

**Morris County Continuum of Care (CoC) Executive Committee Meeting
March 24, 2016
Meeting Notes**

Meeting began at 10:00 a.m.

Voting Members Present:

Jeffrey Bashe, Community Rep.; Jenni Briggs, Roots and Wings Foundation; Terry Connolly, Community Soup Kitchen; Luisa Fieno, Community Hope & Monitoring Comm.; Joseph Gallo, Market Street Mission; Russ Hall, Housing Alliance of MC; Nancy H. Magee, Community Foundation of NJ; Dan McGuire, Homeless Solutions; Jodi Miciak, United Way of NNJ; David Scott, Market Street Mission; and Rebekka Zydel, Child & Family Resources, Inc.

Ex-Officio Members Present:

Lou Schwarcz, Mental Health Association Morris County; and Patty Sly, JBWS.

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

1. Welcome & Introductions

Mr. Jeff Bashe, Chair, opened the meeting with welcomes and introductions.

2. Approval of January 28, 2016 Minutes

Mr. Russ Hall made a motion to approve the January minutes. Mr. Dan McGuire seconded the motion. All were in favor with no abstentions and no opposition.

3. Early 2016 Priorities and Updates:

Monitoring – Ms. Kelly

Monitorings of CoC funded agencies began this week with Executive Committee team members and Ms. Kelly. They went well and the team provided agencies with some technical assistance. Monitorings will be completed soon. Once completed the monitoring subcommittee will meet to discuss their findings and letters will be sent to the agencies. The Executive Committee will decide if they need to approve the recommendation letters or if the subcommittee may approve them. Ms. Kelly stated she has seen this done both ways but often the Executive Committee wants to approve the letters and be informed of what is going on.

The subcommittee uses the monitoring policy which the Executive Committee approved. Monitorings include review of agency files, financial processes and backup documentation. The monitoring takes about 2 ½ to 4 hours (this includes time for technical assistance). Mr. Bashe, Ms. Fieno, Mr. Hall and Ms. Briggs are members of the subcommittee.

Mr. Scott recommends the subcommittee bring back the monitoring findings to the full Executive Committee for approval. Ms. Kelly stated that there isn't a specific time limit on this. She said that the agency will be informed of any problems or issues that need to be addressed at the monitoring. Mr. Bashe would like the recommendations to be brought back for the full committee's approval. Ms. Zydel believes the board should entrust the

subcommittee to make recommendations and send out the letters. Once the letters are sent the information can be brought back for discussion to the full committee. Ms. Connelly is in agreement with Ms. Zydel and feels the letters should be sent out and then the findings brought back to the full committee. Mr. Scott does not agree and feels the full committee should be involved and part of the discussion before the letters are sent out. Ms. Sly stated that since the agencies will already be informed of any improvements they need to make the subcommittee should wait to send out letters until the full committee meets and discusses. .

Committee member asked if it's a problem for the whole committee to hear the findings. Ms. Zydel stated that if recommendations are presented to the full committee and they endorse the recommendations it would be good. Ms. Becker asked what the providers think and if there is a reason the information should be confidential. Mr. Bashe stated there is concern about whether agency members and non-voting members should be excluded. Ms. Zydel stated that sharing this information might give some agencies an unfair advantage. Further discussion ensued.

Ms. Sly suggested the monitoring subcommittee put together a collective summary and as long as the findings are non-controversial they should be brought to the full committee. She feels the general audit should be discussed openly and anything controversial should be discussed in a smaller group. Mr. Bashe stated that any real issues would be taken up with the agency without airing the information to all. Ms. Zydel stated that if it's a performance issue it should not be addressed here since it might influence the application process. Mr. Hall asked for clarification on whether the agency will be informed of any issues or sent a letter first. Ms. Kelly stated the agencies will be notified of any issues at the monitoring and they will get a letter. The question is if the letters should go out after the Executive Committee reviews and discusses. Mr. Hall stated that the agency is not being reviewed only the program. Mr. Bashe recommends the full Executive Committee approve the general findings and conclusions and then the letters be sent out.

CoC Application 2015 Update and Outlook for 2016 – Ms. Kelly

HUD announced the Tier 1 projects were funded. All those programs will receive funding for renewals. Tier 1 involves approximately \$1.5 and there is no reduction in Tier 1.

For new projects Tier 2 is in the amount of \$300,000,000 nationwide. This funding is very competitive and based on overall score. Not all projects will be funded. Tier 2 may see a reduction since funding is very competitive and based on Morris County's CoC overall score. The lower ranked counties are more at risk of not receiving Tier 2 money. We hope to hear about Tier 2 funding in June. Mr. Bashe stated that this highlights the need for Morris to get good scores.

Mr. Bashe stated that the committee had discussed announcing the Notice for Intent (NOI) for new applications before the NOI for renewal applications. Ms. Kelly stated that she drafted a process for new project applications that involves an application with eleven questions. This is a different application to be filled out separately from the renewal application. Perhaps a smaller subcommittee could look at these applications and bring their recommendations back to the full committee.

Ms. Kelly stated that HUD releases the general information on the NOFA. The 2016 NOFA should be released between April and June; however, release could be later as last year it wasn't released until August or Sept. It is recommended that the committee prepare NOI materials for June anyway. Last year the application process was in May for new and renewal projects even though decisions on the projects weren't made for months. Ms. Zydel stated that if the committee decides on modifying the process they will probably need to get the NOI for new applications out soon or the opportunity for new applicants may be lost.

Ms. Kelly passed out information on new applicants and questions for the new applicants. Mr. Bashe asked what is driving the need to separate the requests for new vs renewal applications. Ms. Zydel says that when the letter of intent is released there is a short turnaround time and there has not been success getting new projects. She believes there have been missed opportunities due to the short turnaround time and that is the reason there were only one or two new project applicants. From a timing perspective there isn't enough time for agencies to do new projects. If the letter of intent for new projects was released earlier this would give providers additional time.

Ms. Sly stated that with the announcement and application for new projects, the funding priorities should be included. Ms. Kelly stated that perhaps a letter should accompany the application stating that the CoC is looking for new projects. The letter could include the priorities and list what type of new projects would be funded. Ms. Kelly will draft the letter to go with the application.

Mr. Bashe asked who needs to approve the letter. He asked if there is any problem with Ms. Kelly drafting the letter and the Chair, Vice Chair and Ms. Zydel reviewing and sending out if all are in agreement. Ms. Kelly stated that if the group approves she can get the letter out in early April with the same deadline as the renewals at the end of May. This will allow at least two additional months for new project. Mr. Bashe asked the NOI for new projects will be publicized. Ms. Becker responded that the NOI will be posted on the website and a public notice will go in the paper in early April.

Coordinated Assessment – Ms. Fieno

Ms. Fieno is part of the subcommittee. The subcommittee has been meeting monthly. They have reached out to Middlesex County, a CoC that has implemented a coordinated assessment. Middlesex shared some information, including working with 211. The subcommittee has homework in between meetings and is doing research. The next meeting is on April 28. Ms. Miciak asked if it costs to work with 211. Ms. Fieno said there is a cost to use 211 but Middlesex was able to get a private funding to pay for this. This might be an eligible activity for a new project that another agency could apply for.

Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) – Ms. Carter

Four out of five applications have been approved. Some agencies have not received their letters yet so the committee cannot discuss. Mr. Bashe stated that he feels this committee should have a say in regard to this funding. He thinks that going forward at least one member of the committee should be involved in the decision process. Ms. Zydel stated that

we need to get a better understanding of what HUD regulations say. Ms. Kelly said that HUD regulations say that funding priorities need to be developed and projects need to be monitored. The committee does have the Coordinated Policy that was developed last year. Mr. Bashe suggested the Coordinated Policy be reviewed and a decision be made on how it affects CoC involvement with ESG. He recommended that next year the committee revisit how it is involved with the ESG funding recommendation and monitoring process. Ms. Carter stated that they expect the agencies to get their award/declination letters in April.

2016 Point In Time Update – Ms. Kelly

The preliminary report has been released and she will forward to be distributed. The final report is not ready for release. From preliminary information, overall across the state those using motels has decreased which could be due to Social Services' stricter motel eligibility requirements.

Ms. Kelly said that information was pulled from HMIS and the surveys. Ms. Kelly stated that it could be that there are less people in need. Members expressed the desire to discuss this survey further to try to figure out what is going on. Mr. Schwarcz said there are a lot of unsheltered on the street that are seen through various outreach programs of MHAMC. Mr. Schwarcz said there is an increase in the unsheltered and no place for them to go. It is hard to get folks into a motel since many are unable to be housed because they don't fit the criteria. Mr. Scott said that the emergency shelter numbers are down but he doesn't understand the reason. They are getting the number of homeless people primarily through the Point In Time. Mr. Bashe suggested that once Ms. Kelly gets the numbers perhaps the group can meet and discuss.

Community Assistance Services (CAS) Report – Ms. Fieno

The group has implemented a format change in meetings. Every other meeting they will break into work groups. In March they broke out into three work groups. One group looked at existing standards, another undeveloped standards and the last group looked at opening doors.

At the April meeting, in addition to updates and announcements the group will discuss which groups they want to continue. The Opening Doors group will probably not continue to meet but perhaps be a part of a subcommittee. The CAS may break out in different ways in the future. They may break into groups based on service area, such as support services, housing, etc. They feel that getting folks more involved will help the agencies become more engaged.

Ms. Zydel is concerned about the time it takes for the CAS to come to a consensus on tasks. There needs to be recommendations from the CAS efficiently communicated to the Executive Committee for approval. If there are times the CAS cannot come to agreement then perhaps the Executive Committee will have to make the final decision.

HMIS Data Collection – Mr. Bashe

Notes were passed out from the meeting. The enrollment is low and it is up to the site administrators to be trained and train their coworkers. Perhaps this should be a standard

practice that agencies need to participate in. In order to improve data quality the administrators should all be required to participate in training. Ms. Briggs stated that everyone needs to be at the table to improve the HMIS data quality. Mr. Schwarz stated it seems there is a data quality problem and a disconnect with what is reported and what is in the data base.

The group had discussion on improving data quality. The Data Collection Committee was created with Ms. Zydel's help. The membership consists of site administrators meeting together. Ms. Genera and Ms. Kelly are also there. It is a very effective and enthusiastic group. At the next meeting, the plan is that one of the administrators will be named chair. These meetings should help improve the HMIS data quality, a weakness in our CoC scoring.

4. Other Business /systems advocacy – Program Standards – Mr. Bashe

Copies of letters of advocacy from the Committee were distributed and discussed. HUD is looking for standards for shelters and housing. They need to look at in depth. Perhaps some subcommittees could work on this and come up with standards.

Partnering with Housing Authorities – Mr. Bashe

The committee needs a working relationship with the Housing Authorities. Perhaps someone can come up with ideas on how to work with the Housing Authorities. Available housing is always a problem. Mr. Hall said he would be willing to help and suggested that maybe a task force be formed. The culture in our housing authority is the ALICE population or the working poor. The issue in Morris County is there are many working poor and not chronically homeless. How much should be set aside for the working poor? Maybe the committee can make a case to bring the Board of Commissioners that 5 – 10% of vouchers should be set aside for the chronically homeless. It is not that way now. Mr. Bashe said that Ms. Bjornson has had some discussion with the Housing Authority to help the homeless and try to get vouchers for them. Ms. Zydel stated if the CoC came to a consensus they could request the Housing Authority try to get more vouchers for the homeless population. They could use a coordinated approach to make a case for this. Mr. Bashe stated that agencies also need to work with tenants and landlords. It needs to be packaged together. Perhaps Mr. Hall and Ms. Bjornson could be involved in this and taking a systematic approach. Mr. Schwarcz would like Ms. R. Brown to also be involved.

Freeholder Communications – Mr. Bashe

Perhaps an update can be given at the next meeting when Ms. Carpinteri is present.

Strategic Planning and Systems Performance – Mr. Bashe

There are two areas on HUD's scoring sheet where we are deficient.

- Systems Performance – currently working on data improvement
- Strategic Planning – Need to update the ten year plan which the committee is currently working on. Anyone with other ideas please email Mr. Bashe.

Ms. Becker reported in Ms. Carpinteri's absence that Ms. Carpinteri has county homeless funding data as well as information from United Way. However, she wants to speak with United Way staff before distributing United Way data.

Mr. Schwarcz stated that the State's transition from deficit contracting to Fee for Service will affect the Mental Health Association's ability to care for the homeless. New Jersey providers and others are monitoring the transition and advocating for what they need for a successful transition.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:38 p.m.