

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 20, 2020

Present: Kristi Bechtel (La Crosse County), Sarah Bowman (Consumer Advisory Council), Randall Brown (CAC), Kevin Burch (Catholic Charities), Teresa Byland (La Crosse County JSS), Krista Coey (Salvation Army), Kevin Fox (Vivent Health), Isaac Hoffman (LAFC), Kevin Hundt (Coulee Tenants United), Mary Jacobson (Family and Childrens Center), Carrie Jick (Salvation Army), Becky Koske (Couleecap), Mai Lee (Cia Siab, Inc.), Le Anne Martinez (CAC), Meredith McCoy (WIBOSCOC), Julie McDermid (CCEH), Jeanne Meyer (Families First), Melissa Myers (Workforce Development Board), Ellen Oligney (ILR), Shannon Parker (Catholic Charities), Carol Onstad (First Free Church), Pat Ruda (FSPA), Amy Schanhofer (Scenic Bluffs), Mark Schimpf (Couleecap), Tennille Spears (YWCA), Ryan Stotts (Workforce Development Board), Stephanie Van Hulst (Institute for Community Alliances), Toni Van Kirk (Catholic Charities), Crystal Wright (Student Intern, La Crosse Schools), Fue Yang (ILR).

2. September Meeting Minutes – APPROVED.

3. Q & A with Kristina Bechtel, our nominee for the BOS Board. Mary Jacobson, our current rep, gave a brief overview of the role. Kristi works in CCS at La Crosse County Human Services. She stated that serving on BOS is a goal of her and she is excited about the opportunity. Looking forward to learning, and being a voice for our collaborative. Kristi's wife is an employee of BOS, Kristi reached out to the director of BOS to ask if this would be a conflict. She was assured it is not a conflict because the board does not make personnel decisions. Kristi would step into the leadership of the Youth Advisory Committee on BOS, which Mary currently leads. Mary would step back from leadership but stay involved with that committee. Randall asked what strengths she would bring to the role – Kristi answered that she is action-oriented, willing to do the work. She will volunteer for projects, and is passionate about this work. Kristi wants to advocate for whatever policy changes the collaborative supports. FYI - Kim Cable will remain a delegate of Coulee COC on the BOS.

4. Balance of State Updates:

- Quarterly meeting is coming up on November 12-13. November 12 is a training day. All virtual. Some local decisions have to be made, including voting on Kristi's nomination to the board. Mark will be sending out link for voting electronically. Meredith – anyone can attend quarterly BOS meeting.
- Collaborative packet due to Carrie Poser by November 2. Info for annual HUD grants. Match form needs to be completed for PIT Count. Time and mileage info should be provided. Meredith can be a resource if needed.

- COVID numbers – Carrie asking for weekly numbers – important to get this info in because it affects resources/funding for our region. Julie is on top of it.

5. Housing Authority Updates – Randall – city asked housing authority to apply for vouchers for housing. Current barriers include being unable to connect with landlords, also not sure necessary admin support is in place. Request will be submitted for 40 additional housing vouchers. Kristi - Worried about stability of residents, staff doesn't have ability to provide support to maintain housing. May be looking at connecting with other agencies to enhance this support. Isaac – confirms this is a good opportunity to build connections. The 40 vouchers are for non-elderly, mental health disability, not sure about homeless priority for these vouchers. Julie – looking at how other communities are approaching this. Isaac – clarifying the priorities attached to the 40 vouchers is important. Julie – Peer Support through CAC could be a good resource for people using the vouchers.

6. Consumer Advisory Council Updates – LeAnne – besides herself, Sarah Bowman, Mark Schimpf and Carrie Jick did certified peer support specialist training classes. Randall starts classes next week. Also Amanda Dinger from Families First is in process. Le Anne spoke of her personal experiences and the value that the trained peer support specialists will be able to offer individuals transitioning into housing.

7. Collaborative/Motel Shelter Updates – Krista from Salvation Army reported that SA will be helping to assist people affected by the end of the Econolodge housing. Requirements include: no sex offenders, no one who needs assisted living, no violent crime history.

8. Emergency Shelter Updates:

- Salvation Army reports their capacity is for 45-50 individuals in the building, also hotel vouchers for 5 families. Meal program will continue Monday thru Friday, looking at developing warming service, right now no shower or laundry option for unsheltered individuals.
- Toni – Catholic Charities – The Warming Center will be taking 30 people at night, little different intake process, no families, not sure yet about day services. Short of volunteers. Shelter will be offered on a night to night basis.
- Tennille – Ruth House – get in touch with a case manager for referral, pre-screen. Requirements - 30 days sobriety, literally homeless, connected in community (AA etc). Their usual capacity is 8, down to 4 during covid. Can't require covid testing. Currently one opening.
- No one available from New Horizons. Julie reported they have 5 rooms, one household per room. Reach out to them directly for assistance.

9. Agency Updates:

- CCEH - Julie reports we are nearing the end of Econolodge program, no extension of funding, must vacate at end of month. Working with School district re: needs of school age kids. Pursuing other funding sources. Single people will have to leave. Working

with Salvation Army, some case conferencing will be taking place. Collaborative – strategic plan – lots of work being done by driver team. Hoping to hire landlord liaison. Alternative housing options being discussed.

- Coulee Tenants United - Kevin Hundt reports CTU is taking calls from people who are being taken to court, foreclosures. Thinking about options for creating more housing, finding landlords, HUD staffing issues, community land trust, interested in having conversations on these topics.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Teresa Byland, Secretary