

**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
March 9, 2022 (Via Zoom)**

PRESENT: Charlene Bonenfant Jennifer DeLuca Kelley Sylvia  
Edward O'Brien Joanne LaFerrara Lori Gonsalves  
Ann Kardamis Laura Miola

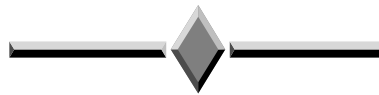
ABSENT: Edward Duffy Herbert Day

Meeting called to order at 10:23 a.m. by Edward O'Brien

Laura Miola made a motion to accept the February 9, 2022 meeting minutes.

Ann Kardamis seconded.

All in favor.



[Board Meeting Reports 03.09.2022](#)

**Director's Report**  
**Charlene Bonenfant**

**COVID 19:** As of April 19th, as long as we continue on the current trend, the mask mandate will be lifted and we will recommend that those who are unvaccinated wear a mask. I have inquired with a company with regards to coming in and scrubbing off the two years of sanitizer that is everywhere.

Program Updates:

- Senior Center Activities - programming is very well attended; grab and goes are starting this month and will be held monthly until June. We are having a picnic in the park in May for Older Americans month, we have a concert series set for multiple locations with Mike Higgins, multiple craft projects and meditation are coming back.
- Community Relations Program/Emergency Fund – As we look at higher gas prices and higher oil prices – we are predicting a very busy end of the winter season as folks begin to run out of their fuel assistance. In addition, as people pay their oil bills - we are predicting that we will have an onslaught of utility shut offs. The Mayor has already called to inquire and she has indicated that if we begin to run out of funding we may be able to again tap into ARPA funds.
- Taunton Opioid Task Force – Lori Gonsalves, Co-Chair TOTF

Lori reported that TOTF held a meeting via Zoom on 03/08/22 and approximately 20 people attended. They discussed settlement money coming to the City and the need for someone to manage those funds. There will be a support group available through Taunton's Open Doors to Recovery at the Baptist Church on 03/10/22.

Other Department Updates

- a. City and Grant Funding updates – We have submitted the city budget which remains an under \$500,000 request; the CDBG grant has been submitted for a full time caseworker. We have final approval of our Formula FY22 grant in which we will receive \$125,628.00.
- b. Personnel - we have been approved to hire two full time Elder Outreach Workers – one via CDBG funding and one through ARPA with ARPA funding the benefits. When speaking with

the CFO, he believes we will be able to get the two positions transferred into the city budget after two years.

- c. Renovations – we have new windows - however we are still seeking \$10 million for a new center and the CFO has executed this type of programming before and he will be assisting us in finding the funds. We will also be collaborating with the Taunton Housing Authority on this.
- d. Collaboration on Programming with Housing – the collaboration is coming together nicely and we have our first full collaboration meeting this coming Tuesday – now that all the positions have been filled.
- e. Community Needs Assessment – Chairman Edward O’Brien – The CFO would like the community needs assessment for the budget presentation. I will start working on it next week. Ted will meet with Charlene and Jenn to finalize.

Charlene talked about our newsletter printer, LPI, working on soliciting advertisers to allow us to expand our newsletter, and said the Mayor has approved accepting advertising from the marijuana companies as long as they are low key and appropriate; and prior approval will be required.

### **Assistant Director’s Report** **Jennifer DeLuca**

Client’s served, # of Programs facilitated:

- 81 home visits
- 23 office visits
- 1028 elder telephone contacts
- 1163 case management interactions
- 95 nursing interactions
- 64 wellness checks
- 6 CFC Fuel Assistance Applications
- 7 SNAP applications
- 2 COVID testing kits distributed
- 38 SHINE interactions
- 20 health insurance information contacts

Program development, upcoming programs etc.:

- Our intern Gabby who has been with us since September will be finishing her internship at the end of April/beginning of May. We have decided at this time we will not pursue an additional MSW intern student for the fall.
- We have been afforded the opportunity to hire 2 full time case workers and to re-hire for the Peer Friendly Visiting Coordinator in the Elder Outreach Department. These positions will begin in July.
- We are continuing to work on monitoring trends relating to aging based upon what the Outreach Staff has been seeing in their home visits and on their phone calls with existing clients and new callers.

- Common trends at this time is accessing affordable housing, financial strain relating to fixed incomes with inflating cost of household food & goods, mental health related issues, increased concerns around elders with limited supports, accessing/receiving the needed level of home care services to remain safely and independently in the home.
- Working with CFO Dello Russo and the Board of Health to explore the Community EMS Program through Brewster. The program offers chronic disease management, homelessness issues, substance use issues and mental health programs. The program services people throughout their entire lifespan, offering in home vaccinations, new mom and infant home visits, home visits to complete in home assessments for those with disabled children, nutrition education etc. This is a program that the entire community can benefit from and would allow for us to have more medical oversight by the EMS services already servicing Taunton's residents.
- Information and Referral Specialist funded through ARPA continues to work on connecting callers to appropriate services inclusive of EMOT, Bristol Elder Services, completion of housing, SNAP, Mass Health applications and completing research to guide seniors through different aspects of aging to continue to remain safely and independently in their home as they age. This has decreased the work load of the part time staff in Elder Outreach which is especially important as we are currently down 2 workers. The current Outreach Staff consists of 1 RN, a bilingual case worker and an intern who are working with the active cases that have already been opened. If ongoing case work is needed, I & R Specialist Deb and I will have a discussion and I will assign the case to the appropriate case worker.

**Community Relations Counselor's Report**  
**Mary Beth Forshaw**

Taunton Emergency Task Force  
 Executive Board Meeting  
 March 1, 2022  
 9:00 am

In February 2022, we approved 5 applications which assisted 14 unduplicated individuals.

1 application was assisted through split UW Family Fund Utility /Flex FY2022 and BCSB Charitable Fund for rental assistance.

2 applications were assisted through UW Family Fund FY 2022 for Utility Assistance.

1 application was assisted through BCSB Charitable Fund for Utility Assistance.

1 application was assisted through Fuel Fund for Fuel Assistance/oil.

Ann Kardamis made a motion to adjourn @ 10:36 a.m.  
 Seconded by Joanne LaFerrara.  
 All in favor.

**Next meeting: Wednesday, April 13, 2022**