

MINUTES
Emergency Assistance Fund (EAF) Committee
March 11, 2022
VIRTUAL MEETING

Present: Abigail Butt (AB), Jennifer Coon (JC), Lorraine Fiore (LF), Wendy Kusik (WK), & Mary Stechschulte (MS).

Absent: Timothy Higgins (ex officio), and Garrett Yates.

Also present: Natalia Dedkov, Town Social Worker.

The meeting was called to order by Abigail Butt at 9:03 am.

The minutes of February 18, 2022 were approved unanimously.

Two requests for assistance were unanimously approved.

Discussion of original charge was resumed. All members present approved of the edits made to the document that reflected the proposed changes from the previous meeting and discussion will continue at the next EAF meeting.

Discussion of original charge's purpose statement began.

The committee agreed that listing the maximum limit for financial assistance should be taken out. A set level of assistance is of decreasing benefit over time. It was noted that the committee already voted to increase the benefit level several times of the years. The committee also voted over two years ago to automatically adjust the benefit level up each January using the annual Social Security cost of living increase.

The committee decided that it would like to expand EAF eligibility to town employees and Metco families. This would align eligibility criteria with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul charitable giving eligibility criteria, the Lincoln Food Pantry eligibility criteria, Lincoln Public Schools eligibility criteria, and the Board of Health adolescent mental health clinic eligibility criteria.

The committee decided several years ago to change the maximum given from a household to an individual level benefit. This was in part due to the fact that households join, break up, and shift making it very complex and difficult to determine whether a maximum had been reached or exceeded in these cases.

The committee felt very strongly that the language stating that money given be considered a loan be taken out entirely. In reality, very few have ever managed to repay any funds "borrowed" from the EAF. Yet, the EAF continues robustly and has had adequate funds to support requests. It was felt that those in crisis should not have their financial burden maintained by requiring a loan be paid back.

Abby will charge

The meeting was adjourned at 10:01 am.