

REGIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE HOMELESS

May 9, 2006

MINUTES

Attendance: Laurie Gross, Chair

Eileen Lopez-Cordone, Rose Cristie, Betty Skaggs, Betsey Gee, Evelyn Castile and Catherine Brennan of United Way campaign staff.

Ms. Gross welcomed all to the meeting.

Ms. Gross asked for approval of the March 14, 2006 minutes.

The Homeless Committee members approved the March 14, 2006 minutes.

Ms. Gross thanked all for attending,

A conversation on how someone becomes homeless took place. Ms. Brennan suggested a PowerPoint presentation could be a helpful tool in making the community aware of the homeless issues in our community, while on the campaign trail. Ms. Gross and council members agreed that any and all information presented to the community would be beneficial in helping the homeless cause.

The Sikorsky strike is over and the only program employees were eligible for through Stratford Community Services was energy assistance. There were 400-450 applications taken at Stratford Community Services alone. The energy season is from November through April 30th. This year it went to April 17th and then extended to May 1st. With the high cost of housing in Stratford many people were staying at hotels. Bethlehem House and Emerge, which is for domestic violence, are the only two shelters in Stratford. 211-Infoline used to call for bed counts to assist agencies in placement of homeless, but they no longer do that. Ms. Eileen Lopez-Cordone stated that the call volume gets higher and higher every year. There is not enough staff or funding to do the bed count each day, therefore, they no longer provide that service of information.

Ms. Rose Cristie reported that the Emergency Shelter Grant has been reduced. There is a new housing director of the Housing Department. There is a total of \$143,000 to disburse among 17 agencies.

The Housing Task Force will hold a developers conference on May 10, 2006, 12-1:30 p.m., to bring the developers from non-profit and for-profit agencies to address the lack of interest in creating affordable housing and permanent supportive housing in the city of Bridgeport.

Ms. Eileen Lopez-Cordone reported that from January 2006 to April 2006, 1,066 calls related to housing or shelter requests have been received in the six-town region. This information can be found on the 211-Infoline's website with the "professionals." Ms. Lopez-Cordone and others have been designing a prevention book on housing or things that people who are homeless would need to access, i.e., education, employment, any type of temporary family assistance availability, etc. It would be a resource book for providers and possibly for consumers.

Ms. Gross reported that the Super Nofa Committee of the Continuum of Care met and ranked applications. All the applications were renewals. There were no new submissions.

The Public Policy Task Force has been meeting. A few weeks ago there was a hearing where members of the task force made presentations on behalf of scattered site projects. Members of the task force had anticipated a lot of opposition as to where these houses were going to be built. Thirty-seven units scattered around Bridgeport were going to be used as supportive housing. Housing will be provided for seniors in one building and supportive housing in another. GASA received approval from CHAFA for a \$3.7 million, also using the low income tax credit base for their 20 supportive units at 665 Arctic Street.

Ms. Betsey Gee of Southwest Community Health Center reported that renovation has started on their new building. The building is targeted for a December 2006 or January 2007 opening.

The nursing problem at Southwest Community Health Center has taken care of itself, as all the nurses who left have returned.

Betty Skaggs of St. Vincent's Outreach Program reported the clinic is opened Monday, Thursday and Friday morning. Friday morning is just nursing and social work. There is no doctor there on Friday. The clinic opens at 9:00 a.m. and closes at 12:00 p.m. There is a Geriatric Clinic on Wednesday mornings from 8:30 a.m. to noon at the Lindley Street site Family Health Center. Dr. Hoffman sees patients there once a week. Three geriatric assessments are done a month from 1-3 p.m. They are backed up until July.

Ms. Gross announced that the next meeting will be held on July 11, 2006, 9:00 a.m. at United Way.