

COMMISSION on SOCIAL SERVICES

Town of Wilton

Minutes of September 12, 2013 Meeting

**Attending:** Roseann De Simone, David Graybill, Peg Koellmer, , Cathy Pierce, Virginia Smith, Christine Tenore

**Absent:** Judy Mabley, Judy Zucker, Betty Jo Corridon

**Guest Observer:** Michael O'Connell

**Guest Presenters:** Colleen Fawcett, Margaret Creeth, Lauren Hughes, Lizabeth Doty

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Peg Koellmer at 5:31 PM

The minutes of the June meeting were approved

**Commission Business:**

**RTC endorsed candidate for Commissioner:** Mike O'Connell was introduced to the Commission as the RTC endorsed candidate to fill the Republican vacancy. Mr. O'Connell is awaiting approval from the Selectman and subsequent to that will take the oath of office.

**Director's Report:**

*Cathy Pierce* gave an overview of the department plans for the year ahead.

C. Pierce reported that presently they are experiencing a decrease in staff due to the illness of one member. Since staffing is bare bones the impact is felt through the entire department. She stated that the Board of Finance has notified all Town departments that the projected budget increase for next year will cap at 1.75%.

Presently the Energy Assistance Program has 51 applications and the department has spent more than \$14,000 on assistance with and anticipation of much higher spending as we go into the colder months.

Mental Health issues are always in the forefront and community awareness is key in the detection process. Following the Mental Health Fair that was sponsored last spring, the possibility of another Community Conversation is being pushed on the State level. Wilton will participate in National Depression Screening Program which will be coordinated with a blood pressure clinic scheduled for the first Thursday in October. C. Pierce will implement the clinical screening and provide the appropriate follow- up for participants if needed.

Emergency Management is recruiting volunteers to man the Emergency Shelter locate at Comstock Community Center, if needed during another Town disaster. To date, the response has not been good.

Food Pantry is being utilized on a consistent basis. RSVP volunteers continue to be the mainstay of functioning of the Food Pantry and thanks goes out to other contingents of volunteers who shop and stock shelves.

*Colleen Fawcett* and *Margaret Creeth* gave an over view of Youth Services. The Anonymous People documentary focusing on substance abuse recovery will hopefully be shown in the Little Theater during the month of April. Greg Williams the filmmaker and producer and Danbury resident will potentially be available for conversation after the showing.

Many branches of Youth Services were discussed: Youth Council, CODES, Youth to Youth, Trackside, Peer Connection and Parent Connection to name a few.

M. Creeth stated that the department is looking to form a group relevant to the 20's age bracket population who are not socially connected with their peers so for the purpose of forming a connection to the community. She also discussed the Task Force on Substance Abuse and Underage Drinking. Projected programs include- Red Ribbon Week, Drug Free Week, Eating Disorder Week and Brain Awareness Week just to name a few.

Youth Services is also looking to involve athletes in the promotion of a healthy and substance free lifestyle, continue the relationship with Positive Directions with the focus on social naming and organizing and facilitating another Prevention Fair.

*Lauren Hughes Coordinator of Senior Services* also spoke about the Anonymous People documentary in hopes that it will promote public advocacy for substance abuse recovery. She stated that Silver Hill Mental Health facility has purchased the documentary and has given Wilton permission to use it. L. Hughes states that she is seeing repetition in her services annually. She is experiencing an increase in counseling of adult children who are caregivers to their parents.

She is responsible for the Holiday Giving program of which its guidelines have been restructured for the upcoming holiday season. She spoke to the Back to School Program in which 70 families were recipients of supplies and gift cards for back to school necessities. She also attended a Webinar presentation on affordable health care which will roll out in October.

*Lizabeth Doty Senior Coordinator for Activities* distributed the schedule for Flu Clinics that will be offered by Visiting Nurse and Hospice of Fairfield County. She also discussed the Senior Community Day that will take place on Sunday 9/15. Forty exhibitors representing various offerings are expected and all proceeds go to the Senior Center. L Doty stated that the many activities that are offered in the Senior Center are well attended

C. Pierce concluded the report by complimenting her staff and all the effort that they put into place so that our Community is well cared for.

Liaison Reports were tabled. Peg Koellmer asked the Commission to think about the liaison list and evaluate them as to which are viable and pertinent to the Commission mission statement. This will be discussed at the October meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:00 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Roseann De Simone, Co-secretary