

**Morris County Continuum of Care (CoC) Executive Committee Meeting
Sept. 28, 2017
Meeting Notes**

Meeting began at 10:05 a.m.

Voting Members Present:

Mike Armstrong, Community Hope; Jeffrey Bashe, Community Rep.; Terry Connolly, Community Soup Kitchen; Russ Hall, Housing Alliance of MC;; Nancy Magee, Community Foundation of NJ; Jodi Miciak, United Way of NNJ; Kesha Moore, Drew University; Gwen Rippey, Atlantic Health and David Scott, Market Street Mission; Rebekka Zydel – Child and Family Resources.

Ex-Officio Members Present:

Niamh Barker, Family Promise; Joann Bjornson, Family Promise; Bob Davison, MHA of Essex & Morris; Janice Kaniewski, NJ211; Meagan Quinn, MC Office of Temporary Assistance and Patty Sly, Jersey Battered Women’s Service.

Voting Members Absent:

Joseph Gallo, Market Street Mission

Staff and Consultants Present:

Laurie Becker, Shelia Carter, Patricia Mocarski, Morris County Human Services and Taiisa Kelly, Monarch Housing.

1. Welcome and Introductions

All were welcomed and introductions were made.

2. Approval of August 10 minutes:

Mr. Bashe asked for the approval of the August 10 minutes. Ms. Magee made a motion to approve the August 10 minutes and Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion. All were in favor with no opposition and one abstention.

Mr. Bashe explained that there was an appeal by NJAS, whose proposal was scored high but ranked in Tier 2 in order for us to ensure funding to 2 other projects (Safe Haven and Homeless Solutions THP). The appeal was denied by an Appeals Committee following our documented process. A discussion ensued about whether we should stick more closely to HUD priorities when re rank proposals in order to retain maximum HUD funding. The committee decided to address this question prior to next year’s proposal process and to work this year on identifying and specifying our strategic needs more clearly.

Towards that end, there was a meeting with Human Services, Homeless Solutions and the Mental Health Association to discuss changes that could be considered for Safe Haven in order to improve outcomes and cost-effectiveness.

Mr. Bashe will set up the meeting with Homeless Solutions and the Mental Health Association in early Dec. to discuss Safe Haven strategizing.

3. Updates and Open Items:

Feedback/follow-up from CAS meeting (a second co-chair?)

Mr. Bashe stated that there was a good turnout at the CAS meeting. There is one Co-Chair, Niamh Barker, Family Promise, but the committee is still in need of a second Co-Chair. They are hoping to get a senior person in a local agency. Ms. Bjornson suggested that someone from the Office of Temporary Assistance (OTA) could be a Co-Chair. It is up to the individual organization and she does not think this would be a problem for OTA. Ms. Becker will look at the CAS membership and see if she gets any ideas for the second Co-Chair.

Mr. Bashe stated they plan to move ahead with the Nov. 14 meeting. There will be a standard agenda but the meeting will focus on a thorough review of systems performance standards and HUD's scoring tool and how we currently stack up against them.

HUD Submission Status/Next Steps/Timetable

Ms. Kelly stated that the CoC application deadline is today. She submitted it yesterday. HUD may make decisions at the end of the year/and announcements could be in April. (When announcements were made last year.)

Mr. Bashe stated the committee needs to see a preliminary score sheet that will help to understand how HUD sees us. Monarch will provide the preliminary score sheet by the end of this week or next week. Then the EC and the CAS need to figure out how to address the weak areas.

Mr. Bashe stated that the next EC meeting is scheduled for November 16. Since this is the same date as Project Homeless Connect, the EC meeting will be moved to November 30.

Mr. Bashe said that the committee reviewed Exhibit 1 prior to submission and he felt it was a reasonable review process. Ms. Kelly stated that she took the questions on the application and shared with the CAS. They came up with some good points to add to the application. Ms. Moore commented on Exhibit 1 that we should explore the building of more housing. Mr. Bashe asked how many CoCs use their money for developing housing. Ms. Kelly stated that it hurts the CoC to use money for capital expenses since capital expenses are not renewable funding. Russ Hall commented that there is a need to address this problem. The EC has written support letters for Community Hope for VA housing and Pennrose for a Dover project to help them obtain grants for more housing. Ms. Kelly said we should have housing developers do MOU's with us and get folks into housing through the Coordinated Entry. Mr. Bashe stated there are more housing players in the community than in the past. The Morristown Soup Kitchen has helped house twenty individuals in the past year. Other organizations are also trying to get housing for the homeless.

Mr. Armstrong stated that we need money for vouchers, services and more buildings. There is also a need for startup money. Ms. Miciak asked about moving money into service dollars. Ms. Kelly stated if there was a new permanent housing project, service dollars could be included in the budget. Mr. Scott stated that the Market Street Mission is working on

providing more housing to clients that have completed their program. Ms. Bjornson stated we have many partners that can try to work together to raise additional funds. We can bring in foundations and other funders. She asked who was interested in working on this. Ms. Bjornson, Mr. Armstrong, Ms. Connolly, Ms. Rippey, Ms. Sly, Ms. Miciak and Ms. McGee all agreed to work together on this.

Ms. Connolly said it would be helpful to know how much it costs to house a person. Mr. Bashe stated there is a need to look at the whole picture. Mr. Hall stated it would help to look at the private market. Mr. Bashe will set up a meeting on this in the next month or so. He will reach out to Mr. McGuire to see if he is interested. Ms. Moore stated that we need to work together to have influence and leverage more for our community.

Point in Time (PIT) Planning Issues –

Ms. Kelly stated the Point in Time count is set for January 24. On this date, the homeless are asked where they slept the night before (the 23rd). The committee was asked if there should be additional questions on the survey. They collected additional questions and there will be a debriefing meeting with the PIT Coordinator in November. Monarch is working on debriefing from last year. Ms. Carter stated that the only feedback she received was to add questions about out of county persons. Ms. Kelly stated that if an addendum is requested, Monarch could do it. However, the addendum will need to be given to Monarch early in order that they have time to incorporate it into the survey monkey.

The committee must figure out the addendum questions and do training on additional questions. Monarch does the training on the full questionnaire. Last year the Point in Time Coordinators were Ms. Danielle Pera and Mr. Wes Gaynor. PIT coordinators need to be selected this year as well as the liaison with Monarch. Mr. Bashe will reach out to Ms. Pera and Mr. Gaynor to see if they are willing to be the PIT Coordinators. Ms. Kelly stated that the PIT Coordinator develops protocols and planning on how to do the surveys.

Ms. Kelly stated that the PIT data is collected in two ways. Agencies enter information into HMIS or a paper survey can be administered. Once all the information is collected then the analysis on the homeless is done. Ms. Bjornson stated that they get information from soup kitchens, street teams, drop in centers, agency intakes and those that are already in shelters. Question asked about the police, jails and hospitals. All of this should be a part of the planning process. The survey is twelve questions. The first six question satisfy HUD's requirements and the last six questions are for our planning purposes. Additional questions may be added.

Ms. Connelly, Ms. Moore and Mr. McGuire offered to work on the addendum. Mr. Bashe made a motion to add an addendum to the PIT this year adding to the survey a few questions concerning those that are from out of county. All were in favor with no opposition and two abstentions. Motion carried.

There needs to be an initial PIT planning meeting to cover all bases. Ms. Kelly, the Co-Chairs, Ms. Carter, Mr. Bashe and Monarch will have the initial planning meeting.

There was also discussion on the reason the homeless come here. Mr. Scott said that Morris has many services other counties do not have. Ms. Kelly asked what the actual purpose of the addendum is since HUD does not care or want to know about the out of county folks. Mr. Bashe felt that we need to work on strategies to address our particular needs. He thinks the data will be helpful.

Code Blue Update

Ms. Bjornson stated that since the Code Blue law passed it is necessary to have shelters open from Nov. to March when the temperature falls below 40 degrees. There was some thinking the Soup Kitchen or the Drop in Center would work for overflow from the shelters but they are not equipped to handle this. If one of these places was open during inclement weather, it would create another shelter and that cannot happen without money. The law states that if there are more than ten people unsheltered when a Code Blue is called the County has to be involved. Ms. Becker said the County has organized the Code Blue protocol. The coordinator in Morris County is the Office of Emergency Management (OEM).

Mr. Bashe said that this is the County's responsibility. Agencies are trying to work on this but the County needs to be deeply involved. Ms. Bjornson said that Ms. Connolly, Ms. Carpinteri, the Sheriff and herself are working on other options. Ms. Bjornson stated there needs to be a strategy, process and resources. Ms. Kelly said there needs to be a standard procedure and information on locations of shelters. OTA usually places those that are homeless in motels in inclement weather. Mr. Bashe said now is the time to start working on this before the inclement weather. Ms. Becker will talk to Ms. Carpinteri about this. Mr. Bashe asked for a summary of the County's plan of action. He suggested Ms. Carpinteri, Ms. Becker, Mr. Scott, Ms. Bjornson, Ms. Connelly and Monarch meet to discuss a plan of action.

Project Homeless Connect

Mr. Bashe stated Project Homeless connect will be on Nov. 16 at St. Peter's church. Handouts were distributed. The Mental Health Association is the lead agency. Ms. Becker stated that it is important to get all the key players there. Please spread the word.

Atlantic Health Homeless Health Care

Ms. Rippey said AH is working with the Soup Kitchen and people as they leave the hospital/emergency room/jail and are trying to connect them with agencies/services. They are letting agencies know when people are admitted or discharged. The Soup Kitchen has paperwork on many clients and are asking clients to sign release papers so the hospital can have access to their history, needs and medications. Ms. Rippey has brought the community partners into the hospital and are taking social workers out the field and working together to help the homeless. Any agencies that would like to come and visit the hospital please let her know. She can also help facilitate a meeting with other hospitals. Ms. Becker asked if they have worked with the Sheriff. So far, Ms. Rippey said they have not worked with the Sheriff but are working with the police.

DCA Housing First Consortium Update

Mr. Bashe will send out a summary of the accounting of the fifty vouchers. So far, there are only fifteen actually housed, eleven approved and searching, nine pending and two submitted. They are hoping to end up in good shape. DCA has been slow in dealing with the administrative part of the vouchers. There will be a meeting next week with the local office. R. Brown is coordinating a talk with them about speeding up the process. Mr. Bashe stated there are many challenges with DCA. Discussion on some of the problems.

Mr. Hall said that DCA is in a state of denial. The system is not working. Ms. Bjornson asked if the CoC could get involved. There are so many people waiting and some people are dying while they are waiting for housing. Ms. Becker said that it might help to bring this to leadership. Perhaps the CoC should send a letter to the DCA Commissioner. Ms. Kelly suggested a face-to-face conversation with DCA. Mr. Davison said that with the change in administration coming up at this time not much change will occur.

Mr. Bashe suggested that MHA draft a letter expressing their concerns and what is going on. Perhaps the CoC can also endorse the letter. Ms. Bjornson thinks it would be better coming from the CoC and not an individual agency. Mr. Armstrong stated that these problems are part of the separation of housing and services since they are now two entities. It is a more fragmented system. Ms. Bjornson stated that the deadline for the vouchers has passed and after Sept., the administrative money will no longer be available. The folks already approved for the vouchers will get 120 days since their approval to find housing.

4. Committee/Subcommittee Reports

CAS – already covered

Permanent Housing –

Mr. Hall stated they are working on expanding landlords available. He had a meeting with Ms. Carpinteri and they discussed this problem. He asked if the county could be involved in a recognition and support program for landlords. They would like to expand this to entities that would support it. He also presented these issues to the Women's Advisory Council. One member of the Council is a realtor and was very knowledgeable. She suggested reaching out to realtors and property managers. This could be done by hosting a realtor breakfast. They also discussed a possible reallocation of funds. He would like to have the Housing subcommittee sit with Ms. Carpinteri and talk about the scope of the landlord recognition program.

Ms. Moore stated that a landlord survey has been developed. They talked to the NJ Property Owners Association and they are interested in partnering with non-profits. They were asked to send a letter out about this but they did not respond. Ms. Moore's team also did a mail survey and sixty students are doing phone surveys. They were thinking it would be nice to have a small gift card for the landlords that did the survey but it is hard to get gift cards. There will be a Housing Forum Seminar at Drew with Senator Booker on Oct.12. The conversation will be focused on housing solutions.

Coordinated Assessment –

Mr. Bashe stated the presentation Ms. Bjornson gave to CAS on the Coordinated Entry was excellent and really helped the committee understand the process. This has to work in order to get HUD funding. Contact Ms. Bjornson if you have any questions. Mr. Bashe thanked everyone on this subcommittee for their great work.

HMIS Data Quality –

Mr. Bashe stated this subcommittee meets monthly. They have good meetings and meetings are well attended. They developed a standard operating procedure for HMIS. Ms. Delcalzo is the Chair and has done a great job. The HMIS Advocacy state meeting was on Sept. 15. There were many technical matters discussed. Rutgers gave a presentation on an initiative to sensitivity training to the LGBTQ population. This would be a good presentation for a CAS meeting.

Systems Performance Standards and Monitoring –

They are looking to do this at the next CAS meeting along with reviewing the overall score from HUD. Monarch will work on preliminary standards and performance in the New Year. Then the CAS can look at what areas need improvement. Ms. Kelly stated the Data Quality subcommittee has made great efforts to improve the data quality. The information seems to be accurate but there is still a need to develop strategies for improvement.

Veterans Homeless Network –

Mr. Bashe stated they are trying to get the numbers right and developing strategies.

Bridging the Gap Network-Youth Homelessness -

Mr. Bashe stated the community and the county need to coordinate to help identify homeless youth. They are working on getting information from the schools and Zufall Clinic. This committee has determined to date that there are about 70 youth homeless.

Ms. Kelly stated there is no CoC wide effort. Maybe invite this group to our meetings or we should go to their meetings. HUD wants us to work with other systems. Ms. Becker stated it is hard to get the schools engaged. Ms. Kelly said that all need to have better information sharing. Perhaps we need to present what we are doing. Ms. Rippey stated that Morristown Medical Center provides training to school nurses – more training could be helpful. Morristown Medical Center has a website that kids can go on and get help.

Adjournment -

Mr. Russ Hall made a motion to close the meeting at 12:05 p.m. Ms. Connelly seconded the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and no opposition. Motion carried.