



STEERING COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

October 19, 2018

8:30-10:00am

Facilitator:	Lisa Cruden		
Meeting Attendees:	<u>Steering Members:</u> Lisa Cruden, Nancy Oliver, Shannon Bass, Tom Cottrell, Casey Gordon, Erin Banchoff, Karen Merrill Tjapkes, Laurie Craft, Susan Cervantes, Hattie Tinney, Kwan McEwen, Kenya Brown, Alonda Trammell, Rebecca Rynbrandt <u>Community Members:</u> Sherri Vainavicz, Virgie Ammerman, Lynn, Amber Troupe, Rebecca Long, Denny Sturtevant, Cheryl Schuch, Rich Arndt <u>Staff:</u> Wende Randall, Emily Schichtel, Brianne Czyzio		
Time Convened:	8:30	Time Adjourned:	10:15

Approval of Agenda			
Motion by:	Tom Cottrell	Support from:	Shannon Bass
Discussion	<p>Lisa suggested two edits. First, move Dwelling Place Presentation from item 9 to item 5. Second, move National Hunger and Homeless Awareness update to item 6.</p> <p>Erin noted the consent agenda was missing. Wende explained it was because there is not any updated data. Erin also suggested the addition of a report about the Coordinated Entry Report-Out and Action Planning.</p> <p>Rebecca asked to add a KConnect update; Wende noted that topic will be discussed under Strategic Planning.</p>		
Amendments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Move Dwelling Place Presentation from item 9 to item 5. - Move National Hunger and Homeless Awareness update to item 6. - Add Coordinated Entry Report-Out and Action Planning 		
Conclusion	All in favor by acclamation with no dissent.		
Approval of Minutes		From September 7, 2018	
Motion by:		Support from:	
Discussion	<p>Erin noted in the last meeting Rebecca suggested that Governance Charter update move to June, and this motion was approved. This is missing from the minutes. There is a concern that the results of electronic votes that happen between meetings are not recorded.</p> <p>Rent this Way is misspelled, and there are incomplete sentences.</p>		
Amendments	<p>Add: Governance Charter Update changed to June on Steering calendar</p> <p>Fix: spelling and incomplete sentences</p>		
Conclusion	All in favor by acclamation with no dissent.		
Dwelling Place Presentation		Denny Sturtevant	
Discussion	<p>Ferguson Apartments opened in May 2002 and now needs renovation. The original Section 8 contract, funded in early 1990s, provides insufficient funding and currently requires annual renewal. Dwelling Place would like to convert the old contract to a new Section 8 contract through HUD's RAD program. This would allow Dwelling Place to operate the apartments with an operating reserve.</p>		



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Currently, Dwelling Place is in the process of completing all the HUD requirements. They are applying for LIHTC under the Preservation category, which focuses on preserving existing housing units. They have the second highest score in the category, so likely to get the funding. Dwelling Place is currently using coordinated entry, so this will not change what they are doing now. They have an \$11 million-dollar renovation planned for the Ferguson Apartments. Dwelling Place has hosted two meetings so far with residents to let them know what will happen if the proposal is approved. Rebecca thanked Denny for being proactive in presenting to the Steering Council.

Erin made a motion that the Steering Council provide a letter of support for the RAD conversion. Tom seconded her motion. All in favor by acclamation with no dissent.

	Person Responsible	Deadline
Write up Letter of Support for Steering Council. Send to Lisa once completed.	Denny	
Return signed letter to Dwelling Place	Lisa	

National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week **Vergie Ammerman**

Discussion

The Veterans Connect event will be November 9. The main hub will be at Community Rebuilders' office. The Ending Veterans Homelessness Committee is currently looking for people to participate, and for referrals. Hope Network will be providing transportation. Several groups are committed to being deployment sites so lots of businesses/employment services will be involved. Tom asked what information will be sent out. A flyer will be sent.

Lisa suggested if there is anything that individual organizations are doing to observe National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week, they send the information to Brianne who will send it out. Wende asked if anyone would like to submit a blog around homelessness, we would be happy to post a blog as well.

	Person Responsible	Deadline
Forward flyer(s) with event info	Brianne	
If interested in submitting a blog, please send to Wende	All	

PIT Planning **Emily Schichtel**

Discussion

Emily presented that PIT planning is coming up for January. At present, CoC has some new and interim staff so they may be turning to some Steering members for help and expertise. Emily predicts it will take "All hands-on deck" momentum to get this going. If Steering Council members have information that would help, please connect with Emily. Outreach meeting October 30th from 3 to 4:30 at United Way which will focus on getting PIT count planning started.

Rebecca asked when a data report on the Youth Count will be available. Emily explained that the first meeting since the count will be Friday the 26th, at United Way. Once that group comes together, there should be more information. Casey added that there should be enough data by the meeting. Rebecca asked if there is something that can be put together. Arbor Circle will likely take point on this.



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Rebecca also asked if there have been conversations about outputs versus outcomes. Emily expects this to start happening on the 26.		
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Send Outreach meeting invite to Steering members	Emily	
Strategic Plan	Wende Randall	
Discussion		
<p>Wende presented that the strategic planning group is going through the strategic plan to determine priorities. The expectation is that a list of priorities will come to Steering Council to be approved and assigned to different members. In addition, she is in the process of releasing a RFP around conflict resolution to get facilitated mediation. This will be an opportunity for people who are in a leadership position to have a series of conversations and come together around common goals.</p> <p>As a broader community conversation around housing, KConnect will be helping to rebuild relationships within the CoC. The end product will then inform strategic plan steps to identify the CoC's relationship within the community, and its broader plan. Wende has not seen dates from K Connect, but they finalized the contract and have been looking at getting additional funding. Steering has the opportunity within the HUD planning grant to give KConnect some funds, if this group decides, they can support the KConnect process, which will in the long term support the development of the strategic planning for the CoC. Laurie recommends waiting to see if KConnect actually needs the funding. Casey wondered where and what projects the funding for conflict resolution is coming from. Wende explained that the CoC received additional funding because they knew there would be a need for strategic planning funding.</p>		
	Person Responsible	Deadline
Emergency Shelter/Motel Program	Nancy Oliver	
Discussion		
<p>Lisa announced that several families who are in shelter in hotels have to leave because emergency shelter funding ran out. The conversation surrounding family homelessness started in 2016. Since then it has been a conversation that has come and gone. Lisa mentioned there was a group convened a few years ago in a time of need and suggested it may be time for that again. Nancy explained that the goal of eliminating the waitlist was brought to the table a few months ago, but numbers have ramped up due to lack of shelter beds. As of Tuesday (10/16), 72 families are in various motels. Some have been there for 3 months. This has been an exorbitant cost to community, and we need to have a plan to ensure this does not continue to happen. Current funding is available until end of October; right now organizations are planning and triaging for safe exits from hotels. It is Nancy's hope that additional funding will come forward, so families can be sheltered. She asks that a task group comes together to come up with a plan. As a community, there is not enough affordable housing, resources, and resources for prevention for these families. Lisa noted that in 2016, the group looked at gaps, and put diversion methods into place. Since then, 210 families went through diversion and avoided a shelter stay. In addition, eviction prevention is happening in Grand Rapids and Kentwood. Right now, agencies are doing their best to help keep families safe but are not able to move them into permanent housing. Karen asked when the ESP fiscal year starts. It started October 1.</p>		



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Lisa explained that the families are getting case management to identify the barriers, and more is needed to get families into permanent housing. Rebecca asked if there is a projection as to what the need is. As population increases, it makes sense we see a rise in need. Nancy explained that agencies have been collecting data, so now they should start to be able to project accurately into the future. Laurie asked why there was such a huge spike. Nancy explained the current contract with the State requires a no refusal policy. Families must be placed if they are identified as literally homeless. Alonda added that this problem is not sudden. As transitional housing has disappeared, this has become more of a visible problem.

Casey asked what families are going to have to do to stay safe. Answers included: mom stays in a shelter and kids stay with friends, families leave Grand Rapids to stay with other family and friends, some will stay in their car. Kenya mentioned that an unintended consequence of GR becoming a great place to stay that people are being forced out of the city. This issue is on peoples' radar, but he suggests the CoC starts pushing a little bit, especially with building landlord relationships, Rent This Way, and leveraging the RPOA. Karen stated that barriers to admission are an issue. Legal Aid is investigating several people who are using illegal admission criteria. If you are seeing/hearing about this, especially from particular providers, let Karen know, and let the Fair Housing Center know. It may not help today but will help in the long term. Rebecca reflected on whether the taskforce is one or multiple taskforces based on the complexity of the need. There may be other voices that need to sit at the table. For example, building code, laws and zoning, provide limitations and there are not many people at this table who can speak to these issues. She also added that this is not a City of Grand Rapids problem, it is a problem of the whole area. To ask families to relocate puts a disproportionate responsibility on another community. She suggests the CoC demands engagement. Laurie noted that this is a regional problem, the private sector needs to be engaged as well as the public sector. Hattie noted that locally the public housing authorities have raised pay standard to 110% of FMR, but this still isn't enough money. Laurie asked if vouchers can be prioritized for people who are literally homeless. The assumption is that no one on the waiting list is not homeless.

Wende mentioned that last winter there was discussion in this group that faith based, KSSN, private individuals could get together to look at families in Northern Kent County. She suggested CoC members reach out to these contacts.

Erin made a motion to form an emergency taskforce to develop a plan for addressing family homelessness. She suggests one taskforce to start and then possibly section off in the future. Shannon seconds the motion. Motion approved. CoC staff will send email to see who is interested in being part of task force. From that list, they will schedule a meeting sometime next week. Emily will then pull people in as time goes on and as necessary.

Nancy recognizes that the state cannot be our only resource. We need to take care of these families as a community. Shannon suggested Steering make this a priority at every meeting. Tom noted that 75% of folks in transitional housing have vouchers. Rebecca asked that these updates are added to the agenda for the full CoC. Karen agreed all CoC members need to understand what is going on. Rebecca asked if there has been engagement with the media because this type of story is likely to



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grow in the media. Wendé met with Salvation Army, DHHS and Family Promise to prepare to address inquires. They developed a 3-fold approach:

- First: Acknowledge what is happening and explain that there are limitations to the amount of shelter available, and funds have been depleted.
- Second, explain that families are in process of safety planning.
- Third, explain that an emergency taskforce has been created and is looking for additional funding, short-term solutions, as well as a longer-term plan.

Rebecca requested the CoC official talking points be shared with Steering and the general CoC membership. Wendé will share the talking points. Casey has seen a few things on social media but agrees that this story it will grow and the CoC needs to be in front of it.

Conclusion

Erin made a motion to form an emergency taskforce to be formed to develop a plan for addressing family homelessness. She suggests one taskforce to start and then possibly section off in the future. Shannon seconds the motion. All in favor by acclamation with no dissent.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Email Steering Council members to determine interest	CoC Staff	
Set up a taskforce meeting for next week	CoC Staff	
Share official CoC talking points surrounding motel crisis	Wendé	

Coordinated Entry Evaluation Report-Out

Discussion

Wendé shared that during the session Cloudburst [held October 12, 2018] provided context and discussion points, and then gave the opportunity for small group discussion. Brianne is in the process of compiling all the information shared at the session. Erin suggested the plan go back to the Coordinated Entry committee for initial work toward development of an Action Plan. Rebecca agrees with approach but worries that people in the committee are not at the level to make policy recommendations. Laurie explained that there are high-level people in the group. She explained Coordinated Entry members were waiting for assessment to take place, so they could have direction. She thinks the group needs to be reconvened. CoC staff will help convene group and add Nancy to the group. Some areas of discussion will be: what are some of the barriers people have, in addition to what are things that people are dealing with as a family to individual that make it difficult to work through the system and get permanent housing.

Conclusion

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Reconvene Coordinated Entry group around report out	CoC Staff	

Updates from Steering Committee Members

Discussion

City of Grand Rapids: Erin shared informational meetings are scheduled about the Residential Rental Application Fees Ordinance. She will forward flyers. Wendé noted Connie Bohatch will present on this topic at the full CoC meeting.

Grand Rapids Housing Commission: Hattie shared that they will be participating in 3rd ward listening meetings. They are starting a rental assistance program. The goal is to start a list of at least 1,000



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residents who are having problems finding housing. Then, 250 of these families will be case managed. They are in the process of outreach with landlord groups and may reach out to Steering Council members. In addition, they are opening the Section 8 HCV waiting list November 5 through the 18. Applications can be done online, 24 hours a day. Preference will be given to Kent County residents. They will lottery up to 5,000 names who will receive vouchers.

City of Wyoming: Rebecca shared that a new developer, Magnus Development out of New York, submitted a LIHTC application for mixed income housing. It was well received by MSHDA and the city is also working with them. It will be called Apartments at 28 West Place. Also, the City of Wyoming has launched a new community master plan process. They are finalizing the solicitation of a consultant. The plan will include an AI and housing needs assessment. They have found a disconnect from the average resident on what affordable housing looks like. They have been using storytelling as a form of education because of push back from 'ignorant' citizens. Rebecca suggested the CoC should be proactive in having characters developed to show that residents who are firefighters, doctors, may qualify.

Kent County Community Action: Susan shared they will have additional food distributions this year, due to new tariffs that do not allow food to be shipped internationally.

October LIHTC round: Erin shared that 10 applications were submitted. This shows there is a lot of interest in developing affordable housing.

General CoC membership: Wende reminded everyone of the meeting next week. There will be a vote on the governance charter change, so a quorum is needed. If you're not able to attend, please ensure that you have an alternate voter.

Elections/Nominations: Emily just started pulling together Nominations committee

Dwelling Place: Alonda shared that they are struggling with 3rd party disability verification. They have two staff who are doing outreach to try to get folks into housing, as they have vacancies they need to fill. The problem is on both sides as physicians will not sign off on disability verification if they do not have a relationship with the client. Casey added that refugee resettlement is having the same issue with 3rd party clinicians. Karen offered to connect them with an attorney at Cherry Health who can explain to the situation to clinicians.

Public Comment on Any Matter

Discussion

Cheryl Schuch requested that Steering Committee look a case care triage meeting where some of the tough cases could be handled as a work group. She also recommends the taskforce does not get lost in permanent housing but focuses on safety and emergency shelter for families with kids. She thanked Nancy and Steering for having the will to look at this issue. She also shared that the National Alliance to End Homelessness is getting ready to release a statement with PIT count data that shows homelessness for families has reduced by 30%. Communities are pushing back on this information. This is not what we are seeing. Lastly, an American Academy Pediatricians released a study showing that homelessness in kids prenatal to age 2 has catastrophic impacts. She thanks Steering Council for



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having the conversation and asks them to remember that they are talking about kids living on the street.

Sherry Vainavicz shared that homeless assistance calls are extremely high. She asks that the emergency taskforce not forget individuals who are homeless.

Adjournment

Shannon Bass motioned to adjourn.

Steering Council Decision Making between Regularly Scheduled Meetings

HMIS Data Request Procedure. On September 14, 2018, the Steering Council conducted an electronic vote on the HMIS Data Request Procedure. The vote passed. The document will be incorporated into the CoC Policies and Procedures and will be available for immediate use. Signed Data Request Procedure documents should be provided to CoC staff for record-keeping purposes. Voting results are listed below.

Eligible Members: 20*
 Voting Members: 15
 "Yes, I vote to approve": 15
 "No, I vote to not approve": 0

*Because we did not yet have a designated Youth Action Board representative identified to participate in Steering Council, there were only 20 current Steering Members eligible to vote.