

## MINUTES

**Date:** Nov. 3, 2011      **Time:** 11:00 AM

**Location:** St. Thomas More University Parish, Romero Room 425 Thurstin Ave. BG  
Welcome and Opening Prayer by Erin Hatchel

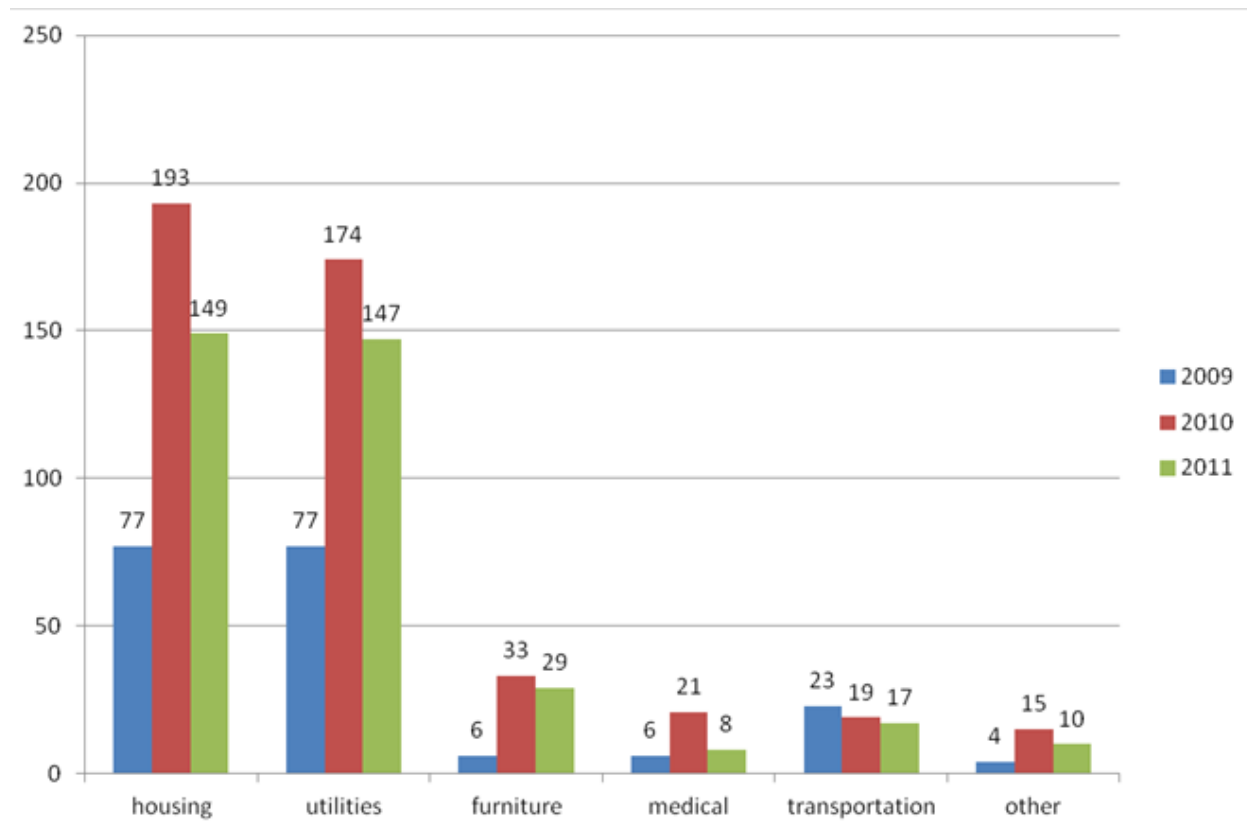
Attending      Wib Miller – BG Christian Food Pantry  
Erin Hatchel – First United Methodist      Jeff Sorrells – First Presbyterian Church  
Rev. Robert Barr – Salvation Army      Mary Jane Fulcher – St. Thomas More  
Leslie Cady – Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

### Who is our neighbor?

As part of our mission to *equip and organize our members to better serve the underserved in our community*, we spent time looking at what kinds of help people are seeking and how we can respond.

Types of assistance requested, 2009 to present

November focus: Utilities



This chart represents the types of requests for assistance that WAM has received since we started cooperatively serving our neighbors in July of 2009.

We discussed the following:

**Why do people need help with utilities?**

- Unemployment/underemployment
- Traditional funding sources for low-income households are delayed/reduced/eliminated
- Seasonal spikes in heating/cooling make some bills unmanageable for low-income households
- Energy inefficiency in the home

**How is WAM meeting needs?**

- Financial assistance through Emergency Relief/Benevolence Fund
- Information & referral to Salvation Army, [HEAP](#), [WSOS](#), and [JFS](#) through food pantries and other church-based ministries

**Are there other ways WAM can help?**

- Ask churches to host neighborhood meetings to share info on reducing energy costs and services available in the community
- Ask churches to host neighborhood financial counseling/budgeting classes for folks who are trying to survive on limited income due to unemployment/underemployment
- Help facilitate energy audits in homes so neighbors can learn about ways to reduce energy costs
- Find ways of giving people information about reducing energy costs
- Find ways of giving people energy efficiency improvement tools like CFL light bulbs

**How does this need provide an opportunity for WAM to help people live self-sufficient and spiritually-fulfilled lives?**

- We can *help people recognize that they can lower their expenses* through changing some behaviors (turning off lights, unplugging TVs when not in use, etc.) and *empower them to do so with practical help*
- We will treat others with dignity and affirm them by *partnering with them* to provide solutions to this challenge
- We will *deepen our own understanding* of what it takes to provide household basics (heat and light) on a small family budget

The last page of the attachment has some simple steps that anyone can use to reduce their home energy costs. I encourage you to share that with your congregations and your neighbors.

**Financial report from Emergency Relief Fund –**

*there was no report available but will report in January*

Service report from other ministries

1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian Church Deacon's Closet is open Thursdays. They collect gently used clothing to give to those seeking items to wear for job interviews. Toledo has a similar program called Suitably Attired.

No December meeting so that we can each serve our churches in their Christmas celebrations and missions

Next Meeting – **January 5, 2012, 11 AM**

Closing Prayer