

CITY OF WEST HAVEN
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION
MINUTES OF MEETING
February 14, 2023, 6:00 p.m. City Hall 3rd floor Conference Room

Meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.

Present: Committee Members: Colleen O'Connor, Michele Miller, Carol Eagles

Staff: Mark Bisaccia, Rosa Richardson, Ron Dumas

Absent: Committee Members Jeffrey Moreno, Victor Borrás, Roberta Garlock

Bridges/ Elderly Case Management- Dawn Silver and Allison Csonka Director of Communications introduced themselves and the Committee members did the same. Dawn Silver gave an overview of the program they provide to our Seniors. Bridges provides an outreach program for Elderly who need Case Management, and intervention. Bridges has a mobile crisis team and has responded to many calls from Doctors, families and even CDA. These calls are for welfare checks, and intervention as needed. The Crisis team will assess situations and decide if the individual needs to go to the hospital. Bridges provides appropriate support once the individual is discharged.

Bridges has opened a satellite clinic at 98 Elm Street. They provide intensive outpatient treatment and support to children, adults and the elderly. This program has grown from 1 to 2 and they are will providing a third in the near future. They provide outpatient programs 3 hours per day, 3 days per week. There is a daytime and an evening program. Bridges hopes to provide this program at the Elm Street location soon. They now also provide a gambling group session.

Dawn and Allison thanked the CDA and Committee for their continued support.

BH Care/ Domestic Violence: Victim Advocates

After formal introductions, Espirina Stubblefield. She stated that Domestic Violence has two Offices, North Haven and Derby. They provide in person services as well as shelters/ housing. There are victim advocates available in the New Haven, Derby and Milford Courts. The advocates will assist victims, not only in criminal cases but civil as well and help with restraining orders. Ms. Stubblefield informed the Committee of the many challenges that victims encounter and stated that Domestic Violence services do not stop with the court advocates. This organization assists in finding therapeutic services, relocation, financial assistance and other services as needed by the victim and family.

The Committee is very much aware of the programs and services that Domestic Violence provides for victims and they thanked Ms. Stubblefield for their commitment and dedication to these individuals/ families.

She thanked the Committee once again for their time and commitment to the victims and to non-profit organizations such as this.

Rape Crisis of Milford/ Victim Services- Antonio Vitti, Executive Director, Peggy Pisano and Stephanie Hanrahan introduced themselves to Staff and Committee Members. After formal introductions, Mr. Vitti thanked the Committee for their continued support. They gave an overview of the services they provide to victims. Mr. Vitti It would be great if we did not have to come before CDA because rape did not exist; but as we are all aware, it does. There are 10 full time employees as well as 30 volunteers who man the hotline after business hours.

Ms. Pisano explained that the funds provided by West Haven CDBG are used toward victim services as well as educational Mr. Vitti stated that this agency did not have to exist, but the reality is, it does.

Rape Crisis Center has a wonderful relationship with the West Haven Police Dept. As well as the Board of Education and UNH. They are very thankful for the collaboration and support they receive from these organizations. They cannot thank the Committee enough for their continued support.

St. Lawrence/ Afterschool – Frank Arnone, Principal of St Lawrence School and Kathleen Joyce introduced themselves to the Committee and Staff and thanked them for the opportunity to discuss their application for CDBG funding.

He went on to explain that St. Lawrence is the only pre-k – 8 catholic school left in West Haven. This school provides 1 class of each grade from pre-k through 8th grade. It is a tuition based, Title 1 School. They provide a faith-based education as well as smaller class sizes.

They provide an afterschool program. From 2:30 – 5:30 p.m. so parents do not have to worry about childcare while they work. They are seeking funds in order to provide scholarships for low-income children. However, the application does not reflect the number of children they will accommodate and is not specific to West Haven students. CDA is requesting a breakdown of cost per child and how the funds, if received, would be used for this scholarship program. They also indicated that they must use the funds for West Haven students.

St Lawrence staff will get the requested information to the CDA as soon as possible. They thanked the Committee and CDA for allowing them the opportunity to discuss their request.

W.H.E.A.T./Staff Support- Michael Sullivan, the new Executive Director Introduced himself and thanked the Committee for their commitment to the Residents of West Haven as well as WHEAT. He stated that WHEAT is the largest pantry in West Haven. They currently have a part-time Pantry Coordinator, part-time Administrative Assistant and part time Bookkeeper along with 30 volunteers and one driver volunteer. The Pantry is open 3 days per week for clients and the clients can actually choose their own food. They are also allowed to come to the agency twice monthly.

The rising cost of food has impacted agencies such as theirs. Food Bank have gone to a 1 for 1 for items purchased through them. For each item they give, the food pantries must purchase the next one (at their cost). Additionally, there is concern that based on the cost of food, donations can be impacted as well. His request is for additional CDBG funds to help support staff so more funds will be available for food.

Member Michelle asked if there is anything else that goes on when they are not open. This time is used specifically for administrative responsibilities as well as re-stocking of shelves, inventory, etc.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Rosa Richardson