

APPROVED ON 4-7-06

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
CAC MEETING**

**MARCH 9, 2006**

**PORTSMOUTH CITY HALL**

**6:00 P.M.**

Present: Chairman Bob Layton, Vice Chairman Cicero Lewis, Jean Pecunies, Lynne Langley, William Thorpe, Dani Rooney, Stephen Lichtenstein,

Absent: Nancy Emerson (called), Algene Bailey (called)

Staff: David Moore, Program Manager

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Chairman Layton opened the meeting and recognized David Moore to introduce the evening's first presenters for the FY 2006-2007 Public Service Agency Grant Program.

Judy Bunnell, Community Services Division Director for the Portsmouth Housing Authority (PHA), spoke on behalf of the foot-care clinic. Ms. Bunnell said that the foot-care clinic continued to serve seniors in the PHA complexes. In response to a question from Chairman Layton, she said the PHA has arranged for services to continue for residents at Keefe House, which is now managed by the private property owners rather than PHA. She said that without the Portsmouth CDBG support she would not be able to fund the foot-care clinic, which is run in partnership with Compass Care. Ms. Bunnell then offered the CAC to hold a meeting at Parrott Avenue Place. The committee thanked Ms. Bunnell and generally noted its desire to arrange a meeting at the Senior Center in the future. Chairman Layton thanked Ms. Bunnell for her presentation.

Ms. Bunnell then spoke on behalf of the Portsmouth Housing Authority Senior Center. Ms. Bunnell said that the Senior Center has benefited from the addition of a new activities coordinator and has seen an increase of 100 people attending its programs in the last quarter. Ms. Bunnell said that the center's goal is to help families keep seniors in their homes while still making them feel part of the community, but she stressed they need funding to achieve their goal. The CAC asked questions about the transportation program, meals program and typical clients. Ms. Bunnell said that the agency's transportation services are very costly and time consuming, but an important part of the agency's work. Ms. Bunnell is responsible for overseeing the part-time dispatcher and drivers, who pick up and deliver seniors to destinations within the City. Ms. Bunnell reported that the Center has been busy with new activities including visitations from the Red Hat Society and music therapy activities. The agency is also expanding with the addition of activities formerly offered by the Community Council of Senior Citizens. She also hopes to pick up additional programming from the Council such as computer classes and forums on topics of interest to seniors. In response to a question from Vice Chairman Lewis, Ms. Bunnell said that many people seeking services are not from Portsmouth but have moved here to be with family and need contact with other seniors in their new surroundings. Chairman Layton thanked Ms. Bunnell for her presentation.

Chairman Layton then recognized Pam Haggarty, Executive Director of A Safe Place, a domestic violence and abuse shelter. Ms. Haggarty said that the number of clients served is directly related to the number and availability of staff. She said the typical client is usually female with one or two children. She said her agency works in collaboration with the Division of Child, Youth and Family Services at the State level and is increasing their education efforts, which have grown by over 20% in the past year. In addition, Ms. Haggarty said that the shelter is sharing space with Sexual Assault Support Services in Dover in order to help the agencies save money. Mr. Thorpe asked who the 73 people served in FY 2005 were. Ms. Haggarty said they were shelter residents. Mr. Lichtenstein asked about the public facility needs at the shelter. Ms. Haggarty said the agency hopes to construct a new kitchen, new insulation, pursue inquiries into the possible presence of lead, and finish off a basement for support group programming for children. Chairman Layton asked about the service area for the agency. Ms. Haggarty said the agency services all of Strafford County and Rockingham County except for those towns that border the Manchester area. Chairman Layton thanked Ms. Haggarty for her presentation.

Chairman Layton then recognized Christine Lavalley, Esquire Fair Housing Program and Testing Coordinator from New Hampshire Legal Assistance. Ms. Lavalley spoke about the need for education and outreach for the issue of fair housing and landlord-tenant issues. She said The Fair Housing Project (FHP) provides counseling on several issues related to lead paint, families with children in rental housing, homelessness, and accessibility issues. She said that often people who earn low or moderate incomes have some need for legal assistance but cannot afford an attorney or they are not aware of legal protections. She said FHP can help clients access services and provide for their families. She said Portsmouth accounted for 12 fair housing cases out of 70 statewide. Mr. Lichtenstein asked if the agency has a website with frequently asked questions about housing issues. Ms. Lavalley said there was a website and it is currently being renovated to better meet needs. Chairman Layton asked if the agency hired attorneys or had them on staff. Ms. Lavalley said NHLA has attorneys on staff but sometimes the agency utilizes outside attorneys for specialized areas of the law. Mr. Moore asked Ms. Lavalley to elaborate on how the funds would be used. Ms. Lavalley said that the \$3,000 requested would be utilized in order to organize a fair housing conference in Portsmouth to help provide education and outreach to the community. Chairman Layton thanked Ms. Lavalley for her presentation.

Chairman Layton then noted the absence of Planned Parenthood of Northern New England (PPNNE) representatives and suggested the committee wait to see if the representatives would arrive. Mr. Moore then informed the committee that earlier in the evening he had received a call from Gordon McCollester CEO of Area Home Care, who said he was feeling ill and hoped his presentation could be rescheduled. Mr. Moore said space remained at the end of the meeting on Tuesday March 21 and he would schedule him for 7:30 p.m. At this time, Mr. Lichtenstein informed the committee that he would be late on March 21<sup>st</sup>.

Discussion ensued about the evening's presentations. The committee discussed how fewer applications were submitted for the grant program this year. Mr. Moore said that there could be several factors affecting an agency's decision to apply. He said that because grant writing can be time consuming, many agencies make a calculation about their likelihood of receiving funding. The committee inquired about which non-profit agencies did not ask for funding this year. Mr. Moore said that Operation Blessing, New Heights, Micro-Credit NH, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of New Hampshire, and NH Small Business Development Center did not ask for funding this year.

One funding option discussed was spreading the available funding out over all of the agencies that requested funds. Ms. Rooney said that all of the agencies were worthy of receiving funds. Mr. Lichtenstein said that he was impressed that, in general, agencies requested only relatively small amounts of funding. The discussion then turned to New Hampshire Legal Assistance and Ms. Langley asked what kind of questions NHLA fields from clients. Mr. Moore said that the agency has a special program dedicated to issues of fair housing, which can mean equal and adequate access to rental housing for people who earn low incomes, have disabilities, or have families. He said that the larger agency is involved in other areas of the law such as assisting a client access benefits or representing them in an employment discrimination case. Mr. Thorpe pointed out that the agency did good work but it was a large agency and he wondered why they needed Portsmouth CDBG funding.

Chairman Layton determined that Planned Parenthood had missed their presentation time. Mr. Moore said staff would contact the agency in the morning and would follow-up with the Chairman regarding their absence.

Hearing no other business Mr. Layton adjourned the meeting at 7:45 p.m.