

Greater Nashua Continuum of Care

Meeting Minutes of August 3, 2011

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Wendy LeBlanc, Chair called the meeting to order at 8:10AM. Introductions were made by all, and the attendance sheet passed for signatures and updated contact information. The August meeting was the report out by committees.

The minutes of the June 1, 2011 meeting were reviewed. There being no changes, a motion to accept the minutes was made by C. Furlong, which was seconded by C. Gebhart, and the minutes were accepted unanimously.

Committee Reports:

Executive Committee (EC):

W. LeBlanc reported that the EC didn't meet in July. At the June EC meeting Janice Watson of Lamprey Healthcare let the EC know that they lost 100% of their substance abuse funding, so Healthy Steps Program was to end 6/30/11.

The EC discussed the presentation format for the GNCOC meetings, and going forward the intent of the presentations will be to focus on the GNCOC's goal of ending homelessness. The EC started by reviewing trends and will try and obtain speakers relative to this subject matter. In Sept, S. Costa of the Nashua Housing Authority will make a presentation and someone from HHI will also make a presentation of some of the other subpopulations they serve.

EC discussed the need for a chairperson for the Data Gathering Committee and the GNCOC members were asked to speak with W. LeBlanc if they are interested.

W. LeBlanc asked C. Gebhart to update the GNCOC as to the status of the NH Legal Aid office in Nashua. Legal Aid is closing its Nashua and Littleton offices due to the State budget cuts, and 13 advocates have been laid off. C. Gebhart indicated they are sorry to go and hope to be back. Outreach hours will be cut. C. Gebhart indicated that she will meet with clients wherever is necessary to continue to help as much as they can. She is still available by phone and email. The Nashua office is closing on 8/19/11. C. Gebhart is also stepping down from her co-Vice Chair position of the GNCOC and she encouraged that someone step up into that role quickly.

W. LeBlanc thanked C. Gebhart for all her service and support. L. Piper will also be stepping down from the Clerk's position at the end of her term on 9/30/11. W. LeBlanc indicated her willingness to stay on as Chair of the GNCOC for another term, but was open to receiving nominations for the position of Chair, Vice Chair and Clerk. Any interested parties should contact W. LeBlanc.

Ending Homelessness Committee (EHC):

B. Mack reported that at its June meeting many items regarding the ending homelessness plan was discussed. The Project Employment Connect is coming up on August 30th and they are looking for more potential employers to participate. The Dress for Success at the Grey Nuns Thrift Store is forthcoming to help clients attending the Project Employment Connect.

EHC will be reviewing some of the State budget cuts still scheduled to come and the longer term impact. B. Mack reported that there appears to be other persons from other states coming into Nashua because of NH's low unemployment rate relative to the rest of the country. This has created additional challenges as many of the people arriving are not able to find employment and are in need of services. The EHC will be reviewing the goals and talk about some different strategies.

E. Bowman inquired as to the status of clients receiving housing and services because of the announced shutdown of the behavioral health center at SNHMC. It was noted in the meeting that a representative from Greater Nashua Mental Health Center was not in attendance at today's meeting to address that question. C. Furlong of Harbor Homes indicated that the NH State Hospital will likely see an increase in the number of people looking for services. Someone else in the group commented that it was their understanding that the State Hospital beds for mental health patients were full.

Wrap Around Services Committee (WASC):

B. Mack reported that the meeting structure will change to quarterly with the next meeting scheduled for October 25th. The plan is for agencies that have a challenging situation to contact the WASC and the WASC will pull meetings together more on an as needed basis to address specific issues that a client may have. By doing this, the WASC is hopeful that this will be more effective for clients and solutions found more quickly.

Community Relations Committee (CRC):

P. Murphy indicated they met in July following up on the Chamber presentation. W. LeBlanc sent an email to President of the Chamber, C. Williams asking for him to disperse the committee's letter of thanks to the chamber members. To date that has not been done and L. Piper will follow up with C. Williams on that. P. Murphy reported that there will be a Resource Fair in Milford in September and B. Doolan of Marguerites Place is going to be attending and she offered to put out information about the GNCOC at that forum. The CRC discussed that a letter to our legislators was in order, and despite the fact that the budget has now been passed, the CRC felt it was still a good idea to keep the legislators aware of the GNCOC. The CRC has composed that letter and W. LeBlanc will send it out on behalf of the GNCOC members. D. Curley mentioned the new cable station could be another forum for getting information about the GNCOC out to the community.

Legislative Affairs Committee (LAC):

E. Brady indicated she needs more committee members. Citizens Bank is having a strategy session today (8/3/11) about the impact to the community from these State budget cuts, and she will be attending. She indicated that even though the legislature is not in session to please call your own representatives and make them aware of what is going on with the clients each agency is working with.

It would be good if there was a lot more publicity about the impact of these cuts and we need to work to make it more from the point of view of the GNCOC agencies and real life impact to clients. She hopes to get the committee going again in September. She suggested inviting representatives in to see how your agencies operate and it is good to do when the representatives and senators are out of session. She is still working with NH Cares, however they have used up all their funding so she is not sure how it will continue to operate. NH Can Do Better signs are still available. The NH Coalition to End Homelessness has closed down due to funding and some of the group has folded into Housing Action.

Data Gathering Committee (DGC):

W. LeBlanc indicated once again the need of a Chairperson for this committee. The DGC had a meeting with K. Beaulieu, the Manchester COC's VISTA person to discuss the point in time counts, as well as the challenges of gathering data. W. LeBlanc emphasized that the primary responsibility of this committee is the annual point in time count.

HMIS:

D. Curley reported results for June and July 2011 regarding the HUD outcome measurements. They are as follows:

June 2011:

2.3; the June outcome was excellent on increasing the percentage of homeless persons staying in Permanent Housing over 6 months. It came in at 90.4%, which is 3.4% higher than the GNCOC goal of 87% and higher than the HUD goal of 77%

3.4; this category of increasing the percentage of persons moving from Transitional Housing to Permanent Housing continues to be challenging and is negatively impacted by the 'other' and 'unknown' categories. The outcome for June was 37.6% which is significantly lower than the HUD goal of 65% and the GNCOC goal of 76%;

4.3; this category of increasing the percentage of homeless persons employed at exit to at least 20%, which is both the HUD and GNCOC goal is close to goal at 19.2% for June, and given today's economic climate is a good result.

July 2012:

2.3; the July outcome was excellent on increasing the percentage of homeless persons staying in Permanent Housing over 6 months. It remained the same as the June 2011 outcome at 90.4%, which is 3.4% higher than the GNCOC goal of 87% and higher than the HUD goal of 77%

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4.3; this category of increasing the percentage of homeless persons employed at exit to at least 20%, which is both the HUD and GNCOC goal is close to goal at 18.6% for July, down from 19.2% in June, and given today's continuing economic malaise, is a good result.

Statewide Committees:

Manchester Continuum of Care (MCOC): No report

Balance of State Continuum of Care (BOSCO): No report

Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH):

C. Gebhart indicated that ICH has temporarily suspended meetings while a smaller task force has been looking at the homelessness issues statewide. This will help the ICH to better realign the group based on a review of the different plans around the state to bring a more focused statewide approach to this challenging issue. The ICH can hopefully provide one voice to these issues to leverage state and/or federal level funds to make it a more focused approach. The perception was that there were too many people/agencies at the table and this task force will narrow it down to try and align the various plans and then make recommendations to the Governor. Then the ICH will pick 2-3 of the key tasks from the plans to work on each year and move forward with a more united front. It has been a positive experience.

Housing Action NH (HANH):

E. Brady encouraged people to get on the HANH email list directly and this group will be monitoring the legislature as the next session gets started.

Shelter Directors Meeting (SDM):

K. Merrill – no meetings since last GNCOC meeting.

Updates to accomplishments section of 10 YR Plan: None this meeting.

Announcements/Discussion:

E. Brady did indicate that more clients are much more aware of the impact of the State budget cuts.

K. Merrill requested a letter of support from the GNCOC for HHI. HHI would like to combine the Safe Haven Program and the Maple Street Shelter to improve the progression of services for the homeless. However because Safe Haven is a SuperNOFA project they need to request a letter of support from the GNCOC to re-locate the safe haven program into the Maple Street facility. The number of people being served will remain the same. C. Gebhardt motioned to approve the letter of support, E. Bowman seconded the motion, and the motioned passed, with B. Mack abstaining from the vote.

E. Brady explained that because of the increased need the schedule for food boxes/perishable goods distribution has changed at the Nashua Soup Kitchen and Shelter. The new schedule is for families with last name A-M pick up will be on Tues and Thurs; last name N-Z pick up will be on Wednesdays and Fridays; Monday food boxes only; Saturday morning anyone. She also indicated that they are serving significantly higher numbers. For example most recently they served 240 at the last meal as compared to a facility that can hold 40.

A representative from Lamprey Healthcare indicated that J. Watson is still providing services but is now traveling between the three centers of Raymond and Newmarket in addition to the Nashua office.

A flyer for the Nashua PD Citizens Academy was provided to attendees, and it is a good opportunity to meet the police, and this is part of the Neighborhood Watch Group.

K. Rice-Orshak, of St. Joseph Hospital indicated that the hospital will be trying to encourage more volunteers to get involved in their communities, and J. Leclerc will be heading this effort on behalf of the hospital.

W. LeBlanc indicated that L. Christie while on vacation has asked that the GNCOC discuss the impact of the Behavioral Health Center closing at SNHMC on the GNCOC's clients. However, there was little discussion as there were only a couple minutes remaining before the close of the meeting. E. Brady indicated it is highly likely to increase homelessness and arrests. C. Furlong indicated they there will likely be more people trying to get into the State Hospital, as she had mentioned earlier in response to E. Bowman's question earlier in the meeting.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 9:00AM.

Minutes taken by Lori M. Piper, Merrimack County Savings Bank