



STEERING COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

January 15, 2021

8:30-10:30

Facilitator:	Casey Gordon		
Meeting Attendees:	<u>Steering members present:</u> Casey Gordon, Adrienne Goodstal, Tom Cottrell, Susan Cervantes, Amanda Tarantowski, Cheryl Schuch, Alonda Trammell, Elizabeth Stoddard, Erin Banchoff, Heather Bunting, Karen Tjapkes, Lauren VanKeulen, Melissa Barnes, Rebecca Rynbrandt, Scott Orr, Susan Cervantes, Victoria Sluga <u>Steering members absent with notification:</u> Hattie Tinney, Cathy LaPorte <u>Steering members absent without notification:</u> <u>Community Members:</u> Wende Randall (ENTF), Emily Schichtel (UW), Tammy Britton (City of GR), Curtis Smith (Hope Network), Allison Green (MCAH), Wafa Haddad (Noors Heaven) <u>Staff:</u> Courtney Myers-Keaton, Brianne Czyzio Robach		
Time Convened:	8:34	Time Adjourned:	10:35

Approval of Agenda			
Motion by:	Tom Cottrell	Support from:	Cheryl Schuch
Discussion			
Amendments	Add MSHDA CERA funding (item 8d)		
Conclusion	All in favor, motion passes.		
Approval of Minutes		December 11, 2020	
Motion by:	Karen Tjapkes	Support from:	Tom Cottrell
Discussion			
Amendments			
Conclusion	All in favor, motion passes.		
Public Comment on Any Agenda Item			
Discussion			
Curtis Smith from Hope Network expressed that he is excited to attend today.			
Approval of Consent Agenda			
Motion by:	Adrienne Goodstal	Support from:	Susan Cervantes
Discussion			
Amendments			
Conclusion	All in favor, motion passes.		
Petitions and Communications			
Discussion			
None.			
Executive Committee Elections			
Discussion			
Nominations for each position were solicited ahead of the meeting. Nominees are:			
Chair: Karen Tjapkes			
Vice Chair: Lauren VanKeulen			
Secretary: Adrienne Goodstal			
Treasurer: Alonda Trammell, Erin Banchoff			



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Member at Large: Cheryl Schuch, Elizabeth Stoddard

Nominating Committee member Adrienne Goodstal called for nominations from the floor – no new nominees submitted. Following review of submitted votes, Nominating Committee member Emily Schichtel announced results.

Chair: Karen Tjapkes

Vice Chair: Lauren VanKeulen

Secretary: Adrienne Goodstal

Treasurer: Erin Banchoff

Member at Large: Elizabeth Stoddard

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline

General CoC Updates

Discussion

COVID-19 Planning and Response

At the last meeting, there was a lot of conversation around a sweep at the encampment in Heartside Park. Since that point, there has been work with outreach teams to provide resources and encourage folks to move into shelter if they choose. The City of Grand Rapids posted notice and asked folks staying there to leave due to health and safety concerns. Mel Trotter’s new overflow space seems to be running smoothly. Given the warmer than normal weather, they have not been at full capacity yet this season.

Shelter Count Trends

Data shows an almost double increase in the number of family households staying in shelter since March. The recently updated [CoC dashboard](#) shows an increase in length of time homeless and first-time homelessness, especially amongst families. Cheryl noted that these trends are not happening slowly. Diversion efforts have slowed substantially due to COVID. Length of time prior to lease up is increasing due to lack of available housing units. Attendees noted that increasing available housing would be important to increase flow out of the system.

Cheryl moved to revitalize family homelessness task force as an ad-hoc committee with specific charges and outcomes. Karen seconded. Attendance fluctuated throughout the last term of the ad-hoc group. Staff can reach out to those previously involved and make a call for additional members. Suggestion for group to look at data as well as RRH coordination with a by-name list. **In favor: 16. Opposed: 0. Motion passes.**

Action Boards

This topic has been discussed in a variety of spaces over the last few months. Action boards are not currently active due to COVID, and there is no longer an individual member with lived experience on Steering Council. This brings the CoC out of alignment with our charter as it requires 2 representatives with lived experience sit on Steering. Youth Committee and Veterans Committee have been working to revitalize YAB and VAB. In addition, there have been conversation around how to ensure that those with lived experience feel comfortable speaking into issues being discussed at the Steering Council



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table. There is a seat that recently came open on Steering, Executive can appoint someone to this seat until the next election.

Conversation around the potential action board structures to best inform the decision-making process. Potential structures include reaching out for feedback instead of asking folks to come into the CoC or contracting with organizations who have a better structure for feedback. Agreement that this should be a focus area in strategic planning and should include the voices of lived experience in these planning conversations.

MSHDA CERA Funding

Funding made available through the COVID Relief Bill. It is estimated that Kent County will receive around \$38.5 million for rent and utility assistance. MSHDA estimates that the community should have 22 full-time or 44 part-time staff dedicated to this work. Funding could be available as early as the first week of February, though they have to go through appropriations at the state-level. MSHDA want to have at least 3 agencies on board to help distribute these funds. All agencies can participate, but agencies must be able to handle the required paperwork, follow rules and regulations, and have ability to cut the checks. The final decision will be made based on agencies who are willing and able to commit. Staff will continue to reach out. Planning is ongoing and includes learnings from the previous EDP program. Unsure of the fiscal agent, but it likely will be United Way as they are the ESG fiduciary. The CoC has to submit an initial plan for MSHDA by next week Friday (1/22). Funding has to be spent down by the end of 2021, committed by 9/30/2021.

Cheryl expressed concern that this is a significant amount of funding that may put a strain on organization's accounting systems. She wondered if the CoC should be looking at contracting with an agency who works with mass transaction distributions instead of putting burden on housing agencies who are already over-strapped. Others agree and note the difficulty for managing this large amount of funds and staffing-up with a tight turnaround. Suggestion to explore partnerships with banking or similar organizations. Karen can look into statutes to determine feasibility.

The group of potential interested agencies is meeting again on Tuesday. The group can discuss and formulate an initial plan/process to submit to MSHDA, knowing that there may be flexibility.

Since this is a large amount of funds for rental assistance, suggestion that agencies who have funds earmarked for prevention explore how they could be used for those who are literally homeless.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Convene family homelessness ad-hoc group	CoC staff	
Formulate plan for distribution of MSHDA CERA funds	Potential CERA agencies	

CoC Position Statement on Encampments

Discussion

Courtney noted that there are two different directions for a position statement – focus on encampments and COVID-19 or on encampments in general. Agreement that the statement should



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touch on national best practices regarding encampments. Members pointed to statements from Kalamazoo County and MDHHS as examples. A board statement would help hold continuity for any new folks entering system.

Agreement that the statement should be broad with a solutions-focus. Tom suggested including some reference to practices in place due to COVID-19 as it is an unprecedented time. Courtney will bring a draft to Executive in February.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Bring draft position statement to Executive for review.	Courtney Myers-Keaton	

Funding Updates

Discussion

HUD NOFA Update

Staff have heard from an unofficial reliable source that CoC projects will automatically renew, but that community will be able to apply for bonus projects if desired, but we are still waiting for a confirmed update from HUD.

FEMA Reimbursement

Based on learnings from other communities, the community is likely not using FEMA dollars to the full allowable capacity. Other communities are using funds to cover hoteling costs for those in need of shelter. Conversation around FEMA versus state requirements. Staff will convene group to discuss.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Convene group to discuss FEMA requirements	CoC staff	

Steering Council Orientation

Discussion

There will be a Steering Council Orientation in February. If you are interested in helping draft or review materials, connect with Brianne and Courtney.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline

Budget Model

Discussion

A draft budget model similar to the one presented when finalizing a strategic planning consultant was included in the agenda packet. Staff are meeting with United Way Finance staff in the next few weeks to develop a final budget which will be up for approval by Steering Council in February.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline

Prioritized Goals and Activities

Discussion

Want to ensure these goals are on our radar to ensure we are making progress on goals. For Q1 activities, one area that has not been started is a campaign to private landlords. This will likely begin in February. The CE Committee has made progress in ensuring that information is transparent. In addition, HAP and other organization have been discussing a coordinated system for prevention to



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increase equity. Staff capacity for case management has been completed through MSHDA ESG-CV grant funds.

Erin suggested moving the gap analysis to Q1 given the influx of funding coming into the community in Q1, if we wait until Q2 she is concerned the opportunity will pass. Suggestion to track gaps by updating the funding source spreadsheet including unit analysis. Staff can ask each municipality to update information and schedule a meeting a few weeks out.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
Request municipalities update funding source spreadsheet	CoC staff	
Strategic Planning: Next Steps		
Discussion		
Consultants are starting to begin preliminary research, they will be coming to Steering to discuss process in the next few months.		
Other Matters from Steering Council members		
Discussion		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KCCA – currently have funds for homelessness prevention and utility assistance. - Fair Housing Center – annual workshop on April 22nd - NLIHC report on rental assistance program models: https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/Emergency-Rental-Assistance-Programs-3.pdf - Thanks to Casey for her leadership over the past 2 years. 		
Public Comment on Any Item		
Discussion		
None.		
Adjourn		
Motion by:	Tom Cottrell	Support from: Karen Tjapkes