

Hartford & NHCEH Continuum of Care Meeting Minutes

Thursday May 25, 2017

Present:

NAME	AGENCY / ORGANIZATION	E-MAIL
Linda Anderson	Capstone Community Action	landerson@capstonevt.org
Rick Bauer	HCRS	rbauer@hcrs.org
Lynn Boyle	AHS	Lynn.boyle@vermont.gov
Laurel Chen	VCEH	laurel@vsha.org
Richard Davis	St. Paul's Church / Haven	RA214Davis@gmail.com
Jennifer Fontaine	Upper Valley Haven	jfontaine@uppervalleyhaven.org
Lynne Goodwin	City of Lebanon Human Services	Lynne.goodwin@lebcity.com
Karen Lipinczyk	WISE	Karen@wiseuv.org
Linda Neily	VAMC	Linda.neily@va.gov
Keith Shelton	VAMC	Keith.shelton2@va.gov
Shannon Tzrinske	SEVCA	stzrinske@sevca.org

The meeting was called to order at 11:30 am in Room 170 at the State Office Building at 118 Prospect Street in White River Junction.

1. Approval of Minutes from March 30th Meeting

- Shannon is going to check on SEVCA funds to confirm whether it is \$1000 or \$2000 for move of money from Rapid Rehousing to Prevention. She will report back to Linda A. to ensure the correct amount is reflected in the April 27th Meeting Minutes.

2. Action Plan

What are some concrete things that have to happen for homelessness to be rare and brief in Orange/Windsor Counties? Linda A. led the group in an action planning session, focused on the preceding question.

- **Landscape of Homelessness in the area:** Richard asked if there is a consensus as to the landscape of homelessness in the area.
 - Linda A. said we could ask about HOP numbers to get a better picture.
 - Lynn Boyle said the PIT data gives a snapshot of one night of homelessness.
 - Laurel said she could provide Continuum of Care-level data.
 - Linda pointed out that it can be difficult to accurately count when people are not as visible as in cities. Also there are different definitions of homelessness.
 - There was further discussion on hard-to reach homeless encampments.
- **Educate the Broader Community on Homelessness & Housing Issues:** Jennifer said something concrete we could do is provide information and educate the broader community to decrease the stigma of homelessness and the idea of us vs. them. This includes educating landlords and others in the outside world.
 - Lynn Boyle: Part of it is exposing the broader community to homelessness.
 - Linda A: How do we help the community understand homelessness?
 - Lynn Boyle: One idea is to teach people about trauma. Another thing that makes an impact is sharing homeless persons' stories, like on homeless day.
 - Dick: Having a coordinated community effort and message is very important.
 - Linda A.: Second piece is to the talk about what is being done already, what can be done better, and how can others get involved?
 - Rick: Some of the people we serve just need some help to get them over the hump and that's important for community members to understand.

- Faye: The education piece is key. For example, sharing how much you have to earn to pay rent was surprising and educational for her friends on Facebook.
- Jennifer: Who are the people in the community, such as business owners who can provide jobs, who could be part of our effort in a long-term way that is also beneficial to them?
- Linda A.: The other thing that we may want to consider is the impact of homelessness: taxpayer burden, health care cost. How would the community benefit from better addressing the problem?
- Linda A: It would be powerful to empower our clients to share their own stories.
- Karen: One idea is to create a speaker's bureau.
- Linda N.: We need to start with better PR, which will lead to a changed perception and people voting for the right politicians and the right policies.
- Linda N.: Proposal to put a person's story in the newspaper; include their obstacles and how the reader can help.
- Dick: The Chamber of Commerce is another potential audience.
- Lynne Goodwin: Proposal for Valley News to do a series on homelessness, as in-depth reporting can be very powerful.

Supporting Landlords: Shannon said that one thing to focus on is offering support to landlords to make them want to take the chance to rent.

- Faye: The challenge is how to help people retaining housing.
- Lynn Boyle: Springfield Supportive Housing provides support and case management for two years. 80% got into and stayed in housing. It makes a huge difference to both the tenants and the landlords.
- Dick: The funding piece for these things is key. That's the challenge.
 - Shannon: The funding piece I understand but we also need to think outside of the HUD funding box and think of creating these projects from a more grassroots level.
 - Linda A: As an example of problem solving with limited funding, Linda mentioned the Job Fair that will be happening in Randolph, which has been put together with limited resources; the funds are coming in as needed. The job fair is on June 6 at VTC from 10-11:30 open to high schoolers, and 11:30-4 open to everyone else.

More Housing Units: Lynne Goodwin said there needs to be more housing units.

- Lynn Boyle: Asked Faye if Twin Pines was working on creating more SROs.
- Faye: Faye was not sure about this.
 - Dick: As an outsider, the public has no idea about the different types of individual and families dealing with homelessness. For example, what an SRO is. It's important to educate them on these topics.

Improved Transportation: Keith brought up the fact that better transportation would concretely impact the lives of people who are homeless, so they can access services, jobs. The majority of the population misses how a lack of transportation can really affect people's lives.

What to focus on in the next 6 months: Linda A. asked, how do we put these ideas into bite-sized pieces that we can focus on in the next 6 months? Do we want to focus on communication? There was group consensus that the group wanted to focus on communication.

- Jennifer: We can create a coordinated communication strategy. We need to create a consistent group message. We can explain to people that this is happening in your area.
- Faye: What do we want people to do with the information?
 - Linda A: Is there a project we can build up to that would have a real impact on the community?
 - Rick: Vital Communities created a time-limited weatherization project, and it could be a time-limited project similar to that one.

Bringing together Movers & Shakers of the Community: Linda said that at the Hunger Conference, there was a presenter on creating targeted lists of movers and shakers in the community, and getting them at the table to bring about changes.

- Karen: In November, we could have a luncheon of 25-30 movers and shakers, as the first step in raising the mindfulness level. We need to have places to live. I don't see us freeing up money, but I do think a landlord conversation about more case management is possible.
- Linda A.: We can bring people from different sectors of the community together to ask them what they need from us. For example, from the business sector and the landlord sector.
- Jennifer: The pitch could be something about businesses lacking quality employees, and the hospitals spending lots of money on health care, and so on.

Creation of Two Committees: Linda A. said that first part we are discussing is the PR campaign. The next part is having a forum with the movers and shakers to see what they need and how they can help. She made a proposal for one committee for each.

- PR Campaign Committee: Lynne Goodwin volunteered and also stated it would be good to have others involved who work in Vermont.
 - Laurel offered to provide data for the area on homelessness and mentioned the Voices of Home interview in Randolph with folks in affordable housing.
- Community Building Committee: Jennifer and Linda A. volunteered to participate.
- Other meeting participants agreed to think about which committee to volunteer for.

Next Steps:

- Linda A. will send out the committee descriptions to all of the Continuum of Care members in order that members can think of which committee they will join. 15 minutes of next meeting will be devoted to people choosing a committee and planning next steps for the committees.
- Next month's meeting will focus primarily on Coordinated Entry.

3. Reports / Updates / Announcements

- Twin Pines - New projects – affordable housing in Lebanon are moving forward with supportive housing and in New Hampshire they're working on connecting health and home.
- Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness – Laurel – They will work on providing statewide PIT counts by county.
- HCRS – Rick – There is still some funding left in the client emergency fund through HCRS that can help a client avoid losing housing.
- SEVCA – Shannon – lots of electric disconnects are presenting. There isn't much left for financial assistance. They have no prevention funds and are receiving lots of housing calls. JFI is picking up.
- Upper Valley Haven – Jennifer – They have submitted their HOP application. They are working with Twin Pines around their 18 unit housing project.

Next Meetings

- *Thursday June 29, 2017 – we will meet briefly to set up work group structures and then jump into Coordinated Entry which begins JULY 1!*

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted
Laurel Chen

w/ edits by Linda Anderson