

**Morris County Continuum of Care (CoC) Executive Committee Meeting
July 25, 2019 - MCDHS – 1 Medical Drive, Morris Plains**

Meeting began at 10:05 a.m.

Voting Members Present:

Jeffrey Bashe, Community Rep; Russ Hall, Housing Alliance of MC; Gwen Rippey, Atlantic Health; David Scott, Market Street Mission and Rebekka Zydel, Child & Family Resources.

Ex-Officio Members Present:

Allison Delcalzo, Atlantic Health; Joann Bjornson, Family Promise; Janice Kaniewski, NJ211; Laurie Litt, NJAS, Dan McGuire, Homeless Solutions; Phyllis Tonnesen, MC Office of Temporary Assistance and.

Voting Members Absent:

Mike Armstrong, Community Hope; Terry Connolly, Community Soup Kitchen; Kesha Moore, Drew University; Daryl Boone, Citizen Representative

Ex-Officio Members Absent:

Diane Williams, JBWS; Rose Brown, MHA

Staff and Consultants Present:

Amy Archer, Shelia Carter, Patricia MocarSKI, Sharon Yoo, Morris County Human Services and Jay Everett, Monarch Housing.

Others Present:

Erica Pilkington, Jenn Porter, JBWS.

I. Introductions & Approve Minutes

All were welcomed and introductions made.

Ms. Gwen Rippey made a motion to approve the May 23 minutes. Mr. Russ Hall seconded the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and no opposition. Motion carried.

Ms. Zydel asked for mindfulness during this meeting and that, everyone focus only on this meeting and all wear their CoC hats to address comprehensive strategies relating to homelessness in Morris County.

II. Discussion

Morris Advisory Leadership Group

Ms. Zydel stated that the committee has not yet met. Some committees meet close to the EC meeting date and it is hard to get reports in time. At the last meeting, she had to excuse herself since her agency is funded by the county. Ms. Connolly will attend meetings with agendas focused on funding decisions in order to ensure representation.

Megan's Law Implications

Mr. Everett stated that no one he talked to had information. Some have policies and do not allow discrimination and others are hardnosed on Megan's law. There seems to be a mixed bag. Ms. Zydel asked what implications this has for us – it does not seem clear. Mr. Everett said some have different rules because of their locations i.e. they may be near a school. Other programs have scattered site type operations and do not have much discrimination. One agency said they screen people out. The CoC has been talking about how hard it is to house someone with this barrier.

Mr. Scott asked what the situation is across the country. Mr. Everett said that one agency runs a full background check and then tells the landlord working with the person. Other agencies do not tell the landlord. Ms. Tonnesen said that even if the person has a barrier the Office of Temporary Assistance cannot tell the landlord. It is not legal. They cannot even tell temporary housing facilities (such as hotels/motels) that are housing children. There are about ten registered offenders now. A few times this week there were no hotels/motels available. It is a hard situation since they do not want to place a child in a hotel/motel where there are registered offenders.

Mr. Bashe asked what they do in regard to the Coordinated Entry and Megan's law. Ms. Kaniewski said the question is asked. There is no answer how to serve them. Usually clients tell their offenses since they have to report them. They do not have to tell the landlord. Ms. Tonnesen said that Tier 2 and Tier 3 have to report to the police department. Tier 3 means recidivism is likely. Tier 1 does not have to tell.

Ms. Zydel asked if as the CoC we want a broad policy. There is no answer to this problem. We acknowledge this population is a challenge and is hard to serve. These clients are assessed on an individual basis and part of their assessment varies based on their location. Mr. Scott asked if we address this issue, does it put us in a better position with HUD or should we just ignore it. Ms. Bjornson said that since we are working with about ten offenders it is a significant number. She is not sure if it helps to ignore it. Mr. Scott said it is a similar situation to insurance companies. At times, it may be best not to ask if specific things are covered. It may be better to ignore and not tell.

Mr. Everett asked if there is any guidance for the CoC program. Ms. Tonnesen said only one client with a criminal background is mentioned since they manufactured drugs (Meth) and were afraid the client might blow up someone's house. Perhaps there can be some language in the Coordinated Entry that all persons will be served to the extent resources are available as long as they meet the reporting requirement.

Mr. McGuire said that Homeless Solutions does not serve Megan's law offenders. Mr. Bashe said it is an agency-by-agency decision. Ms. Yoo said that HUD has a policy on lifetime sex offenders. Mr. Everett said there are different housing laws and in public housing they always do a background check. Ms. Zydel said maybe we should have something in writing and not penalize offenders. Ms. Tonnesen said she does not think there

is a need for a separate policy for sex offenders. We do not have separate policies for LGBTQ and others.

Mr. Bashe said we are housing first and have low barriers. Ms. Delcalzo asked if we are supposed to have a larger discriminatory policy. Mr. Everett said yes. Ms. Delcalzo said there should be a broader anti-discriminatory policy. We need to look at people individually. Megan's law is something we do not discriminate against. Ms. Tonnesen said that she does not think it is good to mention Megan's law separately. Ms. Kaniewski said we should go out in the community and see what other people are doing. Ms. Zydel said that Mr. Everett already did that. Ms. Zydel will work with Ms. Connelly and bring something back to this group.

Homeless Children & Youth Act

Mr. McGuire said not much happening here. Family Promise is working on it. They are leveling the playing field and the definition of homelessness has changed. Ms. Zydel said this legislation would provide a more flexible, broader definition of homelessness and allow for local priorities.

Ms. Zydel asked the Committee's thoughts. Congresswomen Sherrill sent a representative to our last meeting and is interested in supporting our position. Ms. Zydel stated we need to address advocacy issues on an individual basis given the composition of the committee and respective funding sources. Ms. Bjornson said this was recently brought up at a Housing Alliance meeting. Ms. Rippey asked if it would affect our funding. Ms. Zydel does not think it would affect our funding but it could increase demand (not supply). Mr. Bashe said some people do not meet the definition of homelessness. We want to make it easier to serve the homeless and get more help for them.

Mr. Everett said we are promising to open more access for folks but there is not an increase in availability of housing. Mr. McGuire said with the Coordinated Entry those couch surfing are a lower priority than those that are homeless. Ms. Zydel said that HUD reported a decrease in homelessness and the Dept. of Education showed an increase. If Coordinated Entry is running the way we want, we will still serve the highest priority first.

Ms. Zydel asked if this was something the committee would be behind. Mr. Bashe and Mr. Hall think it makes sense to try to do something about this. Ms. Zydel said if we are able to show the need is growing, there is an argument to get more money. We are waiting to see where this lands and then will reach out to providers. We will put together a position statement from the Executive Committee and then vote on line. Mr. Bashe said there is a lot of material out there. We can find a sample to work from and gather further information.

How Are We Measuring Success?

Ms. Zydel asked if it is dollars or people we are serving or maybe a combination. She would like to have some conversation about the next steps and strategic planning. At the retreat, we talked about strategic planning but it was not our first priority. Let's talk about what success means to this body and what approach we want to use. Is it done at these meetings or is it a

separate piece. This year is a transitional year and we have done some in the weeds work. We need higher level thinking and planning.

Ms. Tonnesen said she is not sure if success is measured by how much money we get but by how much housing we find our clients. People have vouchers and no place to go. How is that success? Mr. Bashe said this is our highest priority issue. We need to lay out a document on this. There are many components. The county does a lot of strategic planning. Mr. Bashe heard Human Services is updating their five-year plan. Ms. Carter said there is a ten-year Homeless Plan and other plans in place.

Ms. Zydel said she sees this as something separate to help us move toward a goal. We need action items and something to guide us and move the work forward. Ms. Tonnesen said we sit around the table saying we need something more concrete. There must be places with more success we can look at. Mr. Hall said the Consolidated Plan is good but does nothing. We need to work within the system and flush it out and fix it. We know there are problems but how do we fix the problems. Ms. Litt said we need to work with housing providers to get more housing. Negotiations can happen. NJAS Housing Manager, Rob, has relations with landlords. Landlords are happy because they have a case manager to help solve problems with clients.

There is a Drew study where they are looking into this. We need to build relationships with landlords. Ms. Zydel said we have great ideas and know what we need to do. We do not have the infrastructure to move forward. That is where a strategic plan would help. Mr. Bashe said that through the Drew study we are trying to attract more landlords to accept vouchers. Mr. Hall said an advocacy plan would be funded to do this. A strategic plan should be collaborative with all agencies working together. Ms. Rippey said there may be a presentation on the landlord study by Drew. All are welcome to be on the committee.

Ms. Delcalzo said this is something that should be in our plan. However, it does not have benchmarks, timelines, or specific information. We should have a list of five things we are working on and where there is accountability. Mr. Bashe agrees we need a written plan. Ms. Becker suggests taking the ten-year plan, reviewing, and updating it. Ms. Carter thinks it is a good idea to enhance and improve the plan and show success. The plan is very much up to date. The same issues have been discussed for years.

Ms. Delcalzo said that two people from CAS are interested in helping to build a Strategic Plan. They are Ms. Manuela Schuster, Employment and Training and Ms. Daniele Pera, Mental Health Association. Ms. Zydel said that is a good place to start and she will follow up with Ms. Delcalzo. Mr. Bashe asked if other CoCs have this document and if Mr. Everett could work on it. Mr. Everett said that some counties did an eight-week challenge to try to house the homeless. In Middlesex, there were 90 people on the chronically homeless list. They wanted to reduce the number of homeless to 65 in eight weeks. They had a time limited measureable goal. They studied the results and took away what did and did not work. They reduced homelessness by 25%. Providers worked together to reduce homelessness. Ms. Zydel will put together a Steering Committee to work on this.

Ms. Bjornson said they are doing advocacy work with the Public Housing Authority on set-asides. There have been some changes with the Housing Authority. We asked the Housing Authority to apply for HUD mainstream vouchers and had success. The NOFA came out and it allows the Housing Authority to apply for vouchers. The application is due Sept. 5. There will be a meeting on August 1 for providers. Information will be provided on vouchers. They will use the county Fair Market Rate (FMR). Mr. Hall is involved and working with the Housing Authority (not DCA). The NOFA says that they can use the Housing Authority's wait list or the Coordinated Entry's wait list. He will find out more at the meeting. Through the Coordinated Entry, the people will be voucher ready. They applied for about fifty vouchers.

Mr. Bashe said that one of the prerequisites to the Homeless Trust Fund is to have a plan in place. It is important. Ms. Zydel said she attended a Build Conference related to Child Care in New Orleans. There was a session on leveraging housing and early Childhood Programs to support families experiencing homelessness. They accessed Child Welfare funding for a rapid rehousing model and partnered with Head Start. Ms. Zydel reached out to Ms. O'Donnell to see if we might partner with them. Mr. Everett said there is something in the application that asks if we are involved with Head Start. Ms. Zydel believes it would be a good collaboration if we are able to work with them.

III. Comments

Committee Questions – None

Lead Agency – Report Provided (Report Provided/Attached)

Nominating/Governance – No Report

By Laws – Ms. Zydel said the draft version is at pro-bono and once reviewed it will be sent out for a vote. The original by-laws and changes will be embedded.

Allocation – Report Provided (Report Provided/Attached)

They met on the 7/19 to provide scoring and provided information to the committee by email vote due 7/31. The committee hopes to inform applicants by August 2. Voting members are invited to stay after today's meeting to have any questions regarding the funding recommendation answered by Monarch.

Community Assistance Services Committee (Report Provided/Attached)

Ms. Delcalzo said there have been some changes – Christine Wolfe, Homeless Solutions left. Jessica Kirchenbauer, NORWESCAP, also left and moved to the Madison Housing Authority. She will stay on with the Provider Group as Chair.

Ms. Delcalzo recommends the EC participate in the Homeless Simulation activity. There was much good feedback from the session. Mr. Everett said it takes about two hours to make the simulation happen. There is a purpose-based outcome and data from across the country. It takes the model of those coming into homelessness and those exiting. You make a decision about your system and map flow as a team. Ms. Carter said it was a very good

session and all learned a lot. Ms. Zydel said that perhaps this could be part of the retreat next year. Ms. Delcalzo feels there needs to be more time spent after the simulation for comments.

Data Quality (Report Provided/Attached)

Youth Services/Child Care Workgroup – No Report

Veterans – No Report

Project Homeless Connect – No Report

Coordinated Entry (Report Provided/Attached)

Ms. Kaniewski said that less people have been attending these meetings. She would like to reach out and encourage people to attend. She thinks the executive level staff should be at these meetings too. Ms. Litt asked if through the Coordinated Entry the person is asked if they identify as LGBTQ. Ms. Kaniewski said the person is asked how they identify themselves (gender question). Ms. Delcalzo said this topic was discussed last year and she wonders if it is relevant whom the person has sex with. Ms. Litt says the LGBTQ population should be identified. It is important to funding. Ms. Zydel suggested Rob, NJAS, provide the appropriate language to be added to the CE assessment at the next meeting.

Ms. Kaniewski said that in general the Coordinated Entry is working. We are able to identify how people are coming into the system and how they are leaving. This is year one and there have been some growing pains and struggles. We are working through the issues and looking at policies, procedures, updates. We are reviewing how everyone is handling each of the pieces and how all are communicating. Ms. Zydel said Ms. Connolly and Ms. Kaniewski have been working with the Coordinated Entry and feedback is happening.

Ms. Kaniewski asked all to review the chart in her report that shows a draft of outputs and inputs so far this year. Many folks are working together (agencies, OTA, etc.) to help fix the problems.

Permanent Housing –

Mr. Hall said this involves the Housing Authority, the CoC and the Drew Community Action Team. The Drew study is done and they did not get as many responses as they wanted but they got a lot of good information. There are 1600 landlords in the county. They sent out 600 surveys to landlords and hoped to get back 310. They only got 55 responses back. Some landlords said it is a good idea to help people. A realtor is involved and will help expand the landlord community. They have goals and want to get Fair Market Rates (FMR) raised.

Mr. Everett said the Representative Mikie Sherrill mentioned raising FMR at a recent session. Ms. Zydel thinks there are some action items. She has some experience attending homeowner's meetings in her town. She encourages all to go to town planning meetings. They want to put in affordable housing and many are against it. Is there something we can do to reduce the stigma associated with affordable housing and vouchers. Mr. Bashe said

that part of the Drew study is to get information out so folks will not stigmatize against affordable housing. Mr. Hall said there are many things we are trying to do. We need to focus on those that are difficult to house. Ms. Rippey said we should keep this on the agenda and try to get the community educated and reduce fear and anxiety against low-income housing.

IV. New Business –

Mr. Bashe said he has been working with Ms. Yoo to address the Homeless Trust Fund with the Freeholders. Freeholder DeFillippo is the Human Services liaison and is working with us on this.

Ms. Zydel said that JBWS reached out for a letter of support for their shelter program. They are looking for help to refurbish half their units. The Point-in-Time results came out. Mr. Everett said they went out to each county. Ms. Zydel said the Division of Family Development finalized their amended policies on Childcare and Homelessness. If a person is experiencing homelessness, there is an addendum to the application that needs to be completed. The person is immediately eligible for childcare for six months and there is no waiting period. If employed you need to submit your employment verification. The person cannot reapply for childcare for a year if they find out there is any fraud.

Ms. Rippey asked who responds to the homeless that are 18 years old. Ms. Bjornson said there is not a specific youth provider and anyone can help.

Ms. Delcalzo said that the Women's Advisory Committee is looking for nominations for the Seeds of Change Award. They are looking for star volunteers. It is a great opportunity to highlight and acknowledge amazing volunteers. The submission deadline is August 15. They are really looking to highlight someone whose efforts transcend paid employment. Ms. Bjornson will send out the information to all.

Ms. Bjornson said that she likes that the agenda was moved around. She feels that discussion piece is most important. Voting members can stay behind if they have any questions.

V. Adjourn

Motion made to adjourn the meeting at 11:45 a.m. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia MocarSKI
Administrative Assistant