

## **Welfare Budget Meeting**

**Date:** October 23, 2012

**Meeting Begins:** 9:45am

### **Attendees:**

Bob Wentworth  
Carol Aten  
Sue Benoit  
Don Woodward

### **Overview:**

Sue quickly explains what she does: When someone is in need, they contact her office, come in and fill out an application. They look at expenses together and go from there. She is constantly reaching out to organizations, churches etc...to find financial assistance.

She talks about the programs throughout the state. There are programs that donate for different issues – evictions, fuel assistance, etc...

Sue has partnered with Hartman Oil. They agree to deliver smaller amounts of oil so the individuals can afford payments.

She quickly mentions that St. Vincent de Paul never turns her away. They are an immense help.

22% of Exeter is affordable housing. Exeter is the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest in the state.

Carol mentions that there is this perception that Exeter is very wealthy. The average resident doesn't understand the social needs of Exeter. The elderly and disabled are living on a small income. The poverty rate for school children was at 10% and most likely is higher now.

### **Changes in community:**

Carols asks about any big changes in the community, both positive and negative. What work you have to do? Sue explains that she is constantly putting out fires. What she is hearing from other towns is that everyone is seeing an increase in the needs of the welfare programs. The utilities piece is the largest need.

### **Who is donating/offering support in community:**

Carol is interested in seeing the breakdown of what programs are giving. She would like to see where the support and money comes from. We want to evaluate the importance of funding. It would be helpful to know what gaps there are covering for the welfare program. Sue explains that it is difficult to be completely public with this information. Some donors are anonymous or private. Sue says that she will try to put it together, but it will be hard since she has been out for 2 1/2 months. She doesn't have all the info she normally has.

**Budget Discussion:**

- Sue explains that salary has gone up due to cost of living. Also Health Insurance has increased.
- Supply budget will remain the same.
- Direct Relief fund – level funded

Sue mentions that she generally has money left over, but depending on oil needs this year she may or may not have the left over money. She says that there are several programs to raise money for oil needs of the community.

**Funeral Costs:**

Carol brings up the topic of families not being able to cover funeral costs. Sue explains that the town would cover costs. She gets calls from undertakers and she does the paper work. There is nothing you can do; the town has to take care of it.

**Control of Services:**

Sue explains that she is getting a lot more people. They go to Sue first, then Sue sends them to the appropriate places, like church or food pantry, etc...She wants to be sure that people are not abusing resources.

St. Vincent now has a case worker (crisis outreach) that works one day a week. Sue explains that it is helpful to have that point person.

**Services (Most/Least Helpful):**

Carol asks about the most and least helpful services in the community. Carol explains that St Vincent de Paul never turns her down. Carol mentions a few services that no longer support the Welfare program.

The Welfare committee will take a look at the services that are no longer accessible.

**Meeting Adjourns:** 10:20am

**Minutes by:** Laura Jeffords