

**TOWN OF DEEP RIVER, CONNECTICUT**  
***Community Health Committee***



**Location: Town Hall at 174 Main Street Deep River, Connecticut 06417**

**Date: March 15, 2011 – Tuesday Place: Town Hall, Deep River CT Time: 7:30 pm**

**Attendance: Committee Members - Russell Marth, Nancy Howard, Diane Recchia, Chuck Walker. Absent: K. Zarfos, J. Nickse, M. Carver, C. Olson (Guests: Henry May of FISH)**

**Meeting Minutes**

Meeting was called to Order at 7:31. New member, Chuck Walker was introduced.

**FISH Representative Visits**

In order to accommodate guest, Mr. Henry May of FISH, Chairman moved this subject to top of the agenda with consent from the Committee members. Mr. May made a brief presentation of the services FISH provides the community. He stressed the main effort, which is providing transportation to and from medical appointments for those who cannot drive. All drivers are volunteers and it was shown that Deep River has a high proportion of people who use and need the services, despite a dearth of drivers from this town. In conclusion, Mr. May shared the small budget under which it operates, asking the CHC to consider a donation to FISH and to help in any way with communicating the organizations needs (which we have done in the past as much as possible). CHC will bring the monetary issue up at a future meeting when more members attend.

**Past Minutes**

Motion to approve minutes from February 15, 2011 meeting was made by N. Howard, seconded by D. Recchia. No discussion was forthcoming, approved 3-0.

Motion was made by N. Howard, seconded by D. Recchia to approve the minutes of the Dec. 20 special meeting. Again, hearing no discussion or changes, minutes were approved 3-0.

**Old Business**

**Documents**

The 'referral documents' presented by N. Howard at the February meeting were discussed along with 'voucher documents' provided by the Social Services Coordinator and another voucher used by the town hall staff were compared and discussed. At length, having reached some tentative understanding of each document's purpose, Ms. Howard offered to continue review of the documents and combine/amend/change them, including various logos, to form some official documents that could be used for both referral and voucher. It was decided to enlist the help of the town's Accounts Manager and other staff for input, as necessary.

**General Health Services**

A brief discussion on the number and nature of health services commenced. The Chair asked whether anyone knew of any services that were distinctly missing. After some discussion, no one was able to say that any service was missing at this time with regard to the town's public health provider (Visiting Nurses of the Lower Valley). No action was taken. It was noted that Mr. Olson will continue to monitor the mental health status to the degree possible.

## **Action Items:**

### **Publicity**

R. Marth let the committee know about recent publicity occurrences. An ad will appear in the DR News Quarterly (copy of ad shown to attendees) and an article will also appear in that issues. Further, an article appeared in the Valley Courier, written by their staff writer Marianne Sullivan (see article copy at end of minutes).

Chairman shared the new CHC logo, as well. Discussion about the format that letterhead would take ensued. It was decided to use standard, 8.5 X 11 paper and #10 envelopes. These would be bought at Staples, and D. Recchia offered to research this item and buy them as a “donation” to the CHC. Others offered “donations” in the form of postage and so forth (all appreciated).

Further, Ms. Recchia will ask a friend to help with design of the pamphlet, begun by R. Marth. Committee liked the general look of the pamphlet. It needs fleshing out, but a start has been made. Mr. Marth offered to contact or be contacted by the person who will help design this item.

Publicity should be ongoing and active into the future – something that should be discussed each meeting. The above items represent a decent start and should be completed as soon as practical.

### **Mailing**

Next item up for business, along with the new logo, is a mailing campaign for donations to the DR Community Fund. Chairman expressed interest in getting donation letters into the mail by the end of May.

### **Muster Day**

Discussions of Muster Day activities that would be possible centered around a photo with a famous person (actor or impersonator or cardboard cutout) in return for a donation to the DR Community Fund. Committee members are urged to work on this idea, fleshing out possibilities and presenting alternate ideas or solutions to logistics.

### **Officer Election**

Tabled. In brief discussion, it was again asked that people consider positions as Secretary and Vice Chair.

### **Questions from the Committee About VNLV Activities**

Chair gave a brief synopsis about the last VNLV BOD meeting. Main subjects were finances (no problems) and a marketing plan which has been an ongoing area of interest for the VNLV.

### **New Business**

#### **Two DRDTC Sponsored Events**

The Deep River Democratic Town Committee will sponsor two upcoming events/meetings, both of which would be of interest to the CHC. In June, it is planned to have several guest panelists discuss recent changes in the national health care bill. More details on this as they become available.

A second event would be a Volunteer Organization Fair, and is set for September, possibly in conjunction with the Deep River Day events, always in mid- to late September. This event would feature “tables with various organizations” looking for volunteers - more details to follow.

### **Possible New CHC Member**

There is one more spot on the CHC, but it must be filled by a non-Democrat in accordance with State statutes. Chair IS hoping for one more member and has been in touch with town Republicans along with the BOS who has likewise asked for Republican representation.

### **Bills, Checks and Payments**

Chair noted a few checks that are drawn on the Memorial Fund. Each was for fuel oil and was addressed to Daniels Oil and Lighthouse Oil, two locally known purveyors. Total of the checks was somewhat over \$1,000.

### **Audience of Citizens**

None in attendance.

Next meeting: Tuesday, April 19 at 7:30 pm. It was moved by D. Recchia and seconded by C. Walker to adjourn the meeting at 8:56pm.

*Respectfully submitted,*

Russell Marth, Chairman  
(March 22, 2011)

**Addendum: Copy of March 3 Valley Courier article:**

## **Deep River Community Fund Established**

by **Marianne Sullivan**

Publication: Shore Publishing

Published 03/03/2011 12:00 AM

The town's recently established Committee on Community Health (CHC) has two roles. The first is to serve as liaison to the Visiting Nurses of the Lower Valley (VNLV), the agency that provides public health services as needed to Deep River residents. The second, CHC Chair Russell Marth says, "is to address the other needs of our residents in need."

To accomplish the second goal, the CHC decided in December to establish a Deep River Community Fund.

Presently the fund totals \$850 through contributions made by CHC members Dr. Kristen Zarfos, Selectman David Oliveria, and Marth.

"Dr. Zarfos was very generous. Her check was our first donation. Dave Oliveria came to our February meeting as a guest, heard us talking about the fund, and opened his checkbook," Marth said.

With the fund initially established, Marth admits the committee must work hard to spread the word if the fund is to grow and to meet its goal of helping those in need.

The Board of Selectmen created the CHC and appointed its members after residents, in a May referendum, voted to discontinue support of the town-financed Deep River Visiting Nurses Agency and to contract with VNLV instead. The issue was

controversial. One of the roles the Deep River VNA had assumed over the years was the provision of some social services, such as food baskets at holidays, applications for Operation Fuel, and emergency funds for people in need. The services were financed in several ways, including use of a charitable fund known locally as the Memorial Fund. For many years, it was managed exclusively by the VNA. With the closing of the local nurses agency, town officials were granted control of the fund, which totaled approximately \$72,000.

"The decision by the probate court judge was very specific," Marth explains. "The Memorial Fund was to be used to provide assistance to needy town residents-to be used for food, clothing, shelter, emergencies, fuel oil, for example. It was not to become part of the town's operating budget, but it was to be maintained and administered separately, which it is."

As the Memorial Fund diminishes, the CHC hopes to see the newly established Deep River Community Fund grow.

"Our committee believed that starting a new charitable fund, a community fund, was the best decision. We believed a charitable fund needed a fresh start. The whole fabric of how the town delivers social services and how it meets the needs of its citizens has changed. We have a part-time social services coordinator...Rosie Bininger, we have a new nursing service addressing public health needs, and we wanted a fresh start with a community fund as well."

Bininger is in her Deep River office Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to noon and Thursdays from 1 to 4 p.m. Her office is located in the former visiting nurses building on High Street next to the entrance of the Deep River Elementary School. The phone number is 860-526-6033. Residents may leave a message on the answering machine if the office is closed.

Working with Bininger has emphasized the need for services, Marth says.

"In our economy today, more and more residents have emergencies, whether it is oil for their tank, a winter coat for their child, or food for their table," he explained. "We hope to be able to provide for these emergencies through the community fund. The needs are great."

The committee is preparing a town-wide mailing and will begin contacting businesses as well.

"We need to explain who we are, that the new fund is viable and well-managed, and what the fund will accomplish," he said, adding, "Our committee hopes this fund will continue on and on, will continue to help residents in need for years to come, long after we have gone."

**Persons wishing to donate to the fund should make checks payable to the Deep River Community Fund and mail the checks to the Town Treasurer, Town Hall, 174 Main St., Deep River, CT 06417**