

Coulee Collaborative to End Homelessness

Collaborative, diverse, and compassionate individuals working to eliminate homelessness in La Crosse, Vernon, Monroe, and Crawford Counties.

MEETING MINUTES

October 19, 2021

Present: Tenilla Amerine (Couleecap), Ricardo Acevedo (Social Security Admin), Izabel Balk (ILR), Mike Basford (WI Interagency Council on Homelessness), Kristi Bechtel (La Crosse County HS), Sue Bennett (La Crosse Co. Health Dept.), Molly Betts (MHS Health WI), Corey Bournes (BLACK), Randall Brown (CAC, CCEH Vice Chair), Kevin Burch (Catholic Charities), Michelle Burkhardt (Western WI Workforce Dev. Bd), Teresa Byland (La Crosse County JSS, CCEH Secretary), Diane McGinnis Casey (City of La Crosse), Kael Clemmerson (New Beginnings), Krista Coey (Salvation Army), Liz Evans (Great Rivers United Way), Michael Fitzpatrick (ILR), Danielle Fohr (Salvation Army), Kevin Fox (Vivent Health); Isaac Hoffman (LAFC), Kevin Hundt (Coulee Tenants United), Sarah Isaac (DOA), Mary Jacobson (Family and Childrens Center), Abby Jeffers (Couleecap), Lauren Journot (YWCA), Becky Koske (Couleecap), Catherine Lange (Mayo Clinic), Bob Matthews (Catholic Charities), Meredith McCoy (WIBOSCOC), Julie McDermid (The Exchange), Jeanne Meyer (Families First), Sadie Nelson (ILR), Ellen Oligney (ILR), Nancy Parcher (La Crosse Schools), Shannon Parker (Catholic Charities), Danielle Person, John Pesch (La Crosse County HS), Sandy Powell (DOA), Dawn Reinhart (City of La Crosse Planning), Tracy Rieger (Catholic Charities), Jen Roberdeau (YWCA), Amy Schanhofer (Scenic Bluffs), Mark Schimpf (Gundersen/St. Clare Mission, CCEH Chair), Heidi Svee (New Horizons), Robyn Thibado (DOA), Tina Tryggstad (Couleecap), Stephanie Van Hulst (Institute for Community Alliances); Toni Van Kirk (Catholic Charities), Abby Waters (Great Rivers HUB), Billie Wise (Couleecap).

2. September Meeting Minutes – APPROVED.

3. Balance of State Updates – Quarterly meeting coming up in November. Discussion is taking place about whether to hold meeting virtually or go back to in-person meetings. Pros and cons of each were discussed. Work continues on applications. The YWCA will not be funded by HUD after this current grant cycle ends, so Couleecap may be our only funded agency going forward. New Horizons is applying for DV bonus funds for Rapid Rehousing so may be funded in the next cycle. They are hoping for enough to fund 12 units and a Housing Advocate position. Some concern was expressed about loss of capacity if fewer agencies are funded.

4. BOS Dues – Support for the dues increase was unanimous. In terms of structure, no consensus or preference was expressed between the flat and percentage rates. Pros and cons were discussed at length and our delegate got their questions answered. The group chose option C, flat rate for dues.

5. After Hours Plan – The plan was reviewed and several questions were raised. First, there was interest in knowing the status of the Warming Center, especially since it had recently been used as a quarantine site for homeless individuals. Kevin Burch reported that the plan is to resume normal operations for unsheltered individuals on November 1. There is some overflow capacity that will be utilized when the temps dip to 15 degree above zero overnight. The Warming Center is working with the jail, area hospitals and the Salvation Army in an attempt to provide as much shelter as possible over the winter months. Concern about the plan was expressed – it reads as though the community has the ability to shelter anyone in need when that may not be the case – it lists agency phone numbers that are not

answered after hours, and at times people are not given immediate help. In the past people have been turned away from shelters due to capacity issues, which are even more complicated due to COVID. No one had info on whether the North Side Policing Center would be available, Kael Clemmerson offered to contact the police to ask about it. Motel vouchers may be an option. Abby Jeffers offered to get a group together to work on the After Hours Plan to address some of these concerns and develop a better plan. Get in touch with her if you wish to be part of this effort.

6. REACH/RHYMES Updates – The REACH Community Resource Center is up and running. The YWCA is looking for service partners to get involved. The RHYMES Youth Shelter has hired a director.

7. Consumer Advisory Council Updates – Randall Brown reported that the CAC held its first monthly meeting at the REACH Center. Randall and Le Anne both passed their exams to be Certified Peer Support Specialists. The CAC is hoping to network with other agencies to expand Peer Support. Randall said a CAC Liaison is needed with the CCEH, he asked about the status of hiring a new CCEH Coordinator. Kristi and Randall will talk to Dawn from the City of La Crosse to get an update on this. This brought up more questions about the status of the restructuring of the CCEH, which had been a topic of conversation a while back but has fallen off the radar in recent months. More info may be coming after Kristi and Randall speak to Dawn.

8. Agency Updates - Kevin Hundt from Coulee Tenants United –Evictions process being reviewed.

BLACK – Youth advocate Corey Bournes has been hired. They are now taking referrals online. They are looking to hire 3 Americorp workers to also serve as youth advocates. Working with the YWCA to set up a 24 hour hotline.

Ricardo Acevedo from the Social Security office reported that they are open Tuesdays and Thursdays. Anyone who has served through Americorps for 12 months (does not have to be consecutive) can apply for federal jobs on a non-competitive basis.

Heidi Svee from New Horizons – previous capacity was 3 families and 4 singles. New capacity is now 3 families and 8 singles. If they are full, they can place people in motels for 1-2 nights while another plan is developed.

Next Meeting - November 17, 2020. No meeting in December.

Respectfully Submitted,

Teresa Byland, Secretary