

**Commission on Social Services
Minutes March 11, 2010**

Attending: Betty-Jo Corridon, Roseann De Simone, Nate Shipp, Judy Mabley, Cathy Pierce, Judy Zucker, Beth Mason, Ed Raposa, Steve Lanza, Colleen Fawcett, Karen Strickland, Lisa Bogan

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm.

The February 11, 2010 minutes were approved.

Director's Report: Cathy Pierce

Cathy announced that the Department's expanded website will be accessible within the week, and she acknowledged Liz Doty's help in getting it up and running. The site will offer helpful information to citizens who prefer to make use of the Department's resources online rather than coming in for face-to-face service. It will include information and application guidelines regarding local, state and federal family assistance programs. It will also provide staff biographies and contact information. Cathy asked for and received approval by those present to publish names and contact information for Commissioners as well.

A Community Conversation sponsored by the Underage Substance Abuse Task Force is scheduled for April 7, 2010. The aim is to attract attendance by parents of teens.

Although the department did not receive one of the United Way Community Response grants last month, Cathy was pleased to report that grants were awarded to Trackside and to the Y, the latter to support their new childhood obesity prevention initiative.

A general discussion followed about the League of Women Voters' current study of the effects of the economic downturn on Wilton families. The Department has participated actively in this study.

Guest Speakers: Karen Strickland, Wilton Family Y development director; Lisa Bogan, Wilton Family Y president; Colleen Fawcett, Wilton Youth Services coordinator

Karen, Lisa and Colleen reported on the \$50,000 grants awarded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to six Connecticut YMCAs in Wilton, Darien, Southington, Hartford, Waterbury, and New Haven. Wilton is one of only three suburban towns to receive a grant, and the speakers attested to the strong record of cooperation and collaboration among Wilton organizations and agencies as being instrumental in the selection of the town to be awarded one of the grants.

The focus of the grant is the childhood obesity epidemic, and the charge is to develop an action plan to promote community-wide policy and cultural changes (i.e. not just a series of "events") for a "Healthy Community." The action plan is to be presented to the Foundation this coming May, and funding will become available in July. The core planning team of 12 has now

increased to 30 interested members, ideas are being shared, and the response from the community and town officials has been unanimously supportive.

Old/New Business

Mission Statement: The Commission on Social Services' mission statement will be posted on the Town website within the week.

Food Pantry Committee: Betty-Jo Corridon is chairing this committee and reported that many food donations are coming in from a variety of new sources (some examples: Pepperidge Farms is supplying bread; the Wilton Community Garden is turning a plot over to growing vegetables for the Food Pantry; fresh eggs are being supplied by a local woman who raises chickens). Weekly updates on items needed for the Pantry will be published in the Wilton Bulletin.

Liaison Update: The Domestic Violence Task Force is planning a May 2010 event directed toward parents of teens and tweens on the subject of technology's effect on dating violence. There is also interest in launching a White Ribbon Campaign, modeled on Bridgeport's program, to bring male members working to end violence against women into the Wilton Task Force. Steve Lanza, Social Services Commissioner and the Executive Director of Family Re-Entry, and also a member of the Wilton DV Task Force, is interested in helping with this initiative.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7 pm.

Next Meeting: April 8, 2010

5:30 pm

****IN ROOM 23 AT COMSTOCK****

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Mason
Co-Secretary