

Greater Nashua Continuum of Care
Meeting Minutes of December 7, 2011
www.nashua-coc.org

Wendy LeBlanc, Chair called the meeting to order at 8:00AM. Introductions were made by all, and the attendance sheet passed for signatures and updated contact information. Reports out by the committees were the order of business at the December meeting.

The minutes of November 2, 2011 were reviewed and two typographical errors pointed out by B. Mack, which will be corrected. There being no other changes or discussion, a motion to accept the minutes was made by J. Miranda-Smith, seconded by E. Brady, and the minutes passed.

Committee Reports:

Executive Committee (EC):

W. LeBlanc reported that there has been discussion at the state level as to whether the HMIS should be an open or closed system; and the pros and cons of this were debated. The EC continues to look for an intern to help revamp the GNCOC website. St. Joseph Hospital is looking for charitable projects to take on. The committee also discussed overflow issues, and that the Wrap Around Committee has been moved to a quarterly basis and is not being well attended. A discussion took place about future GNCOC presenters. W. LeBlanc indicated that the Point-in-Time (PIT) count is to take place on 1/25/2012, and there will be a presentation on form completion at January GNCOC meeting. She also indicated that HUD has sent a tool to reassess the HEARTH Act and a survey will be sent to 6 -20 agencies within the GNCOC for completion.

W. LeBlanc thanked Bob Mack and the planning committee for their hard work on Project Homeless Connect as well as all that participated in the event which took place on December 6, 2011.

Ending Homelessness Committee (EHC):

B. Mack reported they've been looking at the tool kit and there has been new information that will be added to the kit. He recommends that people use and promote the tool kit for their clients. They also discussed the importance of HMIS data gathering, concerns about winter overflow, as well as recent downtown activities including some panhandling issues. EHC is going to meet jointly with the police, hospitals and other agencies to brainstorm on how they can reach out together, particularly during the winter months to help keep individuals and families off the streets. S. Mead also indicated she has met with the police and have updated the homeless information card that is distributed to individuals they encounter, that provides phone numbers and agency contacts.

B. Mack reported that the Project Homeless Connect event was held successfully on 12/6/2011 and he thanked everyone for participating. He indicated there were 25 – 28 agencies represented; 20 – 30 volunteer nursing students from Rivier College that helped man various stations and also provided some medical checks, such as blood pressure, and feet checks. There were 50 persons that attended representing families of 64 adults and 12 children. Although fewer people came through than last year, the need for services anecdotally appeared greater from a wider array of service providers. It seemed more targeted at people who were truly homeless, as compared to individuals/families that in the past may have been living in some form of housing, but still in need of assistance. E. Brady commented that the Harbor Clinic was busy during the Project Homeless Connect and likely picked up a few volunteers at the event. B. Mack thanked United Way and Merrimack County Savings Bank for providing lunch.

Wrap Around Services Committee (WASC):

B. Mack reported a meeting will be held on 1/24/2012 @ 1PM. It is now quarterly, but is opened to be scheduled as needed. If there are challenging cases or cases that just don't seem to move forward, it may help to have some additional sets of eyes and ears on the issues to see if there are any other ideas that the group might have that could help resolve specific situations for clients.

Community Relations Committee (CRC):

W. LeBlanc indicated that in November she presented about the GNCOC to the H.E.A.R.T.S. peer support group.

Legislative Affairs Committee (LAC):

E. Brady reported they have had two meetings since the last report to the GNCOC. Members are enthusiastic and well informed. They are looking at the 'Tree Streets' revamping, and are concerned about the impact of affordable housing in that area. She also indicated that there are numerous bills in Concord that are directed towards getting rid of regulations on housing opportunities. Carolyn Gargas, a Nashua representative in Concord would like to meet with the LAC group to become more informed on various issues. E. Brady indicated that while fuel assistance was not specifically discussed at the meeting she did say that both Senator Ayotte and Senator Shaheen have pushed at the federal level for additional fuel assistance for the state. Matt Leahy, Senator Shaheen's Special Assistant for Policy and Projects indicated that this is currently a top priority for the Senator. He indicated that she is working to pass another temporary budget (at the federal level) and is trying to get more funding for low income housing fuel assistance. L. Piper asked M. Leahy about the 2% payroll tax reduction that is scheduled to be eliminated on 1/1/2012 that is a top issue of debate currently in Washington, and expressed concern about the impact this hike would have on all families, low – income and others. M. Leahy indicated that Senator Shaheen is in support of the extension of this tax reduction remaining in place.

Data Gathering Committee (DGC):

B. Mack reported that they are waiting on the state and Manchester COC (MCOC) to finalize the revamping of the data gathering forms which will be used going forward on a statewide basis. W. LeBlanc indicated that all agencies that provide permanent or transitional housing must complete an accurate count for the Housing Inventory Chart, which then rolls up into HMIS. The forms must be put onto an excel spreadsheet, rather than a manual format going forward to improve efficiencies of the data into the system.

Employment Committee (EMPL):

T. Lopez was not able to attend the meeting. No report in December.

Statewide Committees:

Manchester Continuum of Care (MCOC): No report

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

Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH): No report

Housing Action NH (HANH):

E. Brady and M. Leahy indicated next meeting is 12/16 @ 10AM.

Shelter Directors Committee Meeting (SDCM):

L. Skibba and L. Christie attended the last meeting. L. Christie reported on the possibility of an open system for HMIS. The State may mandate shelters to use the open system but nothing is scheduled to change until at least July, and at that point it may first be a pilot program. There is concern that an open system could pose problems whereby a shelter could check if there had been problems with a potentially new client to its shelter and it may result in some people being turned away based on issues that have happened in the past.

Updates to Accomplishments Section of the 10 Year Ending Homelessness Plan:

- M. Wirbal shared that Nashua Pastoral Care and Bridges jointly collaborated on a Department of Justice grant and were awarded \$250,000 to develop affordable housing for individuals that have suffered from domestic violence. They are hoping to provide 10 units of housing. This housing may also be used to serve undocumented individuals.
- S. Mead is going to send the updates to W. LeBlanc on the housing that Nashua Mental Health Center has completed for inclusion in the accomplishments of the plan.

Announcements/Discussions:

- R. Petersen from U/W passed out forms for recruiting tax preparers to help lower income households with their 2011 returns. He is also looking for greeters at the site. Refunds totaled approximately \$2.7 million last year, money that came back into the community to low income families. M. Wirbal asked if the start date can be earlier than 2/7 as their clients are looking for the monies sooner, and often have their W-2 forms by mid-January. By moving the date forward a couple of weeks, may help to eliminate some people getting Tax Anticipation Loans. R. Petersen indicated they could consider moving the date forward next year. He also indicated that there will be another site at the Adult Learning Center.
- S. Gale spoke about working on a non-partisan basis to get voter information guides that are now also available in Spanish out to the general public. She indicated that on 12/12/2011 a meeting will be held at the Nashua Public Library and both Senators Lambert and Luther have been invited to meet with people to discuss family issues.
- P. McArdle from Cross Way Christian Church indicated that the church is coming to Nashua and he is looking to connect, get to know people, agencies and services being provided so that they can work with the GNCOC to help others, but to also try not to duplicate services.
- M. Wirbal indicated that Nashua Pastoral Care Center will be celebrating their 25th anniversary with an event on 1/25/2012 at the Crowne Plaza. It is not a fundraiser.
- J. LeClerc indicated that he will remain active with the GNCOC and is the Secretary of the Board of Trustees of Ann Marie House. He intends to stay on as the Vice-Chair of the GNCOC at this time.
- E. Brady asked if the Nashua Access was planning to attend the GNCOC meetings. W. LeBlanc indicated they have said they will attend the presentation meetings and film them.

W. LeBlanc announced that the parking meters will now start at 8AM, rather than 9AM.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8:55AM.

Meeting minutes were taken by Lori M. Piper, Merrimack County Savings Bank