



Town of Greenwich
BOARD OF HUMAN SERVICES MINUTES
Regular Meeting, March 20th, 2018

ATTENDING

Board Attendees: Barbara Nolan, Abbott Jones, Annalisa Fernandez, Jeffrey Medina, Natalie Queen, Alan Gunzburg, Winston Robinson.

Staff Attendees: Alan Barry

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson, Barbara Nolan, called the meeting to order at 7:00PM in the DHS Conference Room at Town Hall.

BOARD PROTOCOLS

The minutes of the February 20th meeting were approved 7-0 as written.

ADVOCACY

Linda Sandiaes, GDHS Admissions and Applications Case Manager presented to the Board on her role in assisting clients with their needs. She emphasized the importance of advocacy and how difficult it can be for clients to navigate the system on their own. Some of the reasons why it may be difficult for some clients could be because of a language barrier or literacy issues. Her job is to make clients aware of the different services available through the town, state, and private agencies.

One of the major issues she deals with is when working with the State Department of Social Services. At times it can take over two hours on hold for a response on the phone. The information provided isn't always correct or can be conflicting. The case manager will sometimes request a hearing on behalf of the client so a client will have access to the benefits prior to the case being heard. It is important to not only advocate for the client but to also empower the client to eventually advocate for themselves.

Another challenge case managers face has been working with the energy assistance program. After completing an application for the program, it is then sent to a community action agency for certification. If the agency denies the application, they give the applicant 10 days to respond not leaving enough time for the client to respond in a timely manner. Sometimes leaving the applicant to start the entire process over again.

Many of the speed bumps the clients experience, can, and have, discouraged those in need from obtaining the type of assistance they need. The case managers make sure the client has an



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opportunity to achieve their goals and helps them on the path of least resistance.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Community Partnership Committee – Mr. Gunzburg, Chairman, announced the committee met with the New Covenant House. Two case managers came in to discuss program status. The first three months went very well. They are getting full participation and clients are coming in often to work with them. There have been no DACA recipient yet which was a bit surprising. They discussed refining the process and making sure a client who came to visit them understood what services were available to them after their first meeting and when follow up was necessary in Stamford. We are still shaping the program as it began this fiscal year. The program looks very promising with potential for helping clients.

The committee will be meeting with the Boys & Girls Club and the Rite program in April.

**COMMISSIONER'S
REPORT**

Operating Statement and Dashboard – There were no significant variances and the department remains under budget by roughly 3%. Clinical activities haven't seen much change over the last month. We are averaging about 44 referrals a month and admitting approximately 20 clients a month. 9 first time admission and 11 readmissions, 13 of those admissions go to applications and 7 to case management. Other relevant information on department statistics are in the supported documents provided by Dr. Barry.

Department Update – The Department has hired a new business office manager on March 5th. She joins the department after 18 years at the Jewish Family Services of Greenwich. The department is one employee short of being fully staffed. The department is presenting its next year's budget to the Health and Human Services committee of the RTM on April 3rd. once presented it will go before the entire RTM body for a vote in May.

NEXT MEETING

The next Board Meeting will be held on April 17th 2018 in the DHS Conference Room at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeffrey Medina