



**BARNSTABLE COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

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MEETING MINUTES

CAPE & ISLANDS REGIONAL NETWORK ON HOMELESSNESS POLICY BOARD MEETING

Monday, June 28th, 2021

9:00am-10:30am

Meeting Held Using Microsoft Teams

Members Present: Cassi Danzl, Dara Gannon, Suzie Hauptmann, Lysetta Hurge-Putnam, Jan Kendrick, Chris Lawson, Hadley Luddy, Melissa Maguire, Susan Mazzarella, Jerico Mele, Heidi Nelson, Edythe Nesmith, Greg Quilty, Paula Schnepf, Krystin St. Onge, Mary Waygan, Erika Woods

Members of the Public: Lee Hamilton

Barnstable County Staff: Dan Gray, Martha Taylor

Guests: None

Unable to Attend: Leo Blandford, Martha Burzycki, Andy Clyburn, Cathy Gibson, Megan Homer, Jackie Lane, Eddie Murphy, David Rose, Renee Salisbury, Joe Taylor, Naomi Tavares-Silva, Karen Tewhey, May Willner

Elected Officials: None

Assembly of Delegates: None

County Commissioners: None

1. Welcome and Introductions:

- a. Heidi Nelson, Chair, facilitated the meeting which began at 9:05am. Dan Gray read the following statement: *The meeting will be held through remote participation pursuant to Massachusetts Governor Charles D. Baker's Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law on March 12, 2020. The public will be allowed to view the meeting; but no public comment will be taken. This meeting will be recorded.*
- b. Dan completed a roll call of attendees.

2. Approval of Minutes:

- a. Chair asked for motion to approve meeting minutes from January 25th, 2021- so moved by Lysetta Hurge-Putnam with a second motion by Cassi Danzl.
- b. **Roll call vote-** all in favor, none opposed. Krystin St. Onge abstained.

3. 2020-2021 Winter/Emergency Response for Those Experiencing Homelessness- Heidi Nelson- Chair, Dan Gray- Barnstable County Dept. of Human Services

- a. Winter/Emergency Response Summary Document

Creating a Healthy Connected Cape Cod

The Mission of the Department of Human Services is to plan, develop, and implement programs which enhance the overall delivery of human services in Barnstable County and promote the health and social well-being of County residents through regional efforts that improve coordination of services.

- i. The data from the 2020-2021 Winter has been accumulated and the annual report has been completed (handout).
 - ii. This report has been completed the past three years to submit to elected officials in support of funding.
 - iii. For several years, the Winter response housing resources for the region was increasing the number of individuals accessing the shelter overflow, which was offered in the lobby to as many individuals as they could fit. This practice was changed due to fire code, which created pressure to provide a place for those experiencing unsheltered homelessness to be protected from cold weather. This change led to Jackie Lane from NAMI and Gene Carey from Vinfen to propose a Winter Warming Center.
 - iv. Although the Warming Center model was not able to be launched on the Cape, Sen. Julian Cyr's office was able to provide a \$45K earmark to fund additional hotel bed resources. The earmark was not available for the 2020-2021 season.
 - v. The 2020-2021 report also details the community response to the pandemic for those experiencing homelessness. Resources included showers, food, laundry, bathroom facilities and other basic needs funded by federal, state and local government entities as well as private funding sources. These resources sustained the Winter response throughout the season.
 - vi. There continues to be a need for a long-term solution to Winter Response and the workgroup has shifted to monthly meetings throughout the year to focus on planning for sustainable solutions.
 - vii. Details on funding sources for each program have been listed in the report and charts outlining the data, including total bed nights and individuals served, are also included.
 - viii. St. Joseph's House was able to expand its overflow beds for the season through the use of federal funds and Duffy used the same and additional funding streams for two In From the Streets programs.
 - ix. There are draft recommendations in the report and additional details can be added after review by Policy Board members. One of the recommendations is to identify ongoing funding to pay for overflow beds at St. Joseph's. Other recommendations are to continue a motel response model and to work with the County Emergency Response team to utilize resources available in weather emergencies.
 - x. Edye Nesmith suggested that daytime resources- such as the coffee house, Salvation Army and St. Joseph's Day Program- should be included in the recommendations as the Federated Church will no longer be used as a location for the coffee house.
 - xi. It was requested that the status of day programs for in person activities be reported at the September Policy Board meeting.
- b. Belonging to Each Other- *Gina Torielli*
- i. Belonging to Each Other (BTEO) completed it's 6th season in April 2021.
 - ii. The Board of Directors culminated a year long assessment in 2020 and adjusted how they deliver services to meet the needs of the community.
 - iii. BTEO is 100% privately funded, and the focus is to support those experiencing homelessness in the Falmouth area and the surrounding towns.
 - iv. The BTEO Advisory Committee includes the Chamber of Commerce, the Chief of Police and other key stakeholders.
 - v. The BTEO vision is that no one should be homeless in Falmouth; that those experiencing homelessness are treated with dignity and loving support by volunteers and case managers on a path to stable housing; and they will provide an opportunity for volunteerism.

- vi. BTEO provides services to an average of 26 individuals each season at no charge. Services include transportation, case management, household supplies, socialization opportunities and access to needed medical resources.
- vii. BTEO collaborates with other essential human service providers in the community and helps to connect individuals experiencing homelessness with other resources if they are not a good fit with the BTEO model, which includes sobriety.
- viii. Some results from the past six years include:
 - 1. They have interviewed 364 individuals and have placed 157 in housing.
 - 2. In 2021, they also assisted 5 individuals who were not residents of the program.
 - 3. 87% of program participants in the past 2 years have been connected to stable housing or other programs.
 - 4. Due to less availability of sober housing during the pandemic, more program participants moved in with friends or family than in previous years.
 - 5. Due to demographic trends in past years, BTEO increased the number of beds dedicated to women, which was fortunate as they had a higher number of women than men.
 - 6. There has been an increase in those receiving services who identify their race as something other than “white”.
 - 7. BTEO connected 11 additional individuals to access In From the Streets or other hotel programs.
- ix. In 2021 the BTEO board has voted to provide case management to former clients or others in need, for up to 20 hours per week during the “off season”. They are currently working with 4 new households and have provided referrals to resources for several others. They are also reaching out to clients from prior years to offer support to sustain housing.
- x. For individuals referred for “Community Assist” in the summer, they can provide in person work such as referrals, completing applications, identifying barriers to housing and setting a plan for potential housing solutions. They can also assist with securing a PO Box, increasing income, completing education or training programs, and other activities that benefit the individual.
- xi. BTEO plans to open its Winter housing on November 1st with a 50/50 split in beds for men and women.

4. 2020-2021 Priorities Update- Heidi Nelson, Chair

- a. Over the past four years the Executive Committee has used priorities approved by the Policy Board to guide efforts to improve the homelessness response system in the region. Priorities that were developed in previous years that continue to be part of the focus of the Regional Network include Youth and Young Adult Homelessness, Elder Homelessness, Outreach to the Islands, Employment and Capacity to Respond to Funding Opportunities.
- b. The Policy Board voted to add three new priorities for 2021-2022:
 - i. Coordination of Case Management Across Agencies: A focus group was held with staff members of multiple agencies that provide services directly to those experiencing homelessness. The meeting was facilitated by Vaira Harik, Barnstable County Dept. of Human Services Interim Director, and the discussion included the Coordinated Entry System and how to most successfully move individuals into stabilized housing as quickly as possible. The group was able to identify barriers present in the current system and further discussion will occur to enact recommendations.

- ii. Creation of a Short-Term Subcommittee to Measure Success/Identify areas for Improvement: The Homeless Data To Action (HD2A) committee has been formed led by Alisa Magnotta of HAC and Beth Albert, County Administrator. The committee is gathering data on homelessness and resources at a regional level. The committee plans to utilize available data to identify needs and articulate how to address barriers in order to report to the Cape and Islands legislative delegation. It has been determined that the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) can be used as the database to inform decisions and track progress.
- iii. Planning for the 2021-2022 Winter Response: Details on the planning for the Winter Response were given during the earlier discussion.

5. CoC and HMIS Program Manager Updates- *Martha Taylor and Dan Gray, Barnstable County Dept. of Human Services*

- a. EOHHS has informed the BCDHS that the FY22 Unaccompanied Youth and Young Adult (YYA) Homelessness grant will be fully funded at the same level as FY21- \$492,814.
- b. A highlight of FY21 was the YYA Training Institute which included 9 staff from the Cape and Islands who completed the full year of trainings. Feedback from participants indicated that the staff felt their capacity to work with YYA experiencing homelessness had been improved and the institute overall was a success. There will now be an opportunity for the state to support further rounds of the trainings that can be offered to staff from each of the 10 regions.
- c. For FY22 BCDHS is working with Homeless Prevention Council and a consultant, Point Source Youth, on a Host Homes program centered in the Upper/Outer Cape. The region is currently experiencing a lack of available 1 bedroom housing units, and a Host Homes program could provide additional resources in homes that have an unused bedroom.
- d. The annual US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuum of Care program competition had been cancelled in 2020 due to the pandemic and all programs were funded at 2019 levels with a slight increase to account for change in rent amounts. HUD is indicating the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) will be released within a similar time frame as in past years, which is typically the beginning of July. Of note for this year's program competition, Falmouth Housing Authority has elected to voluntarily reallocate funding for the Cape Regional Housing Initiative program. There will be approximately \$280,000 in funding available for new projects to utilize these funds.
- e. The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) enterprise provided through the Mass. Dept. of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), which has been in use by the Cape and Islands CoC for a number of years will no longer be available for use as of December 31st, 2021. The Dept. of Human Services has signed a contract with Wellsy Corp. for an enterprise that will be fully administered locally, allowing for greater data sharing between agencies and expanded ability to analyze data without needing DHCD to provide information. The transition to the new enterprise will begin in July with the goal of being fully operational by December 1st.

6. Partner Updates

- a. School districts across the Cape received funding for meals programs to continue through the summer. Interested parties can check in each school system's website for distribution locations and dates.
- b. The Sandwich and Falmouth Housing Authorities have Mainstream vouchers available and continue to accept applications.
- c. HUD has extended the CDC eviction moratorium to protect tenants until the end of July.

- d. There is at least 1 room still available for Veteran's experiencing homelessness at the newly opened house in Dennis and 1-2 rooms in the house in Hyannis. Agencies referring a Veteran for these openings can contact the Dept. of Veteran's Services or the Cape and Islands Veteran's Outreach Center.

7. Adjournment

- a. A motion to adjourn was made by Paula Schnepf with a second motion by Jericho Mele.
- b. **Roll Call Vote**- all in favor, none opposed.

Respectfully submitted by: Dan Gray, Barnstable County Dept. of Human Services