

Falmouth Human Services Committee
Minutes
April 15, 2015
Meeting commenced at 3:05

Attendance:

- Members present: Elaine Sinni (Co-chair); Barbara Sullivan (Co-chair); Florence Davidson; Karen Cardeira; Liz Page; Patricia Murphy; Tanya White
- Members excused: Anne Connolly

Minutes:

- February minutes were approved

Commendation Awards:

- No new nominations at this time

Non-profit Agencies:

- Consumer Assistance Council (CAC) – Kimberly Denis, Executive Director met with the Committee and addressed questions regarding FY16 funding application, information discussed:
 - Consumer complaints from Cape & Islands residents are most frequently regarding auto dealers (used and new); utilities; cable; home improvement; landlord; scamming issues via telephone and mail to persons with a handicap or over 80 years of age. There is time limit on complaints.
 - Consumers are welcome to call the office to see if a particular contractor has any complaints against them (back to 2008). CAC staff can also provide referrals.
 - Complaint forms can be accessed through their website
 - Funding from Cape Towns are as follows: \$500 Brewster; \$350 Chatham; \$750 Dennis; \$200 Eastham; \$300 Orleans; \$550 Ptown; \$110 Wellfleet; \$1,500 Falmouth
 - Budget from the state has decreased over the last few years (2012 = \$81,525; 2013 = \$81,000; 2014 = \$74,560)
 - Kimberly Denis is the only paid employee and they have 17 volunteers, who receive informal training in mediation but are well versed in all issues. Many volunteers have longevity and range in age from 55-92 years of age. Volunteers work 225 hours per month (in-kind \$5,890); During office hours there usually are 2 volunteers working per each 3-hour shift
 - The complaint assistance process usually includes a 30 day demand letter, followed up by informal mediation. If the case is not settled then the client can choose to take the case to small claims court (if claim is under \$7,000)
 - Number of cases have dropped in recent years because the Attorney General's Office and the 18 other consumer assistance agencies in Mass are processing complaints

better and referring complaints to appropriate agency is better. Consumers are also doing a better job researching their concerns on the internet.

- Many complaints on the Cape are driven by tourists
- Majority of complaints come from residents over the age of 60, disabled, senior veterans, or residents with language barriers. There is no means testing.
- CAC does receive referrals from Elder Services, COA's, town constitutes, and police
- CAC is looking into the possibility of providing services at an office on the Upper Cape (provided in-kind). They currently have two volunteers from upper Cape (Pocasset and Mashpee) who could fill this role.
- Salvation Army – Committee reviewed and discussed site visit report
- Family Services Challenges – Committee members reported on information gathered so far:
 - Family dynamics
 - Services – long wait and misinformation re: availability of access to psych care (therapists and clinicians many steps w/several weeks lag time between each)
 - Support for parents to understand educational needs;
 - Behaviors - “exhausted students” upon school arrival; anxiety;
 - Services needed – Additional clinical professionals; more mentors/tutors; better access to services; improved communication for all (school admin, school nurses, teachers, counselors, parents, psych facilities and other treatment providers.
 - Committee members would like to invite the YMCA representatives to come to the next Committee Meeting to present program goals for their daycare in North Falmouth and Summer Camp.
 - Calmer Choice is presenting to the Falmouth Public School administration on May 8th. More details regarding the school's interest anticipated after that meeting.
 - Evaluation and decision will be made at next meeting to determine allocation of family services funds

Meeting adjourned at 5:15pm

Attachments:

1. April 15, 2015 Agenda
2. February meeting notes
3. CAC site visit template with questions
4. Salvation Army Site Visit Report
5. Needs assessment survey data gathered by Committee to date
6. Cape Cod Regional Substance Abuse Council; Report on Regional Substance Abuse

Next meeting: Wednesday, May 21, 2015

Respectfully submitted by Susan Clondas