

## **Human Services Advisory Committee Minutes, October 19, 2011**

**Present: Jane Blanshard (Disabilities); Dexter Eddy (Housing Authority); Kevin Grunwald (ex officio); Lorraine Kenowski (at large); Bev Korba (Senior Center); Victoria Nimirowski (WAIM); Joan Terry (Commission on Aging). Absent: Sara Anderson (Advocates for Children) (Ethel Manzaris (YSB); Frank Perrotti (at large).**

The minutes of the meeting of September 21 were unanimously approved after a typo in the date of the present meeting was corrected.

In the absence of Chair Ethel Mantzaris and Vice-Chair Frank Perotti, Victoria called the meeting to order at 2:01. At Kevin's request we said what we were representing there for Lorraine Kenowski who is a new member at large. She has worked with Natchaug Hospital and other organizations.

Victoria asked for an update on our effort to reach out to McSweeney Center. Kevin said that he had talked to Marge Roach and that she would be joining us later. He said that he had talked to Cindy Dainton, who is currently on a month's medical leave, and her only concern was space in the present Senior Center. What we would need in terms of staffing if we increased the number of people who eat lunch at the center? Currently, TVCCA, the agency that pays part of the salary of our part-time kitchen worker, and the town pays the rest. This would have to be negotiated with them.

Kevin said that McSweeney is having major financial problems. Marge is acting coordinator. They also have staffing problems because of lack of money. In the past they have survived on various grants, but this has all been significantly cut back, including the dental program.

Bev asked if other towns have offered to share services, but most of them have their own centers and can't ask for additional money to support other centers.

Kevin said that Mansfield's special needs fund is running out and they are seeking contributions. We spent about \$11,000 last year in help for heating, medication, and sometimes food. The minimum fuel delivery is 100 gallons,

which is now \$400, though Potter's will occasionally deliver less. The fund was used for some camperships, drug copays, but we are down to about \$3000. Victoria asked if Mansfield ever refers people to WAIM or ACCESS. Kevin said we do, but we are the third step in the process. Victoria said she hoped we would coordinate so that people wouldn't be coming to Mansfield after getting enough assistance elsewhere. Kevin says we expect a great need for holiday donations. We will ask for sponsors for individual families as well as contributors to our holiday fund. Dudley Hamlin and Paul Kozelka have managed the fund in the past. We are trying to combine solicitations for this and for Mansfield Challenge and for the Mansfield Community Fund. People involved in the Community Fund feel they can't continue it without Betsy Hamill who died recently. Gifts to town are tax deductible. Kevin says we may need to start a foundation. The problem is getting too complicated. Jane asked if Kevin has access to Betsy's mailing list, and he said Mary Stanton has that, and he does plan to combine the various lists and send one letter twice a year. Victoria suggested that he ask someone connected with the Community Fund for help in combining it with the other Mansfield funds. Victoria suggested that the Eastern CT Community Foundation would be the place we should seek help from. She said she would give Kevin the name of a contact person. And also that WAIM would help out.

Joan asked about a press release dated October 7, whether there'd been any response. Kevin said it hadn't been sent out yet, but they usually have a good response. He plans to put it in the Chronicle and the Patch. Victoria asked if it could include the recycling bill. Joan suggested that he include two copies of the letter in each envelope and ask the recipient to pass it on to a friend not on the list yet. Kevin received a request from an EOSmith student who needs a community service project, and he asked her if she'd be willing to help with this effort, and she was enthusiastic. Victoria said she could set up a Mansfield fund at WAIM and have whatever goes into that fund be used only for Mansfield residents. They have many other different funds.

Kevin announced that a successor for Sandy Baxter has been hired: Kathleen Krider. She will be the new early childhood services coordinator, having directed Mt. Hope Montessori for eight years. Before that she was an athletic trainer at Branford High School and Windham High School. She is Deb Walsh's daughter. Kathleen, like her mother, is very much a networker.

Goals and Initiatives: Matt wants Kevin to analyze our role in terms of town government, Kevin will do some “bench marking” by looking at other towns of similar size: whom are we serving, what are we accomplishing, what staffing is needed? Develop performance measures so we can do periodic evaluations. Perhaps we can do a simple survey, are we providing necessary services.

Bev asked who evaluates Kevin and how does it happen. He said Matt evaluates him. Kevin said that the bench-marking process involves evaluation ourselves against our peers. Strategic planning must take into account the unique qualities of Mansfield: aging population, realistically what can be provided for instance in terms of public transportation. Jane suggested an outside evaluation, but that would be expensive. Kevin suggested maybe an outside facilitator. Dexter said this has worked well with several organizations. Victoria said it has worked well at WAIM.

Joan asked if our human services is involved with the university. Kevin said he participates in the healthy campus grant initiative and other issues. That’s another thing to define: how much involvement should we have? There is a health fair going on now at the Senior Center, conducted by UConn students, and many of them volunteer at YSB. So should we tap into that resource more. Kevin will report next month on what he’s learned in the bench-marking process and will work on his time line so it doesn’t go on indefinitely.

Dexter asked what towns Kevin will compare our services to. Windham is about the same size, but they don’t operate their youth services or senior center. Coventry is similar, Tolland perhaps more so. Others we have compared ourselves to in the past are Glastonbury and others, but they are very different demographically.

Next meeting: November 16, 2:30

Respectfully submitted, Jane Blanshard