

## MINUTES

Low Income Energy Advisory Board  
Wednesday, December 2, 2015  
Operation Fuel, Inc.  
75 Charter Oak Avenue  
Hartford, CT

**Members/Designees/Others In Attendance:** Alyson Ayotte, PURA, Frank Augeri, PURA, Gail Lucchina, PURA, Carlene Taylor, DSS, Linette Jones, DSS, Kasia Janik, OPM, Pat Wrice, Operation Fuel, Wendy Wanchak, CLS, Kelly Sinko, OPM, Margaret Bain, OCC, Kate Quigley, 2-1-1, Eddie Swift, Eversource, Kathy Wasilnak, UI, Edith Karsky, CAFCA, Chuck Anderson, DSS, Chris Herb, Energy Marketers, Assoc., Jeff Brining, NPU, Ruth Swift, NPU, Brian Biernat, DEEP, Brenda Watson, Operation Fuel, Joanne Balaschak, New Opportunities, Inc.

**Welcome:** The meeting was convened at 1:31 p.m. Pat Wrice chaired the meeting.

**Approval of minutes of the meeting:** The November 4, 2015 minutes were approved. Kathy moved to adopt the corrected minutes and Wendy seconded.

**Operation Fuel:** Brenda stated that they have reopened for winter assistance. The summer program ended October 30<sup>th</sup>. She informed the group that over 2,800 households were assisted between mid-July and the end of October. It was an approximately \$1.1 million program. Brenda stated that on December 16<sup>th</sup> there will be a press conference to introduce the Energy GAP study. It will be at 11:00 a.m. at the LOB. Brenda stated that they would like everyone to attend.

**SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT:** Pat stated that the due date is January 1<sup>st</sup>. Pat noted that Wendy has done a great job. Wendy advised the group not to worry about typos. She stated that they would be corrected later. She advised that she did include most of the comments received in the document. She felt that a lot of progress had been made. She also stated that they may not have consensus on every issue so she asked that the

document be taken in the spirit of good discussion. Edith stated that she would like to have some indication of where each of the comments came from. Wendy replied that some are obvious and some are not identifiable.

Kathy from UI noted that on Page 5 she started out identifying the programs and then the tasks. Regarding the LIHEAP block grant, Carlene noted that the funds are allocated and 10% is allowed as carryover because at times it may be received late and cannot be spent or some years they have almost no carryover. She mentioned that last year the carryover was due to a larger amount received than originally expected. Edith added that it is not accurate to state that it is used as a hedge and this should be corrected. Carlene advised that there are administrative costs and that can be up to 10% to pay salaries and run the program. Wendy said that it will be clarified and maybe more artfully worded. Chuck advised that the people with experience are stating accurately what is done. Wendy agreed to remove the word "hedge". Edith stated that a lot of info that the subcommittee discussed and said needed to be changed is actually still in the document. Pat asked people to dial back the tone of the discussion.

A lengthy discussion of page by page corrections ensued. Some of the items discussed were as follows:

Diane recommended a change on page 6 regarding HES-IE language. She stated that is not a problem there that they are trying to solve. It was agreed to eliminate the section.

Edith wanted the sentence about it being possible to apply year after year and not receive help. Carlene also wanted the section removed and it was decided to do so.

Margaret stated that on page 6 the Eversource funds should say the "electric and gas customers fund."

There was discussion concerning the fact that a discussion of the history of the LIHEAP was not needed and that the actual program as is should be what is discussed. Wendy disagreed. Edith did not think it belonged in the report. Chuck felt it is not LIEAB's job to educate the legislature and it is best to come to the agencies with the actual knowledge if they have questions. Pat was concerned with the tenor of the discussion. Edith

agreed with Pat and said it is not supposed to be a means of certain members editorializing. Edith stated this was inappropriate. Wendy stated that it was her duty to voice and discuss what came out of the subcommittee. Diane summed up and asked if the history portion would be eliminated and it was agreed that it would be removed.

Margaret suggested clarifying language and data regarding the SBC and the group agreed.

Pat recommended that information be added about the \$3 million in privately raised funds that Operation Fuel receives. She also suggested a clarification that funding is ratepayer derived.

Various other changes and clarifications were discussed.

Wendy brought up language about landlord responsibilities. After much discussion, Margaret suggested that it should state that the Board encourages greater clarity and a look at the entire body of law concerning landlord/tenant responsibilities. Wendy stated that she would write similar language.

There was discussion about the Other Points of View section of the report. Chuck was surprised by this and is confused as to why it would be in this report. Edith, Carlene and Pat expressed concerns similar to those raised by Chuck.

There was also extensive debate centering around a single application. Wendy advocated for a single application. She stated that it would eliminate difficulties in accessing benefits. There are currently multiple apps and multiple waiting periods. Wendy suggested that they look at DSS to see if there is any way they can cut down on the amount of time. She stated that it would get benefits to people faster and on time. Edith stated that they have already seen 60,000 households and will see more than 150,000. Edith added that she does not see the single application piece as an appropriate part of the report. Carlene added that the information is typically already in the system because there is not a large percentage of new people. Edith recommended that they say in the report that LIEAB will continue to look at streamlining the Application process.

Wendy made a Motion regarding adding Other Points of View section. Chris clarified that the vote is whether or not to permit this section to be included. One person was in favor of inclusion and four opposed. Four members abstained. Wendy said she would rewrite the report and distribute copies. A final electronic vote would be conducted on January 6<sup>th</sup>. Wendy so moved and Frank seconded.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

**NEXT MEETING:** The next meeting is scheduled for January 6, 2015.