

TOWN OF KENNEBUNK

SELECT BOARD – SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES SUBCOMMITTEE

MONDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2023 – 4:00 P.M.

KENNEBUNK TOWN HALL, ROOM 300

MINUTES/NOTES

Call to Order

On October 2, 2023 at 4:00 p.m., a meeting of the Social Service Agencies Subcommittee was called to order.

Those in attendance were:

Subcommittee Members: Select Board members Lisa Pratt, Leslie Trentalange, Miriam Whitehouse

Others Present: Community Development Deputy Director Karen Winton, Community Development Director Chris Osterrieder, as well as member of the public, Mark Jago, Executive Director of Community Outreach Services.

1. Discuss unmet needs in the community and opportunities for support

With the consensus of all in attendance, this item was moved to the end of the agenda.

2. Discuss current resources and activities related to social services

K. Winton reviewed the Town's Emergency Fuel Assistance program, and the Town's Property Tax Assistance Program. Both programs are aid programs intended to assist residents who do not qualify for General Assistance, though are still in need. The Town's discretionary fund was also discussed, which serves to supplement other aid programs for special needs where no other resources exist. This has been funded through the Social Service Agencies budget in the past and based on needs shared with the subcommittee that may be anticipated in the coming fiscal year based on available federal, state and local programs and funding.

3. Discuss 2024-2025 Agencies application process

A draft application was shared with the committee and discussion on requested information took place. The subcommittee reviewed the application and provide any feedback to staff as soon as possible. Applications will be made available to agencies by end of October and anticipated review by Subcommittee to take place in early December.

4. Discuss unmet needs in the community and opportunities for support

M. Whitehouse noted she had been in touch with a member of the public who wished this subcommittee to discuss the Town planning for and funding for unexpected asylum seekers in Kennebunk.

Mark Jago, Executive Director of COS of the Kennebunks spoke about the needs in the community that his organization is seeing. There is a sharp increase in the need to meet with people to hear their needs and understand what they are going through comprehensively. He said when people are needing to use the food pantry, they are likely experiencing needs beyond just food. He said that often, it takes time to sit down, have a conversation, and build trust and the basis for a relationship to understand comprehensively what is going on for a person or their family.

Jago has been looking at other nearby models of physical locations where people experiencing hardship can go to be connected with resources, talk to people who can listen and even get a cup of coffee or meal. In Biddeford, there is a place called [Seeds of Hope](#) which provides much of this, and in Portland area, [the Root Cellar](#). He is actively seeking referrals or information of a physical space near Downtown Kennebunk that is accessible and walkable for those seeking this type of support.

Next Meetings

The subcommittee set the next two meetings as November 20th at 10:00 am and December 10th at 10:00 am.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 pm

Minutes/Notes by Karen Winton, Deputy Director of Community Development