

Citizen Advisory Committee
Minutes PY 47
Application Review
March 23, 2021
West River Hall, 37 Orlando Street
6:10 p.m.

The Meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m. by CDA Manager, Mark Bisaccia.

Present: CAC Members: Jeffrey Moreno, Carol Eagles, Colleen O'Connor CDA Staff: Mark Bisaccia, John Bernardo, Rosa Richardson

Absent: Victor Borrás

CDA Manager Mark Bisaccia called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

WH Child Development Center/ Parent Engagement Coordinator- Dr. Patrice Farquharson stated that her Agency has now employed a Parent Engagement Coordinator. This individual is a Marriage and Family Therapist.

WH Child Development has now added another classroom of infant to 3 years (Early Head Start). This was made possible by partnering with United Way. She discussed the relationships that this agency has with others including the diaper bank and many others. She stated that WHCD has to provide all of the diapers and food/ formula for all of the children enrolled in the program.

This position has a very different focus from the previous social worker position. This individual has more direct contact with parents which had become far more important since the children were not in the classrooms. The Coordinator implemented the Remind App for parents so there could be reminded of the curriculum, tasks, projects etc. that were available for the children in the program. Also, since parents are not allowed into the building, they can text to let employees know they are present to pick their child up.

She worked with Teachers to ensure they were comfortable with the return of students. There are no in person/ Parent Teacher conferences, so she worked on the tele conferences. Additionally, She is initiating a Social/ Emotional Curriculum as part of their overall program .

The agency also received a grant from the Mommy and Me Program. They received 10 new I-Pads, one for each classroom, so that pictures can be taken and forwarded to parents and they can see what their child is doing in the classroom that day.

Patrice went on to explain that the School Readiness Program limits the children to only working parents. However, Early Head Start has different criteria which can make transitioning the Early Head Start children into School Readiness difficult.

Jeff Moreno asked her if this program is only for West Haven Residents. It is available to residents and/or employees of businesses within the City. Patrice went into detail regarding the process. She explained that once a child is enrolled into the program, they remain until they move on to school. This makes it very difficult for parents to try and enroll children later on. She expressed that there are specific guidelines and over-enrolling is not an option.

Mark Bisaccia thanked Patrice Farquharson for her commitment to this program and the residents of this city. He also thanked her for the expedience in getting the center re-opened after the pandemic hit.

Ms. Farquharson left at 6:30 P.M.

W.H.E.A.T.- Staff Support- Rose Majestic thanked the Committee for their commitment to the Residents of West Haven as well as WHEAT and other organizations. She went on to explain that she is transitioning staff members in preparation for her retirement. The Staff Support will be used to allow for hiring for the new Director so the transition will be easier.

WHEAT Capital Improvement- Rose explained that the Pantry, Lobby and Offices have not been painted for more than 16 years. There are signs of age on the walls as well as tiles that have been stained from leaking prior to the roof replacement. She feels it is important to improve/ repair and preserve the building. She has received two quotes which include moving of furniture and files, making repairs/ painting then placing the furniture back.

Committee Member Moreno asked if WHEAT owns the building. WHEAT does own the building. He then asked if any of the contractors were minority owned or female owned. Rose said they were not. She explained that the business that she has used in the past has provided employment opportunities for ex-convicts and they are very appreciative of the work. He then asked if it was a West Haven business. She said yes.

Mark then stated that she must adhere to HUD's Guidelines with Davis Bacon wages. He emphasized that when she goes to bid to make sure it is in the bid specs. When HUD does their audit/ inspection they would expect to see bids, not quotes.

Mark stated that Dr. Farquharson was in just and there was discussion about food and formula. He asked Rose if families are able to get these item from WHEAT. Rose explained that baby food is very volatile and expires very quickly. When a family asks about such items, Rose will send them to Mother Care, whom she leases space to right behind the food pantry. If they do receive these items they turn them over to that agency for distribution. WHEAT as well as the Mother Care Agency provide assistance for applying for WIC and Food Stamps as well.

Mark thanked Rose for her years of service and dedication to the resident s of West Haven. Rose thanked the Committee for their time. She left at 6:55 P.M.

Vertical Church- Capital Improvement/ Dream Center- Pastor Ken Vance, Ron Sells Outreach Coordinator and Paul Bronson, Facilities Director introduced themselves.

Pastor Vance proceeded to compliment Rose Majestic of WHEAT, the City of West Haven and the many other organizations in their collaborative efforts to assist the families in need when COVID hit.

He explained that the Mayor Rossi discussed the renovation of the former FYI building for use by all faith organizations in a Collaborative effort to make the "Dream Center" a reality. This would be the staging area form the Center and would allow the mission of this center to happen. Ultimately this would develop into a 501-3C and provide many needed resources for the many residents in need of food, clothing, job training, and the necessary resources for mental health substance abuse or spiritual counseling.

He explained that there is much work to be done to the building. Mr. Bronson also explained that there are many qualified members within their church and community who have and will volunteer their skills to ensure this happens.

Mark Bisaccia asked how the Church and the City are doing with a contract settlement for leasing the building. Pastor Vance stated that the city attorney and their attorney are reviewing and discussing the contents of the Lease agreement.

Mark emphasized that the Committee is committed to assisting their organization in making this project a reality.

The Vertical Church Staff thanked the Committee for their time. They left at 7:15 p.m.

Bridges- Elderly Case Management- Marcy Hotchkiss and Dawn Silver DeAngelis thanked the Committee for Their time and for allowing them the opportunity to apply for funding.

There was a lot of discussion on the effects of COVID and the impact associated with the pandemic. They had to rapidly pivot from group sessions, one on ones etc. to telehealth, phone conversations and virtual meetings. Many of their clients were afraid to be out but were compromised in their ability to communicate virtually. Sometimes they would meet clients outside with masks.

Care packages were delivered to the elders who could not or would not go out during this difficult, frightening time. The Crisis Team still operated during this time. As of April 5th, staff will return to their site. At that time they will determine how the re-opening will take place. They are hoping to resume Groups and Individualized Treatment will resume soon after.

The Committee thanked them for their commitment to our Seniors. They left at 7:40 p.m.

Marrakech- Capital Improvement -Jay Korman from Marrakech thanked the Committee for giving him the opportunity to be here today. He also thanked them for their continued support and funding throughout the years.

He stated that on March 13th of last year it all broke loose. Everything shut down and our residents stayed home for what everyone thought would be two weeks. During that time there were 13 cases of COVID within the 23 homes operated by Marrakech – 3 were hospitalized. Afterwards, the agency was able to keep all its clients/ residents safe and happy.

Thanks to the Cares Act funding, Marrakech was able to purchase many of the necessary items needed in order to to re-open their Island Lane Day Center. At this time they are seeking funding to make necessary modifications to the building in order to ensure the safe distancing for their clients in that building.

CAC Member O'Connor asked Jay to explain the location of the Capital Project. Jay explained that it is located in the interior doors.

He thanked the Committee once again.

He left at 8:00 p.m.

A motion to adjourn was made by Committee Member Moreno. Seconded by Committee Member Eagles. Mee4tng adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Rosa Richardson