

CITY OF WEST HAVEN
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION
MINUTES OF MEETING

February 15, 2022, 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, Roberta Garlock, Michele Miller

Staff: Mark Bisaccia, Rosa Richardson

Absent: Committee Members Jeffrey Moreno, Victor Borrás

A motion was put on the floor, by Member O'Connor, to accept the minutes of January 18, January 25, February 1, and February 8, 2022. Seconded by Member Garlock. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Clifford Beers- Clinical Services for Families, Youth, Adults- Martha Plaza, Program Manager of Clifford Beers, introduced herself after we went around the table and introduced ourselves.

She proceeded to explain that Clifford Beers provides clinical services to children and families. They offer services to children who have been diagnosed with ADHD, Violence, Trauma, Behavioral issues, Domestic Violence etc. and provide many wraparound services including case management, care coordination and assessments just to name a few.

Committee Members had questions regarding the increase in need for these services since COVID and asked if they were having difficulty in staffing and the ability to provide the services. They are short staffed and are seeking clinicians to fill these positions. Some spoke of their personal experiences with Clifford Beers.

Ms. Richardson explained that she is aware of someone who's child was placed on a wait list because they have private insurance and she asked why there would be a wait list for that purpose. Ms. Plaza explained that they are obligated to provide these services to children/families on Husky or other state programs as well as those with no insurance due to the funding sources they are provided.

BH Care/ Domestic Violence: Victim Advocates

After formal introductions, Espirina Stubblefield explained that it was a very difficult transition throughout this pandemic because the court systems were shut down and there was little/ no physical contact with the many victims of domestic violence. Court proceedings have been either postponed or via teleconference/ video conference. This has put a strain on not only the victims but the advocates as well. Ms. Stubblefield informed the Committee of the many challenges that the victims encounter and stated that Domestic Violence services do not stop with the court advocates. This organization assists in finding therapeutic services, in 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 are 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.

Vertical Church- Dream Center: Paul Bronson, Lay Pastor, Community Relations, of Vertical Church was introduced to the Members.

He proceeded to explain that the Dream Center was at the strip mall on Captain Thomas Boulevard for some time, but had to relocate after the building was sold. The Committee for the Dream Center had come to the conclusion that the First Avenue Location, that they were first interested in, would not be suitable for their needs. He was happy to inform the Committee that they believe they have found an appropriate location at 263 Center Street. In the meantime, they have moved the site to their church.

When asked why a building of that size could not accommodate this center, Pastor Bronson explained that they really do not have the appropriate space. They are currently using classroom space but they will once again begin youth classes because of the decrease in COVID. He also explained that this is not a Vertical Church Program, this is a Community Program and the church really does want to move away from the belief that it is this particular churches program.

Mr. Bisaccia spoke to Pastor Bronson about whether the Organization would consider moving their request to Capital Improvement, whereas they could utilize the funding for the building improvements. Pastor Bronson stated that he would discuss this with Ron Sells, the Outreach Director.

He thanked the Committee for their time and commitment.

Mothers of Victims Equality, Inc- Corrina Martin introduced herself to the members of the Committee after their introductions. Ms. Martin after losing 2 daughters and a granddaughter to violence and domestic violence, had made it her mission to try to eliminate the gaps that she had to overcome in her own journey through a very tragic and horrific ordeal, not once but twice in her lifetime.

She has made it her goal to bring awareness and educate to avoid these acts. She also wants to provide wraparound services, financial assistance and try to eliminate homelessness to those that have been impacted by these acts of violence (see attached documents)

Committee members as well as CDA Staff, want to work with Ms. Martin to get her the necessary resources she needs to be able to accomplish her goals. Mr. Bisaccia will contact Ms. Martin to meet with her and put our minds together and offer assistance.

She was so very thankful for the insight she received this evening and is looking forward to working with the Committee and Staff.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Rosa Richardson

* Please note: Minutes are subject to approval.

