

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

MARCH 11, 2003

PORTSMOUTH CITY HALL

6:00 P.M.

Present: Robert Layton, Chairman; Cicero Lewis, Vice Chairman; Lynne Langley; Jean Pecunies; Dani Rooney; Paul Staples; William Thorpe; Russ Van Billiard; and Gia Yannekis.

Absent: Nancy Emerson.

Staff: Cindy Hayden, Community Development Director; Karen Jacoby, Community Development Program Manager.

At 6:00 p.m., Chairman Layton opened the meeting and stated that presentations from applicants to the CDBG Public Service Agency Grant Program would be heard. Each applicant would be given a 15-minute block of time to make their presentation and answer questions.

Mr. Layton welcomed Judy Bunnell, Director of the Senior Citizens Center, and Ted Connors, Executive Director of the Portsmouth Housing Authority, and advised them that they had 15 minutes for their presentation and questions. Ms. Bunnell presented their application for funding for the Activities Aide position and the Fit n' Well Program.

After the presentation, Ms. Yannekis asked if there was a fee for the foot clinics offered by the Fit n' Well Program and where the foot clinics were held. Ms. Bunnell advised her that the fee for foot care was \$20 for the first visit and \$18 for visits thereafter, however, no one is turned away for an inability to pay. Clinics are held at the Portsmouth Housing Authority sites. In addition, a clinic is held at the Woodbury Manor senior housing development which is open to the public.

Ms. Jacoby asked how many hours the activities aide and the foot care nurse worked. Ms. Bunnell replied that the activities aide worked 15 hours per week and the foot care nurse worked 21 hours per week.

Mr. Staples asked if the Portsmouth Housing Authority maintained statistics regarding the number of individuals with disabilities served. Ms. Bunnell said that she would provide this information to the CDBG staff. Ms. Hayden asked if the Portsmouth Housing Authority clients would use the new Route 1 bus route. Ms. Bunnell believed that it would make it easier for some seniors to get to the program.

Ms. Jacoby asked what had influenced the increase in services during the past year. Ms. Bunnell replied that the increase was due to the general aging of the population and the increased number of activities available at the facility.

Mr. Layton asked if Mr. Connors could provide an update regarding the progress of the Cottage Senior Housing Project. Mr. Connors replied that he anticipated that the project would be put out to bid in 3 weeks with construction beginning in June and completion 9 months thereafter.

Hearing no further questions, Mr. Layton thanked Ms. Bunnell and Mr. Connors for their presentation.

Ms. Jacoby welcomed Gordon McCollester, CEO/CFO of Area HomeCare and Family Services, Inc., and advised him that he had 15 minutes to make his presentation and respond to questions. Mr. McCollester provided an overview of his application for CDBG Public Service Grant funds for the Homemaker Companion Program.

Ms. Jacoby asked what kind of training the aides were given. Mr. McCollester replied that new hires were required to view a training video on abuse and neglect, engage in a one-to-one discussion regarding abuse and neglect issues for the elderly and shadow another aide for 1½ days. Ms. Rooney asked if background checks were conducted. Mr. McCollester replied that background checks and motor vehicle license checks were conducted. Ms. Yannekis asked what process was followed if abuse or neglect was found. Mr. McCollester stated that the concern would be brought to him and he would bring it to a committee to review. It was his responsibility to advise the Division of Adult and Elderly Services of the concern.

Ms. Yannekis asked if there was a nurse on staff. Mr. McCollester replied that there was not. Ms. Hayden inquired if volunteers were used. Mr. McCollester responded that a volunteer assisted with administrative duties, however, due to the nature of the work, no volunteers provided direct service.

Ms. Jacoby asked what impact the loss of CDBG funds in this past fiscal year had on their agency. Mr. McCollester replied that the agency “held their own,” however, there was demand for 40-50 more hours of service per week than they could provide.

Ms. Yannekis asked what agency provided nursing services for this area. Mr. McCollester replied that the Seacoast Hospice, Rockingham VNA and Hospice Service, and the Portsmouth/Derry/Salem Hospice served the area. Mr. Thorpe noted that 79% of their agency funding came from federal and state sources and asked if the same was true for the HomeCare Program. Mr. McCollester replied that it was.

Hearing no further questions, Mr. Layton thanked Mr. McCollester for his presentation.

Ms. Jacoby welcomed Fran Joseph, Executive Director of Compass Care, and advised her that she had 15 minutes to make her presentation and respond to questions. Ms. Joseph presented her agency’s request for funding for the Senior Companions Program. Ms. Hayden asked if the agency worked with Area Home Care and Family Services, Inc. Ms. Joseph said that they did receive referrals from that program. She explained that the Area Home Care program provides housekeeping services while the Senior Companion Program focuses on safety checks and companionship.

Mr. Thorpe asked for an explanation of the increase in individuals served from FY 2002/2003 to FY 2003/2004. Ms. Joseph replied that this increase was due to the proposed expansion of the Senior Companions Program coordinator’s job from 1 day to 2 days per week and the addition of the telephone reassurance component. Ms. Jacoby asked Ms. Joseph the amount of the volunteer’s stipend. Ms. Joseph’s replied that it was \$2.50 per hour plus travel expenses.

Hearing no further questions, Mr. Layton thanked Ms. Joseph for her presentation.

Ms. Jacoby welcomed Jackie Cowell, Executive Director of the Community Child Care Center, and advised her that she had 15 minutes to make her presentation and respond to questions. Ms. Cowell provided an overview of the agency and the changes that occurred in the past year. She noted two recent changes that increased the number of children in their program. 1) The recent location of the Headstart program at the Community Campus meant that families with children in this morning-only program often choose to have their children stay for afternoon care. 2) Community Child Care recently began an after-school care program at New Franklin, which expanded the number of children in their after-school programming. The addition of these two programs in combination with a new benefits administrator who is aggressively recruiting low and moderate income families, has resulted in an increase in the proportion of low and moderate income children served to 51% of their total.

Mr. Van Billiard asked if any area employers provided support to Community Child Care. Ms. Cowell responded that increasing employer involvement was a focus of their newly hired fund developer. One initiative that the agency has begun is the Adopt-a-Classroom program.

Mr. Thorpe asked how many children received tuition assistance from the Community Development Block Grant. Ms. Cowell replied that the equivalent of 12 full time children received tuition subsidy from CDBG. Ms. Rooney asked if a waiting list currently existed. Ms. Cowell replied that there were approximately 20 toddlers and 24 infants on the waiting list. The pre-school waiting list was shorter and the after-school care program list was longer. She noted that families in need are given precedence.

Hearing no further questions, Mr. Layton thanked Ms. Cowell for her presentation.

Ms. Jacoby welcomed Phyllis Eldridge, Program Manager of InfoLink's Medical Financial Assistance Program which is a program of Lamprey Health Care, and advised her that she had 15 minutes to make her presentation and respond to questions. Ms. Eldridge provided an overview of InfoLink and the Medical Financial Assistance Program. She noted that the program was initiated in response to a report issued by United Way which had identified the need for prescription services. Lamprey Health Care decided to add these services to their InfoLink program which was already in operation.

Ms. Yannekis asked Ms. Eldridge to describe how an individual would apply for assistance. Ms. Eldridge explained that an individual might be referred by the Portsmouth Pavilion, the Portsmouth Regional Hospital, Cross Roads House or some other agency. Once they contacted InfoLink, an appointment was scheduled and the client was asked to bring their prescription, tax return, and two pay stubs or other documentation of family income. If eligible, the applicant would receive a voucher, which could be used at the Medicine Shop in Portsmouth. When a new prescription was necessary, the client would need to complete a new application. Ms. Yannekis asked the average age of clients. Ms. Eldridge noted that, at this time, the average client was a woman in her 40s, however, previously the average client was a male in their early 20s who was working or looking for work.

As there were no further questions, Mr. Layton thanked Ms. Eldridge for her presentation.

Ms. Jacoby welcomed Nancy Brattan, Fundraiser for Seacoast Workcamp of the Group Workcamp Foundation, and advised her that she had 15 minutes to make her presentation and respond to questions. Ms. Brattan described Seacoast Workcamp. She stated that housing repair projects were limited in scale to projects which did not require a City permit. One hundred and fifty applications for housing repair projects had already been received. Eighty of the one hundred and fifty would be selected to receive house repairs through the program. 400 youth have already registered to participate in the Seacoast Workcamp and to make the repairs under supervised instruction.

Ms. Rooney asked how the homes to be repaired were selected. Ms. Brattan responded that staff visited all applicants to determine the extent of repairs needed. Eligible sites were revisited and job specifications written. Ms. Langley asked where the homes to be repaired were located. Ms. Brattan noted that 80% of the sites were in Portsmouth. Ms. Langley inquired whether any of the participating students were from local schools. Ms. Brattan replied that the participating students came from faith based organizations. However, local youth were conducting fundraising to help support the project. In addition, the Portsmouth School Board had agreed to allow Seacoast Workcamp to use the Middle School for lodging during the week of the camp at no charge, if the organization could guarantee that they would provide a minimum of \$30,000 in repairs to local housing. Seacoast Workcamp agreed to this requirement.

Ms. Yannekis asked Ms. Brattan to describe how youth were selected to participate. Ms. Brattan replied that faith based organizations nationwide registered for the camp. The cost per youth was approximately \$400 for the week. Ms. Yannekis asked for more information regarding the parent organization. Ms. Brattan noted that the Seacoast Workcamp was sponsored by the Group Workcamp Foundation which is a non-profit 501(c)(3) volunteer youth service organization developed by the Christian Publishing company. She explained that spiritual programming was offered at night to the youth, however, faith was not a factor in the selection of households receiving the repair services. The CAC asked Ms. Brattan to provide information regarding local participation in the program. Ms. Brattan agreed to provide this information.

Hearing no further questions, Mr. Layton thanked Ms. Brattan for her presentation.

Ms. Jacoby welcomed George Samuels, Executive Director of the Family Counseling Program of Child & Family Services, and advised him that he had 15 minutes to make his presentation and respond to questions. Mr. Samuels gave an overview of their request for a grant from the CDBG Public Service Grant Program.

Ms. Yannekis asked why there was an increase in the number of clients served from FY 2002/2003 to FY 2003/2004. Mr. Samuels explained that the numbers for FY 2002/2003 were year to date (i.e. through March of 2003) while the numbers for 2003/2004 reflected the estimated number of clients for the entire year.

In response to a question regarding the demographics of their clientele, he explained that a large number of their clients were working parents and single female headed households. Ms. Jacoby asked if there was a waiting list for services. He stated that there was a waiting list for evening appointments. Mr. Thorpe asked if the demand for their services had increased due to the

current state of the economy. Mr. Samuels stated that demand had not increased, however, those requesting services had bigger problems and were more “on the edge.”

Ms. Langley asked if Child and Family Services assisted with the educational programming offered by Family First Health and Support Center. Ms. Samuels replied that they did not. Ms. Langley asked Mr. Samuels to describe the conditions when a Child and Family Services clinician would provide home counseling services. Mr. Samuels explained that this service was only offered if a woman was in her 7th month of pregnancy, or later, and was on bedrest.

Hearing no further questions, Mr. Layton thanked Mr. Samuels for his presentation.

Mr. Layton asked if CAC members had any questions about the presentations. Ms. Yannekis asked if Seacoast Workcamp would provide a list of their volunteers. Ms. Jacoby said that staff would obtain this and provide it to the CAC. Ms. Yannekis disclosed to the CAC that 6 years ago she had worked at Lamprey Health Care which was the parent organization of InfoLink. Ms. Hayden confirmed that Ms. Yannekis disclosure was sufficient, and that no conflict of interest exists.

Hearing no further discussion, Mr. Layton recognized Ms. Hayden who stated that she had some business to discuss. She distributed the following items: CAC meetings minutes from January 28, February 5, and February 20, 2003; a Portsmouth Herald article on The Pearl; a Portsmouth Herald article regarding the expanded trolley service; and a letter from MicroCredit NH.

Mr. Staples noted that COAST was going to have a meeting at the Portsmouth Public Library at 7:00 PM on March 17.

Ms. Hayden updated the CAC on the bids received for the Saratoga Way Streetscape Improvement Project. She explained that the balance available in this line item, after engineering/design costs, was \$233,088 and that a total of \$8,822 remained in the now complete Kearsarge Way project line item. The most recent engineer’s estimate was \$283,000. Three bids were received and the apparent low bid was \$289,565 with an additional \$11,519 in bid alternatives. She said that \$301,084 was needed to sign a contract. She recommended that the CAC hold a public hearing to consider reprogramming funds to this project. Mr. Staples made a motion to publish a legal notice stating that the CAC would consider reprogramming \$35,000 from the FY 2002/2003 Microenterprise Assistance Program and \$25,000 from the FY 2002/2003 Housing Rehabilitation Program for this project. Mr. Van Billiard seconded the motion. All present voted in favor and the motion passed. Ms. Hayden suggested that the public hearing be held at 5:30 PM on March 26, which is just prior to the public service presentations on that evening. All agreed.

Mr. Layton adjourned the meeting at 8:00 PM.