local welfare offices.
Also learned about the Office of Workforce Opportunity "NH Works" which provides training to youth, unemployed and the underemployed. The focus is on preparing these individuals for work in high demand occupations such as healthcare and manufacturing. I plan to post about the program in social media and the website.

- Pantry 2023 redeterminations are taking place. Provided applications and reviewed supportive documentation that is required to continue. Currently tracking down missing information. Also had 3 new households start with the Pantry.
- Camp Scholarships- started receiving requests for assistance. Began soliciting donations. Will send out town wide requests shortly.
- Continued with welfare checks – reports/follow-ups (with family and/or adult services)
- Assisted multiple residents with annual Park Ave residence renewal/updates for JCM Corp., prescription assistance applications, filling out paperwork to apply for subsidized housing.
- Connected multiple residents with donated medical equipment- scooter and walkers.
- Have been contacted by Patrice Brown (HMS principal) about collaborating with she and Kenda Beckwith (preschool teacher) to run a parenting program and education play and learn series. Details to follow...
- YTD Assistance=
 - 7 heating assist from a combination of Welfare budget funds and donated funds
 - 1 rent assist
 - 1 electric assist
 Dollar amounts are not up to date yet in the computer system so they will be reported next month.

Surveying the Community

Alicia discovered, in working with Marcia to decide programs and actions, questions were raised about what people actually need and want to know from the Human Services Department. A survey would help address these questions and needs. Discussion ensued about how many questions, method of reaching the public - survey monkey and/or paper surveys, and how to report results. The committee agreed that posting a survey would be helpful, along with paper copies. This will be worked on more next month with thought given before the meeting to questions needed for the survey.

Community HHS Resources Categories – Luke Simon

Luke presented some ways of organizing resources through categories that we discussed. Luke will consolidate and organize and send it out to the committee for feedback. Then committee members will populate the resource list under the categories.

Upcoming Programming

- June 14 Senior Luncheon hosting by HSAC
- Food Pantry appreciation dinner in the fall – date TBD

- Revisit the fundraiser flea market with a possibility of building up the medical fund started by Louise Carr. Nan McNicholas expressed interest.

Assisting Human Service Coordinator

- Help with starting NH GAP computer program – Luke will assist.
- Streamline Back Pack Program
- Update Welfare Guidelines – Mary will help convert PDF to Word document.
- Revising our Mission Statement

Potential New Member

Dave White expressed an interest in joining the committee. He will get a town application.

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn C. Berry

NEXT MEETING: April 4 at 4 pm.