

GREATER NASHUA CONTINUUM OF CARE MEETING MINUTES

Nashua City Hall Auditorium

October 1, 2014

www.nashua-coc.org

The meeting was called to order at 8:05am by former chair, Wendy LeBlanc. Wendy chaired the meeting in the absence of Abigail and Ana who are both at HUD training this morning. Wendy announced that co-chair Cate Sementa is no longer with Harbor Homes, so has resigned her position.

Introductions were made around the table and all in attendance were asked to sign in on the attendance sheet.

The minutes of the September 3, 2014 were reviewed. Sylvia Gale made a motion that the minutes be approved; Candace Cappio-Gebhart seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Presentation:

Nashua School District

Bob Cioppa & Cherrie Fulton

Cherrie serves as Title I Director for the Nashua School District. She explained the increased emphasis that the District has placed on the issue of homelessness this year (both in efforts made and money allocated). In the past, there has been \$2K budgeted to serving homeless students in the system; that amount has risen to over \$60K during the current school year. Past expenses that were covered included transportation, school supplies, etc. The district is currently looking for other ways that they can support students who are homeless and building partnerships with agencies and organizations to better serve the needs of their students.

Efforts are concentrated in the five Title I elementary schools in the district: Amherst Street, Fairgrounds, Dr. Crisp, Mount Pleasant and Ledge Street. They also provide services at the preschool operating out of the First Church.

Schools operate under a different definition of homelessness – something that is true among other organizations that deal with the issue. They have a set of guidelines on what they can cover from their budget. These include school supplies, tutoring, academic evaluations, staff development, medical/dental referrals (after all other options have been exhausted), educating parents on their rights, clothing and referrals to other programs, and athletic participation fees, among others.

The district plans to hire a Homeless Coordinator whose responsibility will be to connect students/families facing homelessness with resources available in the community. This person would also form connections with community organizations like the GNCOC to gain better insight into the issue.

The district has already partnered with Katie's Closet and End 68 Hours of Hunger to better coordinate the clothing and food insecurity needs of this population.

Cherrie and Bob were asked what screening is done to qualify students for services; this is an area that continues to be fine-tuned as they become more involved in the issue.

The new emphasis is a result of new Title I director at the state level who is passionate about the issue. They are receiving additional guidance and support from the state in their local efforts.

Peter Kelleher questioned what data was collected on the students and how it was used. Bob Cioppa indicated that at this point data collection is very basic but they are putting tools in place to better track the students and their progress. Peter mentioned software that is available that could help in these efforts.

Tom Lopez suggested that the school district try to partner with another organization in an effort to make the Homeless Coordinator a fulltime position.

Bob Mack indicated that these efforts can be combined with the Coordinated Assessment process being developed.

Announcements:

GNCOC Clerk Needed: Wendy announced that the position of Clerk of the GNCOC is open. Beth will continue doing minutes for the general meeting (if needed) but group is looking for someone to join the Board to take minutes at the monthly meetings. Anyone interested can contact Ana.

COC Application: The RFP is out and is being worked on by members of the GNCOC. Application deadline is October 30. Sub-committee has been formed to do program rankings. Because of timing, entire GNCOC might be asked to confirm the results of the sub-committee's recommendations by email. If anyone is interested in being more involved, please let a member of the Board know.

Americans United for Change Bus Tour: Sylvia announced that Nashua is the first stop on the organization's national bus tour. Their "Putting the Middle Class First" bus will be at the Nashua Library on Monday, October 6 at 1:00pm.

Eleanor's Hope Initiative Kick-Off: The National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare will kick-off this initiative at Nashua Community College on Wednesday, October 15 at 3:00pm. Those interested in attending should RSVP by calling 603-934-4297.

Work Ready Program: Donna announced that a new series of Work Ready classes will start soon. She has a waiting list but encouraged anyone who had a potential student to get in touch with her.

Nashua Soup Kitchen & Shelter: The NSK&S needs volunteers – no heavy lifting required. Duties will include guiding people through the new facility's food pantry.

Employment Connect: Tom indicated that the recent event went very well and St. Patrick's is the ideal location. Numbers were down from previous events but with the new partnerships that have been formed during the planning of the recent event, he expects the event to grow in the future. 37 people attended the event; 11 were hired the same day and four more were hired the following day.

211/Holiday Programs: Callers are beginning to ask about holiday programs. Any organization/agency who offers special programs for the holidays is encouraged to provide 211 with that information so they can pass it along.

The meeting adjourned at 9:02am.