

CITY OF WEST HAVEN
CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
APPLICATION REVIEW
JANUARY 23, 2024 3RD FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM

Present: Committee Members Michelle Miller, Roberta Garlock, Carol Eagles, Sammy Rivera, Colleen O'Connor, Paige Weinstein via phone, CDA Staff: Mark Bisacia, Ronald Dumas, Rosa Richardson Absent: Members Jeffrey Moreno, Victor Borrás

Mark opened the meeting at 6:08 p.m.

W.H.E.A.T.- Mark greeted Michael Savanelli, Executive Director of WHEAT and followed with instructions of the Citizen Advisory (CAC) Members and CDA Staff. He then asked Mr. Savenelli to give an overview of the WHEAT program especially since we have 2 newly appointed CAC Members. Mr. Savenelli addressed the Committee and stated that WHEAT has been in existence since the 1970's. The demand for food has increased dramatically between 2022 and 2023 and he explained that due to the diversity within the city it was important to find volunteers to cover the language barriers. He has since found bilingual volunteers, but they are still trying to cover the language barrier of our Turkish, Moroccan, and Indian residents.

Ron asked how individuals/ families learn about this program. Mr. Savanelli stated that word of mouth is the main source. However, they provide flyers through our schools, churches, Facebook, to name a few. He stated that since flyers went out to schools, they have received 20-25 additional clients each day. He also informed CAC members that they have implemented an evening opening (Mondays 5 – 7 p.m.) for working families who struggle to get there during normal hours.

CAC member Sammy Rivera asked how clients qualify for this. Clients complete a TFAP Application. Based on the information provided, eligibility is determined. Clients must be resident of CT and make under 300% of Poverty Level. Not many who do not qualify for this program. Sammy then asked how much can be provided and for how long based on the requested amount. Mr. Savenelli then informed him that the funds WHEAT is seeking is specifically for salaries. Discussion then ensued on where and how the food is received and distributed to clients. WHEAT has made it more client friendly whereas they may walk through and choose the groceries