

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

MARCH 12, 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; Nancy Emerson; and Gia Yannekis.

Absent: Russ Van Billiard.

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 Chris Sternville, Executive Director at Cross Roads House, and advised him that he had 15 minutes to make his presentation and respond to questions. Mr. Sternville provided an overview of their application to the CDBG Public Service Agency Grant Program. He noted that, in the past year, 130 of the 711 individuals who stayed at Cross Roads were children. He also stated that Cross Roads had instituted a fee for services. The purpose of the charge was to provide an impetus for residents to look for more permanent shelter. The fee is \$9 per night which is 30% of a full time worker's income at minimum wage. If the individual has no income, no fee is charged.

Ms. Rooney asked if there was a fee for the transitional shelter. Mr. Sternville replied that there has always been a fee charged for transitional shelter. Mr. Thorpe asked if the shelter was still required to shelter anyone who requested shelter. Mr. Sternville explained that state regulations still required that the shelter house anyone who was not intoxicated. He said that in the past year this had not been a problem. The largest increase in demand during the past year was from clients with mental illness. Finally, he stated that the agency was exploring options for rebuilding the shelter as it was in need of rehabilitation and re-design.

Ms. Hayden asked if the board was planning to conduct a capital campaign to fund the construction of a new shelter. Mr. Sternville said that they were just beginning to investigate the availability of federal funds for this purpose.

Ms. Hayden asked if the new COAST bus route down Route 1 would benefit Cross Roads House clients. Mr. Sternville remarked that it would be of great help to all of their clients, but particularly to those who needed transportation to the malls and the Community Campus.

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

Ms. Jacoby welcomed Kathleen Crompton, Executive Director of SeaCare Health Services, and advised her that she had 15 minutes to make her presentation and respond to questions. Ms. Crompton reviewed her agency's application to the CDBG Public Service Agency Grant Program. She noted that the agency had realized an increase in demand for services due to current economic conditions and, specifically, due to layoffs.

Ms. Jacoby asked Ms. Crompton to describe how an individual would apply for medical care assistance. Ms. Crompton explained that applicants went to the SeaCare office at the Seybolt Building where staff conduct a 45-minute interview to determine their health care needs. An action plan is developed, and the individual receives an enrollment card with a doctor referral.

Ms. Yannekis asked if SeaCare coordinated with InfoLink's Medication Bridge Program. Ms. Crompton explained that Portsmouth clients were sent to InfoLink's program; however, Exeter Hospital meets the medication needs of their Exeter clients.

Ms. Hayden asked if a waiting list currently existed, and Ms. Crompton replied that there was not one at this time. Ms. Hayden asked how the Governor's budget would impact the agency. Ms. Crompton noted that any cuts to the budgets for the Healthy Kids program or the area health centers would increase demand for SeaCare's services. She highlighted that the greatest need was for dental care, because there is a whole generation of adults who received poor dental care as children.

Mr. Layton thanked Ms. Crompton for her presentation. Ms. Jacoby welcomed Ms. Cherne, Director of Development and Community Relations for the Great Bay Chapter of the American Red Cross, and advised her that she had 15 minutes to make her presentation and respond to questions. Ms. Cherne gave an overview of the agency's request for CDBG funding for the Disaster Services Program offered by the Great Bay Chapter of the American Red Cross. She noted that although disaster strikes households at all income levels, households with available resources did not request assistance from the Red Cross. Therefore, 100% of the individuals served by the program earned low or moderate incomes.

The Disaster Services Program provides emergency assistance for 3 days after an emergency including food, shelter, clothing allowance and referrals. The estimated cost for a family of 4 is \$1,300. This cost is based on an analysis of 5 years of historical cost data. Financial assistance with security deposits is also provided. Portsmouth residents comprised 20% of their clients in recent years.

Mr. Thorpe noted that the City of Portsmouth provided a general fund grant to the agency. Ms. Cherne explained that the general funds were used for the agency's other programs. Mr. Thorpe asked what other towns supported the agency. Ms. Cherne noted that all of the 39 Seacoast towns had approved funding for the agency. In the Strafford area, all of the towns have been asked, however, the outcome is still unknown.

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

Ms. Jacoby welcomed Assiah Russell, Director of Client Services for AIDS Response-Seacoast, and advised her that she had 15 minutes to make her presentation and respond to questions. Ms. Russell provided an overview of their services. She stated that the cost for providing services to a client is \$3,600. She noted that young people under the age of 25 years now comprise 50% of new HIV infections.

Ms. Langley asked if their clients were eligible for welfare. Ms. Russell explained that some were and that the agency links clients with welfare and any other resources for which they are eligible.

Ms. Hayden asked if the new Governor's budget would affect the agency. Ms. Russell noted that federal and state budget cuts to the Care Program, which provides funds for medications, and to the Housing Opportunities for People Living With AIDS program would have an adverse affect on their agency; however, she was uncertain what impact the Governor's budget would have on their agency. Ms. Jacoby asked if clients still had complicated dosing instructions for their medications. Ms. Russell replied that dosing had become easier, however, the side effects remained problematic.

Mr. Layton thanked Ms. Russell for her presentation.

Ms. Jacoby welcomed Dick Ingram, Executive Director of Seacoast Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and advised him that he had 15 minutes to make his presentation and respond to questions. Mr. Ingram provided an overview of their application for funds. He noted that although the agency had one office in Exeter and one in Barrington, Portsmouth had the largest number of participants in the program of any municipality. Funding is requested for a match advocate who will conduct outreach, screening and intake. Ms. Hayden asked if he conducted outreach at the Portsmouth Housing Authority family complexes. Mr. Ingram responded that they did not yet. Ms. Rooney asked if only children in single parent families could participate. Mr. Ingram said that there were no restrictions on household composition.

Ms. Yannekis asked what portion of the position CDBG funds would cover. Mr. Ingram noted that the funds would pay for 25% of the match advocate's position. Ms. Jacoby asked what training the adult "Big" mentoring the youth received. Mr. Ingram noted that all adults recruited went through a screening process when interviewed and participated in a training process. Ongoing support was also provided to the mentoring adult. Ms.

Hayden asked if any evaluations of the program had been conducted. Mr. Ingram said that evaluations had been conducted of the program and he would provide this information.

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

Ms. Jacoby welcomed Kristie Conrad, Director of the Adult Basic Education Program offered by Rockingham Community Action, and advised her that she had 15 minutes to make her presentation and respond to questions. Ms. Conrad provided an overview of their application to the CDBG Public Service Agency Grant Program. She noted that funding from the federal Department of Education does not cover the full cost of the program.

Ms. Hayden asked if there was any follow-up conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. Ms. Conrad replied that only anecdotal information was available at this time. Ms. Hayden inquired whether a waiting list currently existed. Ms. Conrad noted that at this time there was not, however, the literacy program is quite full.

Ms. Hayden asked if any outreach regarding the programs available was conducted in the City's low and moderate neighborhoods. In reply, Ms. Conrad described their marketing efforts which include sending out fliers to 150 organizations, posting the classes at employment offices and churches, word of mouth and advertising through the agency's network of programs. Ms. Jacoby asked if the agency currently collected income information. Ms. Conrad replied that although they did not collect it now, it would be simple to add as age, race and ethnicity information were currently collected.

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

Ms. Jacoby welcomed Carol Saucier-Dunbar, Director of Family Service Association, and advised her that she had 15 minutes to make her presentation and respond to questions. Ms. Saucier-Dunbar provided an overview of the Nutrition for Healthy Living Program, which is the program for which the agency is requesting funds. CDBG funds are specifically requested to fund the salary for the Director of this program. The Nutrition for Health Living Program is the primary program operated by Family Service Association.

Ms. Yannekis asked how the Director's salary was currently funded. Ms. Saucier-Dunbar replied that grants and donations were their main funding source. The agency does not anticipate that they will receive a grant from the United Way this year. Last year, a United Way grant was received for back to school supplies; this year funding was requested for overhead costs.

Ms. Hayden asked what the average age of their clientele was. Ms. Saucier-Dunbar noted that their clients ranged in age from young to old. Ms. Hayden asked how

frequently clients could access the food pantry. Ms. Saucier-Dunbar noted that clients could come to the food pantry one time per month or two times, if necessary.

Mr. Layton asked how many staff were employed at the agency. Ms. Saucier-Dunbar replied that they employed 2 part-time (twenty hours per week) Senior Experience workers. Ms. Langley inquired what the size of their current office was. It is approximately 650 square feet. As there were no further questions, Mr. Layton thanked Ms. Saucier-Dunbar for her presentation.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 PM.