

- In attendance:
 - Eileen Smiglowksi, Gary Cronin, Janice Johnson, Susan Corson, Ray Burke, Amanda Noonan, Kristen LaPanne, Jeanne Agri, Pradip Chattopadhyay, Theresa, John Braswell, Rorie Patterson, Jessica Arnold
- Introductions for John, taking over for Janice - Eversource
- Minutes from last meeting (January)
 - Approved minutes
- Web app (K Lapanne)
 - \$45k-75k original quote just for building of web app, didn't include coding or monthly/annual cost
 - Quote for coding – additional \$52.5k
 - \$97-122k total quote
 - To have application built in time for upcoming fuel season, only would be avail to new applicants. KL says this is only 10-11% of FAP households.
 - Discussed with Eileen (have app avail to both, share cost)
 - Discussed that return and recert applicants should be part of it
 - 15-25k quote for pdf version – should we do this instead?
 - Would be same as mail out application, would be able to upload documents.
 - Using Empower to do emergency rental assistance program
 - Could reach out to have pdf version running same as this program.
 - Questions:
 - AN – Refresh my memory – how would pdf version look
 - App online, upload documentation, same fashion as mail out app except it's online.
 - Difference is agency would get docs, agency would still need to fill in system, where new syst would do it for them
 - JJ can you tell us more about Empower
 - Directed to website, pick agency, fills out app and sent to appropriate agency. Comes in form of pdf. Can send over docs same way.
 - AN – would there be a benefit to using empower?
 - Jeanne A. All of CAPS already using
 - Having success with rental program'
 - CAPs already familiar
 - JA what would cost be to move to empower
 - No quote yet, would need to look into it.
 - PC is there benefit to having human entry? They could catch missing info, etc.
 - No difference between web pdf and empower
 - JJ – we should find out the cost
 - KL will find out cost and let us all know.
 - JJ maybe we need a quick meeting before next scheduled meeting
 - AN asked Eileen for her input

- FAP directors all agreed that it would get our foot in door.
- Ray B
 - Understands why we're hesitant to spend a lot of \$ right now
 - If we put it off, will we have the money? Worries there might be missed opportunity
 - ES – at least from FAP side, honestly doesn't believe lack of funding will be an issue in a few years.
 - KL maybe with RFP we can include ability to have online tool as part, included in cost.
 - AN – once cost is identified, will be shared with group and either voted on via email or have quick meeting, shouldn't wait until July meeting.
 - PD – discussion surrounding if empower is a little more expensive or same cost
 - CAP agencies already using it
 - Customers already using it
 - Documentation housed electronically
 - *Waiting to hear back from Kristen, then will either communicate via email or schedule short follow up meeting depending on what Kristen finds.*
- EAP households – removals for failure to recertify
 - Statewide – agency sent 7064 letters with applications
 - As of last wed – total dropped to 5390
 - 1600-1700 either recert or removed from program
 - In speaking with CAPs during meeting a lot of them have received a lot of undeliverable mail
 - SNHS received 150 returned mail in 1 day
 - Various reasons, no longer at address, etc.
 - Everything seems to be going well with mail out
 - Most agencies staggering
 - 1 agency mailed all at once with 3rd party vendor
 - All cust should be either recert or removed by May 2021
 - Also making phone calls
 - AN – does it make sense to touch base on utilities on returned mail
 - Send list of people with returned mail
 - Discussion surrounding whether or not this would be feasible
 - Eversource sends letter when they remove from EAP, Unutil and Liberty do not (*Liberty info confirmed after the board meeting and included in minutes*)
 - Ray asked if utilities are looking at history and talking to the customer about what they can apply for, etc.
 - Liberty – reps check history, go through assistance options.
 - Unutil – may not see history, but go through assistance options.
- Draft recommendation
 - Review of RFP that Steve Towers sent out

- Looking for feedback/edits, then Steve will put into final form and submit.
 - Should be sent directly to Steve
- Only recently went out, group probably hasn't had chance to review
- Pradip – reads more like a request to have an RFP go out
 - Might be intentional – templates out there in OCA and commission to ask for this kind of thing
 - Ray – this is first time that Steve or Ray has drafted RFP, unsure if Steve asked for templates.
 - Ray's understanding is that first there would be request to commission
 - AN – that's usually how it works. She supposes that board could draft RFP, but commission is particular about setup of RFP so sending this request first makes sense.
 - Everyone should provide their feedback by 5/14 to Steve.
- Updated projections - AN
 - Does anyone have questions or want to walk through them?
 - No answer
 - Ray – where end date of 5/21 for recerts, should we wait until our next meeting to review projections, or should we meet sooner than that?
 - AN – 5400 households still pending today, 7000 letters that went out. If all of those dropped off, that would significantly impact the level. If some of those came back shortly after they drop off, don't know.
 - May not see cust behavior to recert until Sept or Oct.
- Ray – is there concern about fund balance being above \$3M
 - Worries that it keeps inching up and up, even in projections
 - AN – uncertainty in future, couldn't guess.
 - Down the road –
 - Concern that there may be backlash in future if we don't do more
 - Negative feelings about systems benefit charge. Would hate to add to that if it's viewed that we're somehow not addressing.
 - AN – concerns her as well. 1 option on table that smaller sub group talked about, small credit back to customers
 - RB/AN – would have to look and see if changing SBC would trigger issues if it is something that we decreased and then needed to increase later (would we need to get legislative approval?)
 - RB – rather than touch SBC, should spend some of the money (credits to cust, RFP) in order to protect long term
 - Ray looked briefly – under current law Legislature would need to approve an increase.
 - JA – understanding we have all seen less customer engagement and more customer need throughout pandemic, after full resumption of collections for low income, and over this summer, we may have more information to consider
 - Rorie – discussion about consultant is part of this, maybe that can be fleshed out in recommendation Steve wrote

- Returned mail
 - Discussion surrounding how to handle
 - All utilities send over moves report for customers on assistance (FAP)
 - Sue C. offered to look at Unutil's NH returned mail, check if those customers were on EAP.
- Reconciliation with Utilities
 - Recently finished with Eversource
 - Compared numbers, within 153. Much better than it was at originally
 - Currently working with Unutil
 - There numbers were around 120 difference
 - Staffing challenges – temps working and didn't make it through training.
 - Next up – work with the co-op
 - Next biggest difference
 - Followed by Liberty
 - Then circle back to Eversource
- Cross browser compatibility for FAP/EAP system
 - System can currently only work with Internet explorer
 - Years ago had talked about how it would be nice to have it usable on Chrome and Edge.
 - Quote from River Delta consulting
 - Lots of coding involved
 - \$16,500 (3200-19800)
 - Only for 5 agency production sites and archiving
 - Doesn't include reporting sites or state sites
 - Once they get into it they would have better idea what required for state and reporting site
 - Internet Explorer not even on new computers anymore, difficult to use, not supported.
 - AN – something that the caps absolutely need to do, Microsoft stopped supporting Internet Explorer years ago
 - Not in budget for this year, would need to be included in next year's budget
 - AN wouldn't have issues with it being included in next year, but that would mean waiting until Oct.
 - KL – not sure if she could have the work started and possibly completed now, and then include cost in next year
 - J Agri – CAPs will look at cost and see what they can do with it.
 - AN – not sure what CAPs can do in this year without it being in budget.
 - Might be additional fund they can pull from and replenish with next year's budget
- Town Square media - KLapanne
 - Sent out results
 - From her and Eileen – numbers are down, even nationally
 - Would like to revisit, outreach needs to increase for both programs
 - This campaign – strictly social media.

- 3 options total, other options include PSA on radio stations, add in advanced audience targeting or addressable geo-fencing
- AN – does anyone have concerns
 - Pradip – I don't, but would be good to have refresher on cost implication
 - just social media, \$1250 monthly (split with OSI & EAP)
 - Social media, add advanced audience targeting - \$1500 per mo
 - Social media, advanced audience targeting, addressable geo-fencing- \$2000 per month
 - During months only EAP, they would have total cost.
 - JA – we can always adjust accordingly down the road if we don't see a change in customer behavior
 - Pradip and Ray agreed
 - Eileen – addition of “where did you hear about program”
 - AN likes this, would like to have measurable way to determine if media campaign works.
 - Ray – will we be able to see results if customers click on ad and go through?
 - Kristen – resending info.
 - JA – beyond measurability, people who click or hear about it might tell friends and family, talked about scripting we've put in place
 - Eileen agreed, most of input she gets is that people have heard through friends and family
 - Kristen – also might not be able to measure if people hear on PSAs on radio
- Eileen
 - 15% down in applications this year
 - Only 1 state is up (Wisconsin)
 - Next year – part of app will be asking how they heard of program
 - Maybe summer can be focused on EAP, during FAP season have it focus on both.
 - Ray asked about whether theories were thrown around at SNAP thing with state
 - One of theories – challenges with office closures, COVID guidelines, etc.
 - Food insecurity has gone up, but SNAP applications have gone down.
 - Eileen said she doesn't think application convenience is part of it
 - Thinks in NH it's been partially because economy was so good
 - Now that economy isn't great, it may be that people really don't want to get assistance unless they have no choice
 - Doesn't think people realize how high the income levels are. Fam of 4 making \$75k could qualify, doesn't think people know/realize that.
 - So many programs going on right now, overlapping, almost too much money out there.
 - AN asked if Eileen knows if other NE states are also lower. Does it have to do with steps taken in this region?

- Eileen – not sure, but we’re in sync with our neighbors, not standing out. Esp very in line with VT & CT.
 - Janice – Eversource went from 2700 last year to 1600 this year (medical)
 - Kristen – people already getting bills paid, why would they go through the paperwork for another program
- Self certs
 - All utilities still not seeing influx of customers self-certifying
 - Still large amount of customers who do self cert not providing documentation.
 - Discussion surrounding what to do with customer who self cert after disconnection
 - All util – hasn’t happened a lot, but when it does we are all reconnecting without pmt and putting appropriate holds on account.
- Discussion surrounding challenges with programs getting up and running
 - CAPs have done a great job
 - Lots of communication in NH between agencies, state, utilities, has been extremely beneficial for NH residents
- Rental assistance program – AN
 - Can utilities share if they’re seeing a lot of applicants?
 - Jeanne – can invite NIFFA for presentation
 - Can mention it next week. Is July too late?
 - NIFFA reporting – are they public?
 - No distinction between what money goes to rent or utilities
 - Unutil – seeing dozens
 - Amanda – commission could ask utilities to add to monthly reports, dollars received for NH rental assistance program
 - Eversource doesn’t have special coding to differentiate between relief program or reg program payments. Checking with Dan Trainer to see if there’s some tracking that she’s not aware of.
 - Rorie – requirement in agreement (IR 20-089) to report on funds received for program? Requirement may already exist.
- Final question
 - Kristen – clarification on date for resumption for low income
 - 5/31, although agreement isn’t approved yet
- Next meeting – 7/23
- Follow up
 - Feedback to Steve Tower
 - RB Once proposal is done, who files? AN – can do it either way, staff can submit.