

GNCOC Executive Committee Meeting

Wednesday February 15, 2023

Minutes taken by Hannah Stohler, Clerk

Attendance:

Bob Mack, Nashua City Welfare

Pam Wellman, Family Promise of Southern NH

Heather Nelson, Harbor Care

Wendy LeBlanc, Harbor Care; Chair

Mike Apfelberg, United Way of Greater Nashua

Ashley Jackson, GNCOC Coordinator

Scott Wellman, Greater Nashua Mental Health; Vice Chair

Tonia Knisley, Consumer

Shelby Brown, Nashua Public Schools

Hannah Stohler, Marguerite's Place; Clerk

1. Call to Order

- a. Wendy LeBlanc called the meeting to order at 10:04 am.

2. Approval of Minutes

- a. Wendy LeBlanc requested a motion to approve the January 2023 GNCOC Executive Committee minutes. Bob Mack made a motion to approve the January 2023 GNCOC Executive Committee minutes. Scott Wellman seconded the motion. All voted in favor, no abstentions. The motion carried.

3. Discussion of Coordinated Entry Manual

- a. Wendy LeBlanc and Ashley Jackson shared that we need to review the Coordinated Entry Manual that was sent out, suggest any edits, and then vote to accept and adopt it. Historically, we have adopted the same policies that the Balance of State (BoS) uses, just amending the manual to add GNCOC where needed.
- b. The GNCOC Coordinated Entry Subcommittee has not yet met to review this, so it was determined by the Executive Committee that the Coordinated Entry Subcommittee will review this and suggest edits/provide feedback to Kristy Schott at their upcoming meeting on Tuesday February 21.

4. Discussion of Concerns of 211 and GNCOC Coordinated Entry Phone Line Functionality

- a. Mike Apfelberg shared that he recently called 211 to seek information for someone at imminent risk of homelessness in Laconia, and 211 did not know how to help them and directed them to their local welfare department. He also recently called our local Coordinated Entry phone line and left a voicemail, and still has not received a response ten days later. He called back and did receive a live person, but shared concerns about the way in which the operator responded to his call. He brings this up not to lay blame on anyone in particular, but out of concern for current operations and in interest of seeking a solution.
- b. Heather Nelson echoed Mike's concerns and clarified that the manual that we were discussing are guidelines, but are a "perfect world" and don't account for training and implementation. She shared that BoS has dedicated coordinated entry staff where as we do not in GNCOC. She stated that it is important that we have active education on what 211 does, and rather than just changing names in the manuals for compliance, we need to ensure we are training people with the information needed to respond effectively.

- c. Mike Apfelberg shared that he feels it's important that the voicemail states what the phone line is, and that he feels it is important that we need to respond to those calling in crisis with diligence and respect. Others in attendance echoed these concerns.
- d. Mike Apfelberg offered that United Way would be willing to take on coordinated entry with volunteers if it would help solve this issue. Bob Mack appreciated his willingness to step up, but stated that he felt the involvement of those with the capacity to respond to emergency homelessness in our community is important. responding to emergency homelessness in our community is important.
- e. Heather Nelson shared that we are supposed to be doing the *Prevention and Diversion Assessment* to make referrals; those who are homeless on the streets are entered into Crisis Assessment and Referral. Wendy and Heather shared that Harbor Care is fielding a ton of calls for emergency support when they do not have capacity to respond to these needs.
- f. Scott Wellman stated that the reality is that we don't actually have the beds to respond to the needs of those calling our Coordinated Entry phoneline.
- g. Pam Wellman shared information about Family Promise's Diversion program. While they cannot support the needs of every person experiencing homelessness in Nashua, they do have a diversion program which is headed by Joanne who is extremely knowledgeable of resources in Nashua and Manchester. Joanne is currently successfully helping families move to desired destinations of New Jersey and Kansas. Referrals can be made to Joanne at Family Promise for additional homelessness diversion supports, and they can call Family Promise directly to do so.
- h. Wendy LeBlanc suggested that the Coordinated Entry subcommittee tackle this issue with responsiveness in their upcoming meeting on Tuesday February 21, and urged those of us participating in this conversation to attend and share our perspectives.
- i. Bob Mack shared history of coordinated entry phone line and its evolution; we knew it was going to be required by HUD so created a process and set up the phone line. It then morphed into two components – coordinated entry which is the by-name list, and crisis assessment and referral.
- j. Wendy LeBlanc shared she felt it was important that representatives from NSKS participated in this conversation.
- k. Scott Wellman asked for clarity on what is occurring when someone calls. Wendy shared that extensions 1, 2, and 3 ring directly at agencies associated with those needs (domestic violence, veterans needs, etc.). Extension 4 is for those experiencing homelessness, which is then forwarding to personal or work cell phones of those assigned to answer.
- l. Tonia Knisley shared that if we want a better response or system, we need more employees.
- m. Attendees determined that a follow-up conversation with all those involved in Coordinated Entry at next Tuesday's meeting was the best course of action to come up with a solution. Ashley Jackson offered to request TA from Mandy Reagan or someone else at DHHS if it would be helpful.

5. HUD TA

- a. Ashley Jackson updated the group that she heard back regarding the TA Request regarding merger logistics, and they requested a meeting with the GNCOC leads to get an idea of the need. That meeting is scheduled and Wendy, Scott, and Ashley will update the Executive Committee afterwards.

6. Topics for General Meetings

- a. Wendy LeBlanc updated that ICA will present virtually on data at the upcoming March General GNCOC Meeting.
- b. April's meeting will focus on Youth Homelessness and will feature presentations by Stepping Stones, Nashua Public Schools, HEAL, Nashua Children's Home, Heidi Young from DHHS, and United Way. Each will have approximately 10 minutes to present.

7. COC Statewide Leadership Group

- a. Leadership from BoS, Manchester, and Nashua CoCs meet monthly to discuss collaboration, trainings, etc., and have been discussing how to address improving DEI in our continua. Wendy asked what topics would be important to us to address?
 - i. Hannah Stohler responded language capacity/access to services for growing immigrant populations.
 - ii. Wendy LeBlanc responded increased equity in COC leadership, and limited turnover at Executive Committee level.
 - iii. Ashley Jackson responded compensation for COC leaders with lived experience or who identify as BIPOC; learning about best practices.

8. Case Conferencing

- a. Ashley Jackson shared that Manchester COC is putting a training together to report on their new case conferencing initiative. Pam Wellman shared that Western Rockingham COC is doing this as well. Bob Mack stated this is somewhat like what the Elder Wrap meeting is doing.
- b. Concerns around Case Conferencing largely center on confidentiality and releases of information for the individual; Bob Mack stated that the HMIS Partnership documents may protect this.
- c. We determined that we would have follow up conversation to explore what this could look like in Nashua.

9. GNCOC Operations Manual

- a. Ashley Jackson shared that we need to update our GNCOC Operations Manual, Policies and Procedures, and HUD required documents manually.
- b. Wendy LeBlanc asked how we would like to approach this, giving us three options of:
 - i. working through edits as an executive committee during meeting time,
 - ii. form subcommittees for each document
 - iii. have Wendy, Ashley, and Scott draft updates and bring them to the full executive committee for review
- c. The group chose option 3.

10. Other Announcements

- a. Bob Mack shared that the Governor's Council are assessing different issues, but one that rose to the top of the homelessness/housing subcommittee was a need for respite services for folks being discharged from hospitals but not ready to go to shelter/motel placement due to self-care needs. He shared that there are no answers yet from state, but positive news that they are identifying this as an issue and beginning to work on it.
- b. Bob Mack shared that Monahan Manor (formerly Bronstein Apartments) are opening their waitlist at the end of this month. Call Nashua Housing at 603-883-5661 for more information.
- c. Pam Wellman shared that the State has also initiated conversation around increasing more shelter and transitional housing.

11. Adjourn

- a. Wendy LeBlanc adjourned the meeting at 11:07 AM.