

GREATER NASHUA CONTINUUM OF CARE MEETING MINUTES

Nashua City Hall Auditorium

April 2, 2014

www.nashua-coc.org

Ana Pancine, Co-Chair called the meeting to order at 8:05AM. Introductions were made by all, and the attendance sheet passed for signatures. Newcomers were asked to add their email to the list if they would like to be added to the GNCOC mailing list. The meeting format that alternates monthly between presentations and committee reports was explained to the group.

MARCH MEETING MINUTES: The minutes of March 2014 were reviewed. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Peter Kelleher, which was seconded by Barbara Alves. Minutes were approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Executive Committee

Cate Sementa, GNCOC Co-Chair reported that an Ad Hoc committee has been established from among Executive Committee members to work on our group's compliance to the updated HEARTH regulations that will go into effect in August of this year. Other members of the GNCOC are invited to join this group, if interested. They will be discussing issues related to changes in governance for the GNCOC, expanded makeup of the Executive Committee and the Coordinated Intake. The first meeting of the group is scheduled for April 16 at 8:30am at Harbor Homes. Wendy LeBlanc will give a presentation/update on the work being done at the May GNCOC meeting.

The Executive Committee also approved / wrote a letter of support for Harbor Homes, supporting a line item budget change for three of their permanent housing programs. The change allowed for a reduction in operating funds and increase in funds available for supportive services and leasing.

Peter Kelleher announced that the Ending Homelessness Fund is growing; it has currently raised \$90K. Seven chronically homeless individuals have been housed through the fund.

Ending Homelessness Committee

Bob Mack reported that several follow-up meetings regarding panhandling have been held and progress in being made in forming a relationship between downtown merchants and agencies and organizations representing the GNCOC. The EHC also discussed the Ending Homelessness Fund and anomalies in this year's PIT Count. Other topics of discussion included homeless individuals from other communities coming to Nashua, issues regarding hospital releases that have nowhere to go when released and where registered sex offenders can find housing in the community.

Community Relations

Pat Murphy reported that the Community Relations Committee has been working in support of the panhandling initiative in the development of tools downtown business owners can use to address the issue. Initiative is allowing the GNCOC to build a better relationship with the merchants. A special pamphlet has been developed for the project. The committee worked with students from Nashua High North School on updating the website. Members of the GNCOC will be receiving an on-line survey in the near future and are asked to offer feedback about the site by completing it.

Legislative Affairs Committee

Wendy LeBlanc suggested that this item in the agenda be moved from “committee report” status to the “announcements/discussion” portion. There is no formal Legislative Affairs Committee in place (save for Eileen Brady). Under the general topic, Peter mentioned Medicaid Expansion as a recent legislative action; Eileen mentioned that better drug/alcohol rehab may result from this. The representative from Senator Shaheen’s office indicated the work continues on the extension of unemployment benefits. Cate announced a change that allows veterans to qualify for SSVF services with 24 hours of net active service. She indicated that this can/is subject to change.

Data Gathering Committee

The anomalies noted in this year’s PIT count were presented. Individual agencies involved in doing the count are being asked to double check their numbers for accuracy and get back to Miles with a final number. There was a marked increase in the number of chronically homeless identified in the count; we need to make sure the counts are accurate before turning the information over to the state and HUD.

Peter reinforced the opportunity presented by the new Ending Homelessness Fund and the chance it gives the community to work together to make sure those who are unsheltered get housed. Understanding that the population is often resistant, Peter encouraged everyone to continue their efforts to engage these individuals to provide shelter. He indicated that efforts should be made to refer those eligible for services are referred to the appropriate agency.

It was pointed out that 80% of the individuals identified in this year’s count were not in last year’s. There was capacity in local shelters to house those unsheltered on the night of the count.

Anyone with further questions is encouraged to call Miles at 883-3616 x 1104.

Maryse Wirbal questioned what efforts could be made to quantify those individuals who are at risk of being homeless. Miles indicated that he does have this data; the state doesn’t ask for it.

Bob Keating raised the issue of how the data that’s available can be interpreted so the message we need to give is framed accordingly.

Eileen Brady noted that given the harshness of the winter, she was grateful for the agencies that made shelter available. The group thanked Miles for his continued efforts in keeping the data up-to-date.

Employment Committee

No report.

Shelter Directors

No report.

Other Groups

Housing Action: Laurel announced that the minimum wage bill (HB1403) has passed the House; prospects in the Senate are not so promising. Other legislation they are following include HB1409 a bill to expand the law against discrimination to prohibit housing discrimination against recipients of rental assistance and victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Announcements

- **HEARTS Peer Support Center** is holding an Open House on Tuesday, April 8 from 2-6pm. All are invited to attend. They have received approval from the Zoning Board to establish a respite center scheduled to open in June.
- **Rescue Mission:** Rick clarified reports that the Mission had “kicked out” clients. The Code Blue Section used for winter respite has closed, but the emergency shelter is open.
- **Homeless Outreach Worker.** Tara from St. Joseph Hospital expressed concern over the loss of the community’s homeless outreach worker this fall. Wendy explained that the supportive work provided by this position was no longer a funding priority through HUD. Discussions continue to be open for possible solutions to the situation. The Employment Program offered through the Soup Kitchen was also removed from the HUD funding request; there is hope that moneys will be found to continue this position/program.
- **Marguerite’s Place:** The agency is holding their annual Jazz and Juice fundraiser this Friday at the Nashua Country Club. Cost is \$50. Barbara indicated that her agency survived a recent HUD Audit.
- **Bob Mack** reminded the group that the Ending Homelessness Committee offers wraparound services for individuals who need assistance in connecting to appropriate resources. Any agency working with a client in need of this help can contact him to set up a wraparound session.
- **Maryse Wirbal** questioned services available to refugees when those provided by their resettlement agency ended. Concern was that income they earn does not support the cost of rent, etc.
- **Financial Education Workshops** are scheduled beginning in June. They are offered through the HomeTeam program of Neighborworks Southern New Hampshire.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 9:05 AM.

Minutes taken by Beth Todgham, Southern New Hampshire Services