

**ENFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 2, 2020**

A Special Meeting of the Enfield Town Council was called to order by Chairman Ludwick in the Council Chambers of the Enfield Town Hall, 820 Enfield Street, Enfield, Connecticut on Monday, March 2, 2020. The meeting was called to order at 5:45 p.m.

ROLL-CALL – Present were Councilors Bosco, Cekala, Hemmeler, Kiner, Ludwick, Mangini, Muller, Sferrazza, and Unghire. Councilors Riley and Szewczak were absent. Also present were Town Manager, Christopher Bromson; Assistant Town Manager, Kasia Purciello; Deputy Town Clerk, Karen Coolong; Town Attorney James Tallberg

OUTSIDE AGENCIES

KITE

Present were Chris Gomeau, Coordinator for KITE and Leann Beaulieu, Chairperson for KITE and the School Readiness Council

Ms. Gomeau stated KITE is Enfield's early childhood collaborative and serves as the Town's School Readiness Council. She noted as such, they oversee the School Readiness Grant application process and related reporting. She stated they work with Amy Morales from the Family Resource Center as their liaison to the School Readiness Council, and they value their partnership with the Town of Enfield.

She stated as the School Readiness Council they convene the monthly collaborative meetings. She explained that much of the work that KITE does in the Town of Enfield and how they delegate staff time in the KITE office is based off information that they get from the Town and School District.

Ms. Gomeau stated one example of the work that KITE does is in the area of young children's mental health based on the needs being seen by Enfield kindergarten teachers and early education providers. She noted the collaboration of schools, pediatric practices, providers and mental behavior specialists resulted in the identification of resources and development of systems to meet the needs of the growing number of children who are coming to school exhibiting challenging behavior as a result of being exposed to trauma and toxic stress.

She stated over the years, KITE has been able to bring pediatric practices together to share and communicate resources and ideas. She noted recently they formed the Enfield Early Childhood Mental Health Committee. She stated Dr. Calnen was recently at a Council meeting talking about Child First, a new resource available to Enfield families. She noted this brings together a series of

professional development opportunities for early care and education providers, as well as Enfield Public Schools, and they've also extended those workshops to families.

Ms. Beaulieu stated a good part of their time is focused on the best way to instruct very young children, and KITE's focus is on all the areas that really impact very young children. She noted they also work with and support whole families.

Chairman Ludwick requested more information about trauma and young children. Ms. Gomeau stated several years ago, there was a large discussion about the number of children entering kindergarten that were really struggling. She noted those conversations started the work, and they provided professional development for teacher and early care providers, as well as supporting families through workshops, and they continue to provide this professional development.

Mr. Beaulieu referred to trauma and noted it's been learned that divorce, illness, death of a family member, economic insecurity, work insecurity or home insecurity create changes in the way a child learns or behaves. She noted such stresses over time changes a child's brain function because of constant tension.

Councilor Sferrazza stated early intervention with young children is vital. He questioned if there's any plan to collaborate with the Police Department because the police see a lot of trauma. He questioned if there's any contact between KITE and the Police Department. Ms. Gomeau responded not specifically, but they did partner with the Police Department in a summer program called "Playground Tuesdays". She noted each event was held at a different playground, and they invited community partners to come out and play with the families and children. She agreed with Councilor Sferrazza that they should further the connection with the Police Department.

Councilor Bosco questioned how much KITE has in their fund balance. Ms. Gomeau stated they depend on the Town or the Schools and private foundations to fund KITE. She noted each year that looks a little different, i.e., this year they lost some funding that they had in previous years from LEGO.

Councilor Bosco questioned what is the percentage of savings to the operating budget. He noted if that information isn't available this evening, it can be given to the Town Manager. Ms. Gomeau indicated that can be provided.

Loaves & Fishes

Present was Priscilla Brayson, Director of the Enfield Loaves & Fishes Soup Kitchen.

Ms. Brayson stated Loaves & Fishes opened in 1982, and they're open 363 days a year. She noted this past year, they did over 90,000 meals, and they gave over 27,000 snacks to Educational Resources for Children. She stated they also cook community dinners once or twice per month,

and this is when families get together with the children. She noted on February 26th, they cooked 250 meals for them, and this was held at the Asnuntuck Community College.

She noted Loaves & Fishes doesn't just feed people because this is a place where the homeless can go, and a place where people who have substance or mental problems can go. She stated her belief this is a place where people can heal because many broken people visit the soup kitchen. She shared stories of how the soup kitchen helped people with their lives.

Ms. Brayson stated Loaves & Fishes partners with the whole community, i.e., Social Services, the Felician Sisters, Mark Twain, and the food shelf in Suffield. She noted everyone works together to make this community better for people in need.

She stated she requested a \$5,000 grant from the town. She noted they need to purchase a sterilizer, a bain marie and a hand sink. She noted they try to be self-supporting, and they do not receive federal or state money.

Councilor Mangini questioned if they are looking for additional funding, and Ms. Brayson responded no, they are not, but they're asking for help to address the mandated hand sink.

Councilor Bosco requested Ms. Brayson provide Loaves & Fishes budget information.

Enfield People for People

Present were Monica Wright, Director of the Enfield Safe Harbor Warming Center and Lorraine Creedon, Treasurer for Enfield People for People

Ms. Creedon stated this is their fifth year of operation, and they have a minimalist budget just covering the needs of what they do throughout the year. She noted their funding is provided by churches, businesses, local organizations as well as 95 individual and family donations in the last year.

She stated they've decided to stay open 100 nights this year, which is 25 nights longer than in the past. She noted they're looking for support from the Town of Enfield in order to maintain that level, so they can stay open during the coldest parts of the year, which would be January, February and all of March and into the first part of April. She noted they have closed earlier, and one year they lost someone who was unable to house themselves after the warming center closed. She stated money donated by the Town will be used to extend the season. She noted they also wish to extend the times that they're open. She stated they're currently open from 9:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. She noted they would very much like to open a little earlier in the evening because right now people are on the doorstep at 7:00 p.m., and they can't let them in until 9:00 p.m. She stated they leave at 7:00 a.m., and buses don't pick them up until 7:30 or 7:45 a.m.

Ms. Creedon stated they do not have any savings. She noted they are hoping to develop a way of building funds so they can do more, but they have not yet gotten to that point.

Ms. Wright stated they have increased their numbers this year. She noted as of March 1st, they've had 40 people visit their facility. She noted they can only accommodate 16, so it's a good thing that all people don't come in at one time, or they'd have to turn people away. She stated she looks at the grant money as a way to hire people, so they can open earlier, and so they can work with CHR and Social Services. She noted opening earlier would help CHR have an opportunity to speak to their guests. She stated it's hard for their guests to get in touch with the resources that they need.

She stated in the form of tokens and monthly bus passes, they provide transportation every night for guests to come and go because they know they're far away from these people. She noted most guests come from Thompsonville. She stated they want to be sure these people can get to the warming center, so they don't have to stay out in the cold. She stated they also offer guests snacks and a place to lay down, so they can just stay warm and safe. She noted if they did not have a warming center in Enfield, it would be necessary to send people to Hartford, Middletown or Meriden.

Councilor Sferrazza questioned if this is the first time they've come for some money, and Ms. Creedon stated they came before the Council last year, but they didn't receive any funding. She noted last year they requested \$10,000 on the recommendation of the Social Services Department.

Councilor Sferrazza stated his understanding they have paid staff and volunteers, and Ms. Wright stated most of their staff are volunteers, but they do have some paid staff because they need to have trained people, who can work with homeless people, people with addiction issues, or people who may have other issues such as mental health.

Councilor Mangini stated this organization provides a well-needed service for Enfield. She voiced her support of this good work being done.

Councilor Bosco questioned on average how many people visit the warming center per night, and Ms. Wright stated they've been averaging 14 to 16 people per night. She noted they're seeing a shift in who is using their facility, and they have more females this year, and they have more females over the age of 60. She stated this is another reason why it would be very important to open the door earlier when they're seeing a number of older females looking to utilize this service.

Councilor Unghire questioned whether there's any idea of where the guests are coming from, and Ms. Wright stated they have local guests, but they do get people from Somers or Windsor Locks, and they allow those people to stay, however, the turnover is no more than 72 hours because they need to have their space available for residents here in Enfield.

Councilor Kiner questioned what kind of counseling is done to help people. Ms. Wright stated they're working with Social Services and CHR to make sure that people are accounted for, so they're not out at 7:00 a.m. and not doing anything. She noted they know they're either going to a program, appointment or some kind of meeting so they can get them to a place where they become self-sufficient. He stated every night she does work with them to make sure they know the resources available to them.

Councilor Kiner questioned how successful they are in providing that kind of counseling whereby those people don't come back again. He questioned if they keep a record of the progress of people. Ms. Wright stated they have helped house around three people. She noted they've had people come in who did not have jobs or were in jail, and they helped these people get jobs in Enfield. She stated they do work with people to help them become self-sufficient. She noted they are more than a warming center because they go above and beyond.

Chairman Ludwick stated he would like to challenge religious organizations to match what the Town is doing. He noted he would like to see how many religious organizations are currently donating, and how many more can help.

Ms. Creedon stated they have ten churches that are currently active and making contributions to the warming center. She noted Holy Trinity houses them at no fees.

Chairman Ludwick stated it would be great to hear more success stories, so that people realize there is a return on the investment.

Community Health Resources (CHR)

Present were Marcia McGuire, Vice President of Communications, Sharon Petrone, Senior Program Director; Kathy Schissel, Vice President for Child and Family Services

Ms. McGuire stated CHR calls Enfield home. She noted CHR was founded in Enfield 54 years ago, and they started off as a small counseling center, and have grown through the years to meet the needs of the children, adults and families that they serve. She stated CHR is now the most comprehensive behavioral health care agency in the State, and they provide a range of services. She noted they're very proud of the housing support services that they provide individuals, and they provide supported employment to help people gain new skills and become self-sufficient. She noted the core of their business is mental health and addiction services for people of all ages.

She stated in the last year CHR served 27,000 individuals throughout the region, including 2,756 individuals from Enfield. She noted in the last year they started offering family medicine, which are primary care services for adult clients. She stated people with serious mental illness tend to die 25 years earlier than the general population, therefore, they're very committed to bringing primary care to their clients. She noted they also added new services for veterans, and system wide they're seeing a 50% increase in the number of veterans and their families who are receiving

behavioral health services. She stated they've added some new programs for children, and they continue to see an alarming number of people who need help with opioid use addictions.

Ms. McGuire stated in the past year, CHR served 27,000 individuals, which is about a 42% increase since 2015, and that is about the same time the opioid use epidemic started. She noted while they continue to see a tremendous demand for their services, they're respectfully requesting flat funding.

Ms. Petrone stated she oversees the Enfield outpatient clinic, as well as the Pathways Methadone Clinic. She noted a large focus of their services this past year has been to try and help with the opioid epidemic. She stated they also provide a large range of mental health and addiction services, and they have an intensive outpatient program that provides services each day for people to come in and get services. She noted they participate in the town's Opioid Task Force, and they also work with the Police Department.

Ms. McGuire stated about 70% of their clients are low income and extremely vulnerable.

Ms. Schissel stated they do serve people from Enfield regardless of their ability to pay, and they have a sliding fee. She noted for Child & Family they have the full continuum of behavioral health and substance use services, i.e., crisis services to outpatient to support services, and they do a lot of intensive home-based services for youth in Enfield, where they have teams that go out to the community, schools, home and work with families and youth.

She stated this past year they enhanced the services that they're providing to the North Central Multi-Disciplinary Team, which is a team of law enforcement, prosecution, mental health, medical, as well as victim advocacy services that work with families where there's been a disclosure of sexual abuse or serious physical abuse. She explained during this past year, they've been going out to these families to do an assessment of the entire family with the recognition that caregivers, as well as siblings and family members struggle when there's been a disclosure of abuse. She noted free treatment is provided to the family, as well as being involved over a longer period of time to make sure families are educated about trauma and the impact of abuse on the child and their functioning going forward and to make sure they continue with the treatment recommendations.

Chairman Ludwick questioned how they get referrals. Ms. Schissel stated DCF is involved in the team, and DCF must screen all the cases where there's disclosure, as well as the Police Department bringing those cases to the table.

Chairman Ludwick stated the problem with Medicaid is that if an individual gets a job or a promotion, Medicaid may take money away that was used for medication. He questioned how they can change that. He noted there are many people who need these services and aren't getting them. Ms. Schissel stated people can come to CHR, which has a sliding fee, and they have the

ability to waive it even lower based on need. She noted because they have family medicine, individuals can be helped if their healthcare needs are not getting met.

Councilor Sferrazza questioned whether they are dealing with marijuana addiction. Ms. Schissel stated they treat people with substance addictions, which includes marijuana.

Councilor Sferrazza stated at the Hartford Capitol they talked today about legalizing marijuana.

Councilor Mangini stated her understanding CHR is making the largest request of over \$36,000. She questioned what that's attributed to, and Ms. McGuire stated clients have very complex needs, therefore, it costs a lot to provide the services that they provide. She noted they must pay their providers.

Councilor Mangini questioned whether CHR receives funding elsewhere, and Ms. McGuire stated they have a number of state and federal grants.

Councilor Bosco questioned what is their ratio of savings to the operating budget. He noted if that can't be answered this evening, he requested that information be provided to the Town Manager.

Councilor Bosco questioned whether CHR owns or rents buildings. Ms. McGuire stated they lease the large building on Hazard Avenue, and they own a building on Enfield Street. Councilor Bosco questioned whether CHR pays property tax on the Enfield Street building, and Ms. McGuire stated she will have to check into that.

Councilor Hemmeler questioned if CHR is reimbursed for medical services, and Ms. McGuire stated at this point they are getting reimbursed by the State for Medicaid, and they're just getting into negotiating contracts with the commercial carriers.

Amplify (formerly North Central Region Mental Health)

Present was Marcia DuFour, Executive Director of Amplify.

Ms. DuFour stated Amplify is one of five Connecticut regional behavioral health action organizations charged by the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services to act as their community partner for planning, education and advocacy to address the behavioral health needs of children and adults in a community. She noted their members include people in recovery, families, providers of behavioral health services and members of coalitions that are concerned about mental wellness and preventing, treating and responding to substance misuse in communities.

Ms. DuFour stated their purposes for their use of town funding are three-fold.

To ensure effective prevention initiatives as well as quality treatment and support services are provided to Enfield residents and identify local priority issues and resource needs

To address gaps and barriers in the service system and provide information about behavioral health services to the general public, so people in need of services may be more likely to seek and have access to needed treatment and support services

She stated every year they conduct a regional services priority review using collected data, surveys, focus groups and interviews with people in recovery, family members, community behavioral health providers and coalition members, i.e., the local Prevention Council led by Jean Haughey and other local referral organizations. She noted those results are presented to the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, state officials, and Legislature, and those reviews are used to set state-wide priorities for the next state biennial budget as well as federal resources that come to Connecticut.

Ms. DuFour stated they also use reviews for development of new and needed services, i.e., information and advocacy to address critical issues such as opioid use and overdose, suicide, vaping, problem gambling and substance misuse. She pointed out they are the fiduciary for federal funding for Enfield's Local Prevention Council for their State Opioid Use Disorder Grant, and they're also the fiduciary for next year's Local Prevention Council grant focused on strategies to address vaping among youth. She noted they represent Enfield in the state-wide Drug and Alcohol Prevention Task Force that's focused on prevention, treatment and recovery support strategies to address addiction issues facing Enfield residents.

She stated they also want to address the root causes of addiction among Enfield youth, so they recently formed an anxiety work group to study and recommend strategies for addressing a growing emergence of anxiety among school youth.

Ms. DuFour stated in their last review they highlighted the need for affordable housing with supportive services to Enfield residents with mental health and addiction challenges, and they highlighted to the state the disparities within the region, especially the lack of options for Enfield residents for affordable and supportive housing services.

She stated they are also concerned about services for older adults, and they're excited that Enfield is creating a new position in the Social Services Department that will focus on older adults, and they look forward to working with that person.

Ms. DuFour stated they have grant funding for identifying and providing education about ADA transportation resources for individuals with disabilities, older adults and veterans.

She noted sometimes they're highlighting the strength of local communities and encouraging other parts of the state to learn from those communities, i.e., in transforming and expanding Connecticut's behavioral health crisis response system, Enfield is a leader in the region, and she

asked Jean Haughey to share at an upcoming meeting about crisis responders and how Enfield is working with the police, EMS, Social Services and the faith community to respond as a caring community to residents in crisis. She noted Enfield is really a model in this area.

Ms. DuFour stated they provide resources and information to the general public, and she noted a weekly newsletter is published highlighting educational and advocacy opportunities, and they also promote mental health first aid as a means of educating the general public about how to understand and respond to people with mental health issues.

She stated their funding request is always based on 7 cents per capita rate, so their request this year is for \$3,125, and she doesn't believe Enfield has ever funded them at that level, and they are grateful for what the town is able to provide. She noted they distribute over \$12,000 in federal funds to Enfield for addressing substance abuse issues. She thanked Enfield for their support of Amplify over the years and the excellent resources this community provides for Enfield residents.

Councilor Cekala questioned if Amplify is located in Enfield, and Ms. DuFour stated their office is in Hartford, and they cover 37 towns, including Enfield.

Councilor Cekala questioned how Amplify does the outreach in Enfield. Ms. DuFour stated their region is divided into catchment area councils, and the catchment area council that serves Enfield is located in Enfield, and they work very closely with the local prevention council.

Chairman Ludwick questioned whether Amplify gets state funding, or is it federal and local, and Ms. DuFour stated it used to be state funding, but the state eliminated all of their funding, and they have federal funding.

Chairman Ludwick questioned the sense of the state cutting Amplify's funding while it considers the expansion of gambling and the legalization of marijuana. Ms. DuFour stated they are at a lot of hearings to talk with legislators. She noted their focus is that if the state is going to do these things for revenue, they need to reinvest money into prevention and treatment services. She noted they will continue to advocate at that level.

Councilor Sferrazza stated when they legalize something for the sake of revenue, it is a cause for concern. Ms. DuFour agreed and noted they are not lobbyists, but they're part of an organization that has a lobbyist, however, they go to hearings as educators for legislators.

Councilor Bosco questioned how many residents does Amplify help, and Ms. DuFour stated their purpose is to help all residents. She noted they don't provide direct services. Councilor Bosco stated if they're using Enfield money, he wants to be helping Enfield residents. He questioned what CHC has in their bank compared to their operating budget and requested that information be provided if it's not available this evening, and Ms. DuFour indicated that can be provided.

Community Health Center (CHC)

Present was Yvette Highsmith-Francis, Regional Vice President

Ms. Highsmith-Francis thanked Enfield for its support for the Mary Lou Strom Primary Care Center where they provide comprehensive out-patient health services to the most vulnerable residents. She noted those comprehensive services include medical, dental and behavioral health. She stated about 82% of the patients are living below 200% of the federal poverty level, so are either uninsured or under-insured. She noted the support from the town has allowed them to provide care to individuals who have no insurance coverage to make sure they have access to the health services they need. She stated they take care of the entire family from infants to seniors and look to provide as much of the health services that people need in one location.

She stated they do have a sliding fee scale based on income and family size, which can discount down to as low as \$5.00, but some families don't even have the resources to pay that, and the town has allowed for those individuals to not forego health services. She stated they very much appreciate the support as a federally qualified health center.

Ms. Highsmith-Francis stated they have met about 65 criteria from the federal government that says the Thompsonville area that they're located in is a medically under-served area, and they're allowed to be there to meet that unmet need. She noted one of the benefits of that is discounted pharmacy services. She stated they work aggressively to make sure that everyone who presents as uninsured or under-insured meets with their specialist for benefits and goes through the affordable health exchange process because sometimes people are eligible for the expanded Medicaid, but do not know that, or they don't have a computer or the confidence to go through the health exchange and learn there is an affordable plan. She stated they really make sure that anyone who does not have insurance coverage gets it.

Councilor Mangini noted Community Health is looking for double of what they requested last time, and she questioned the reason for that. Ms. Highsmith-Francis stated the reason for that is the increase in uninsured. She stated there has been an 8% increase in uninsured.

Councilor Bosco questioned what CHC has in their bank compared to their operating budget and requested that information be provided if it's not available this evening.

Councilor Bosco questioned whether their building is owned or rented, and Ms. Highsmith-Francis responded they've been leasing this building since 2007, however, they are looking at another location that they hope to own.

Councilor Bosco stated his impression the Affordable Care Act was supposed to have everyone insured, and the State of Connecticut has an exchange whereby everyone is supposed to be insured. He questioned why these people aren't insured. Ms. Highsmith-Francis stated they have an Access to Care Specialist, which is an individual that helps people go through the application process, and

there are a good number of people who are eligible for the expanded Medicaid, but they also have lots of working poor who don't qualify for expanded Medicaid and don't have the additional income to pay a \$200 per month premium for one of the plans.

Enfield Homefront Team of St. Raymond of Penafort

Present were Mary Mercik and Robert Atiyeh, board members of the Enfield Homefront Team.

Ms. Mercik stated Homefront is a community-based volunteer driven home repair program, which provides free repairs to low-income homeowners enabling them to remain in their homes with improved quality of life. She noted the Homefront organization is a regional non-profit based out of Stamford, Connecticut, which assists them with low-cost materials, administration and insurance for projects. She noted Enfield's board is comprised of around ten residents who volunteer their time to prepare for their one-day blitz of home repair every year. She stated they are supported out of the parish of St. Raymond of Penafort, which consists of St. Patrick's and St. Adalbert's Churches. She noted their volunteer roster is comprised of about 200 people from Enfield and surrounding communities, and they've been working in Enfield for over 20 years and each year have worked on no fewer than three projects and some years as many as five on the first Saturday in May each year. She stated to date, they've completed projects to make the homes of 70 families warm, safe and dry in the Enfield community. She noted families are screened by the Homefront organization for eligibility before they sign on to provide help. She stated they must qualify as low-income and own the home, and they work with the Office of Community Development to identify Enfield residents in need as well as partnering with them to help families who have more needs than their resources can help.

Ms. Mercik stated their volunteer teams are comprised of professional contractors who donate their time and talent and tools to help in these projects, and they're fortunate to have a large population of retired professionals as well as a large group of people who come out to help with projects. She noted they also solicit local businesses.

She stated they need to pledge \$2,750 per home that they work on each year, and this fee is paid to the Homefront organization in Stamford, and it covers the insurance for the volunteers who work on site as well as giving them access to discounted construction. She noted administrative costs are minimal and consist of paper and postage for volunteer mailings. She stated they feed volunteers on workdays, and they try to solicit that food from local restaurants.

Ms. Mercik stated they are completely funded by donations and grants. She noted they not only help a need in the community, but they also bring community members together to meet that need. She stated any money granted to their organization will be used to foster teamwork and a sense of community, as well as improving the quality of life of those people in need in Enfield.

Councilor Bosco questioned how much Homefront has in its savings compared to operating expenses. Mr. Atiyeh stated they currently have \$6,000 to \$7,000 in their savings, and they are

requested to make a pledge of \$8,275 for three sites. Councilor Bosco requested details be provided to the Town Manager's office.

Councilor Kiner stated he worked with this organization many years ago. He noted it's heart-warming to see volunteers working on these homes, and this is an attribute to the community. He stated he also serves on the Blight Committee, and oftentimes these houses are blighted, and this group is not only improving that home for that individual, but also for the community. He expressed his appreciation for all the work that Homefront does.

Councilor Sferrazza referred to the \$2,750 that must be pledged to the corporate office in Stamford and clarified that is for the whole day and not per project, and Ms. Mercik responded it's per project on that day. Councilor Sferrazza questioned how many projects they would have on that day, and Ms. Mercik stated they generally do three to five projects, and this year they pledged three projects.

Councilor Kiner questioned if there's a program whereby they work in conjunction with veterans and Home Depot. Mr. Atiyeh noted Home Depot has a national level grant that the Homefront based in Stamford applies for, and if they are awarded that, and they happen to be doing a veteran grant, they can provide more material for that particular site.

Chairman Ludwick stated if Enfield were to allocate money, would they be able to get some before and after pictures of what's been accomplished, and Mr. Atiyeh responded absolutely. Ms. Mercik stated their Facebook page has before and after pictures.

Chairman Ludwick stated he assumes there's certain criteria for the homeowner to apply, and Ms. Mercik stated they must meet a low-income level, and they must be a homeowner because they don't work on rentals. She noted projects are extensively vetted through the Stamford organization, and they do the review of the financials to be sure a person is actually eligible.

Chairman Ludwick questioned whether they publish the names of the individuals or companies that help out, and Mr. Atiyeh stated a lot of times the individuals and the companies prefer not to be published and they try to respect that. He noted Troiano's, among others, have been absolutely incredible.

Enfield Food Shelf

Present was Kathleen Souvigny, Executive Director of the Enfield Food Shelf.

Ms. Souvigny requested continued support for their rental assistance, so they maintain and expand their services. She noted Enfield falls in the bottom 25% of Connecticut towns for food insecurity amongst its residents. She stated this makes Enfield residents some of the highest at-risk population in the State of Connecticut for food insecurity, and there are an estimated 7,000 people in Enfield who qualify or could use some form of food assistance.

Ms. Souvigney stated for the last 52 years the Enfield Food Shelf has been providing food assistance for Enfield families in need. She noted in 2019, they served more than 2,100 registered Enfield residents just in their traditional, weekly program. She stated the need continues to grow.

She stated during the month of January they registered 96 new shoppers for weekly food assistance, and these are all Enfield residents. She noted in 2019, the Enfield Food Shelf volunteers worked more than 32,000 hours and successfully distributed the equivalent of 530,000 meals across all their programs, partnerships and collaborations. She stated that's a 3% increase over 2018.

Ms. Souvigney stated as an organization, they are striving towards a community in which everyone has access to nutritious foods through a sustainable and collaborative distribution network. She noted this network will also provide awareness to available programs, resources for assistance and nutrition-based education. She stated to fulfill this vision, they continue to enhance their weekly, monthly and emergency food assistance programs, and they maintain more than 16 partnerships and collaborations helping to extend their food assistance network beyond their traditional weekly program, and they're always looking to provide more, i.e., providing Head Start with overages that they have for bread, etc., which has been going very well. She noted they provide home delivery for seniors who qualify in the monthly food assistance program, they provide SNAP electronic sign-up at each food distribution, and they help build a healthier community by participating in local initiatives such as the Enfield Hunger Action Team and Two-Gen. She stated they work to combat senior isolation with their new Enfield Friendly Caller Program. She noted this is a new collaboration with the Commission on Aging and Enfield Social Services. She stated they have a trained and licensed therapist, who is a volunteer, and who has trained volunteers to connect with seniors in Enfield by phone to provide them with resource information and a friendly voice on a weekly basis. She stated they provide a variety of opportunities for volunteers because people are able to connect with others, they can gain work experience, they can get back on track with their community service, and they have student interns that help to learn social service backgrounds.

She stated they are working on a new, larger facility, and the building is right in their parking lot, so it will not disrupt their clients very much. She stated it's hoped this expansion will make a more positive impact in fulfilling their vision of a food-secure community. She noted they also help other organizations, such as the warming center with joint fundraising.

Ms. Souvigney thanked the Town Council, as well as everyone in Enfield, for helping to provide the Enfield Food Shelf with such dedicated support over the last half century. She noted Enfield has a wonderful volunteer base.

As concerns funding, Ms. Souvigney stated they have 18 months of reserves that they sustain at all times, so they can keep going for 18 months if they needed to, and they're funded by fundraising events, direct fundraising, and grants that she writes.

Councilor Bosco questioned what the 18 months of reserves equates to regarding the operating budget, and Ms. Souvigney responded one and a half times.

Councilor Mangini thanked Ms. Souvigney for all the hard work.

Councilor Muller questioned when they're moving, and Ms. Souvigney stated they're hoping they'll start their construction in March.

Network Against Domestic Abuse

Present was Karen O'Connor, Executive Director of the Network Against Domestic Abuse.

Ms. O'Connor stated after 25 years, she just retired as a State Police Sergeant. She noted one of her passions involved training police officers to respond to domestic violence incidents. She noted 51% of the screening of these incidents comes in as high-risk to be killed by an intimate partner. She stated Connecticut has 14 to 15 domestic violence homicides per year. She stated she comes to the Network with the hope that they can keep Enfield residents safe. She noted they own a safehouse and a children's center and a condo from where they operate their office. She stated they have been in Enfield for 35 years, and their headquarters are in Enfield.

She stated their goal is to provide free services to Enfield residents who are victims of domestic abuse. She noted they have 24-hour Safe Connect Service to get victims and their families into safe, immediate housing. She stated once they are in safe housing, the goal is then turned into counselling and to work towards getting families into permanent housing. She noted she was surprised when she arrived here to learn that the safe house, which is 15 beds, is 124% full. She stated two-thirds of the victims they serve come from the Town of Enfield.

Ms. O'Connor stated they also provide legal advocacy for people to get appropriate orders of protection from their abusers.

She stated they are funded by state and federal grants, donations, fundraisers and grants that they apply for.

Ms. O'Connor stated they apply education services to all Enfield students, both at the elementary and high school level about domestic violence, dating violence, how to deal with the stressors of domestic abuse, healthy relationships and how to deal with anger.

She stated in 2019, they educated 4,575 Enfield students, educators and coaches about preventing domestic abuse and having healthy relationships. She noted they housed 20 adults in their safe house and ten children. She stated the average stay in the safe house is 30 to 35 days with the goal to get people in a self-sustainable residency. She noted some families stay longer or a shorter period.

Ms. O'Connor stated as concerns services outside their safe house, they still provide counseling. She noted in 2019, that benefited 375 Enfield victims and children.

She thanked the Council for providing grant money last year, and that grant money plays a big role in their being able to educate the youth of Enfield, which is where they want to start to begin promoting healthy relationships and hopefully get a handle on domestic abuse. She stated they did request a little more this year because they helped 40 more individuals than they helped in 2019.

As concerns their budget, she will provide that information to the Town Manager.

Chairman Ludwick questioned whether people are educated about reporting domestic abuse, and Ms. O'Connor stated the training in the schools is about healthy relationships and teen dating violence. She noted they are also training coaches.

Chairman Ludwick questioned whether there's a friendly hand-off to other agencies, i.e., when victims find themselves homeless. Ms. O'Connor stated the Network Against Domestic Abuse is the second smallest catchment of advocacy agencies in the State of Connecticut and so far, their safe house has used the rapid rehousing program the most in the state. She noted the rapid rehousing program is specifically to get people into more permanent housing quicker.

Enfield Resources for Children (ERFC)

Present were Claire Hall, Executive Director and David Meizels, Director of Operations

Ms. Hall stated their Summer Escape Camp has been in operation since 1995, and they service children from Enfield. She noted if there's space in their program, they do invite other communities. She noted this camp serves over 125 children every summer, five days a week. She stated children can enroll for one week or seven weeks. She noted they provide two different fee structures for families, and they have a full pay fee as well as a fee for free and reduced lunch. She stated that subsidized fee is where they are asking for assistance through this grant. She noted they subsidize every year approximately 60% of the children they serve during the summer. She stated most of the children who come in the summer from Grade 1 to Grade 8 are students that don't normally go to any other camps because families can't afford other camps. She noted they exist because families really need them because they must work. She stated they can serve families every day from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. with extended camp from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Meizels stated Summer Escape Day Camp is a recreational summer program with a significant academic and educational enrichment component. He noted in addition to sports, arts, crafts and performing arts, there's a dedicated digital media program that will involve robotics, coding, film and music creation all through computer. He stated they will do a dedicated science program and a literacy component all the way through. He noted in doing so, they hope to address what could be learning loss over the course of the summer. He stated they partner with the school district during the year, providing Before and After School, and they feel it's part of their mission to be sure that students are coming back to school at the beginning of the year ready to go having enriched themselves through the camp programs over the course of the summer.

Councilor Bosco stated his understanding ERFC is looking for \$15,000 for the summer camp. He questioned if they run a deficit at the end of summer camp. Ms. Hall stated their budget has been level. She noted they don't serve more children every year because they have not been able to for about three years, so they keep their budget fairly level, and there's never anything left over. She stated if there's any money left over in a budget they're projecting, they use it to subsidize their families.

Mr. Meizels stated all their staff is CPR/first aid trained and they're all trained to handle medication and medication related issues, and they're all mandated DCF reporters. He noted their staff is college age and up. He stated they have counselors-in-training, and these are high school students, mostly from Enfield High School, and who will participate at no cost and potentially work their way into the youth development field.

Councilor Bosco questioned whether they must hire more staff during the summer, and Ms. Hall stated their staff continues and grows with them during the summer. She noted about 85% of the staff stays through the summer. She stated some of their staff goes onto college or higher education.

Councilor Mangini stated she knows first-hand the value of this program. She noted without this program, many children won't fit into other programs due to lack of room or they're too costly, and many of these children will be left home unattended. She stated this program provides not only for the safety of children, but they also provide recreation and opportunities for children to mature, develop and socialize. She noted she will always support this program.

Chairman Ludwick stated the Town also funds the Tons of Fun Summer Program. Ms. Hall stated she's never felt as though her program competes with the Town's program because both programs fill up.

As no others wishes to speak, Chairman Ludwick closed the meeting at 7:49 p.m.