

**Morris County Continuum of Care (CoC) Executive Committee Meeting  
May 26, 2016  
Meeting Notes**

**Meeting began at 10:02 a.m.**

**Voting Members Present:**

Jeffrey Bashe, Community Rep.; Jenni Briggs, Roots and Wings Foundation; Joan Bruseo, MC Office of Temporary Assistance; Terry Connolly, Community Soup Kitchen; Russ Hall, Housing Alliance of MC; Nancy H. Magee, Community Foundation of NJ; and Rebekka Zydell, Child & Family Resources, Inc.

**Ex-Officio Members Present:**

Lou Schwarcz, Mental Health Association Morris County; and Patty Sly, JBWS and Joann Bjornson, Family Promise.

**Staff and Consultant:** Laurie Becker, Shelia Carter, Patricia Mocarski, Morris County Human Services and Jay Everett, Monarch Housing.

**1. Welcome & Introductions**

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

**2. Approval of January 28, 2016 Minutes**

There was one change to the minutes suggested by Mr. Russ Hall. Ms. Terry Connelly should be added to the Coordinated Assessment Subcommittee at the bottom of Page 3. Motion was made by Ms. Jenni Briggs to approve the March 24 minutes with the noted change. Ms. Rebecca Zydell seconded the motion. All were in favor with one abstention and no opposition. Motion was carried.

**3. 2016 Priorities and Updates:**

**Coordinated Assessment – Ms. Bjornson**

Document mapping out Morris County Homeless/At Risk of Homelessness Client Entry & Access of Services Process was distributed. The document maps out how the client enters the system. In the back of it are listed hotlines in all of NJ (Essex Co. is missing). The document illustrates how the Coordinated Assessment works. It is a universal screening tool. Clients are prioritized by need. Those with the highest need go to the top of the list. Some communities have taken several years to develop this system.

Morris is making good progress considering this is only the second year that CoC is working on this HUD requirement.

The Assessment Committee is working on planning and preparation. Most key agencies are participating, but they are looking for one or two new members. This group will be visiting other programs and trying to adapt them to our community. The current recommended approach is a centralized intake system with 211 providing a 24/7 service supported by the Mental Health Association and Family Promise walk-in centers.

HMIS has come out with a release form that we may be able to use. This form has already been approved. This form will allow data to be collected and information to be shared only for the purpose of prioritization of clients. A pro bono attorney helped with the release form and the liability issues. We are not able to record releases, however, 211 is able to record the authorization. Most authorizations will be done through face to face contact with the client. The staff must be trained to do this and every individual client must sign off on the form. Mr. Bashe asked if all were in agreement on this. Ms. Bjornson stated yes although there are some challenges. The biggest concern is what if the agency chooses not to take folks on the list, this may affect CoC's funding.

Ms. Becker asked if there was information available on background checks or if the agency uses their own judgement. Monarch stated that agencies will only accept folks that fit the agencies requirements. Mr. Schwarcz said there is concern over the agency being able to make a decision to accept/or deny folks according to the agency's requirements.

Mr. Bashe asked about time frames for approval of the proposal design. He said this committee will have to sign off on this proposal. Ms. Bjornson said that the recommendation will come in June. 211 will be applying for funding from the CoC to do the screening and assessment.

#### **Program Monitoring Results – Mr. Bashe**

Handout distributed on 2016 monitoring areas of improvement. This will be useful in order to prepare agencies for the HUD audit. Ms. Bjornson stated that she is appreciative of the CoC spending time doing monitoring to help agencies learn. The agencies have learned a lot from the audit.

Mr. Bashe stated that data quality needs to be tightened up. Ms. Briggs stated that the Data Collection Committee is very important and data quality is very important. Monarch stated that there are great recommendations on the list for agencies to follow.

#### **CoC Funding – Mr. Bashe**

Handout distributed on 2015 CoC awards. There were some changes. All Tier 1 was approved and in Tier 2 some projects were not renewed. Family Promise won a bonus for their Housing First Program. The total funding amount was in line with last year. There is a larger planning grant for 2017. This gives us some time to think about how we can most effectively use this grant.

Two DCA grants were not funded by HUD. Mr. Schwarcz stated that since Department of Community Affairs was defunded by HUD the immediate impact is that Mental Health Association will have nine people who would lose their housing vouchers. This is a big concern that needs to be looked at.

Discussion ensued about this. Ms. Sly asked if the Mental Health Association (MHA) applied for the vouchers directly would they have been ranked higher. Monarch stated they don't think it would have mattered. Mr. Schwarcz stated the reality is nine vouchers were lost for the Mental Health Association. These vouchers are for clients with mental illness.

He would like to advocate for these people. For fifteen years DCA got this money and gave it to the Mental Health Association for these vouchers.

Mr. Schwarcz will talk to Monarch directly and try to address this. Ms. Zydel asked if DCA notified Mr. Schwarcz of these cuts. Mr. Schwarcz stated that he just saw this information a week ago and has been trying to meet with DCA. He is hoping to meet with them next week. Monarch stated that DCA only found out about this three weeks ago. Mr. Schwarcz stated that this really bothers him because these folks will end up homeless. It is important to advocate for them.

Ms. Zydel stated that DCA should have notified MHA immediately. It seems the ranking is statewide and not countywide. If that is the case we need to know. Mr. Bashe stated that they ranked one new project over a prior project. There is a need to have a better understanding of this all and get some answers. Perhaps Monarch can get HUD to extend this for a month or so. Mr. Schwarcz is asking for a committee to work on this with him. This is a Mental Health Association problem but also a community problem. We need to find out how much time we have. Mr. Everett, Monarch, stated that he thinks the vouchers will expire on 12/31/16 but he will verify this with HUD. Monarch should send information to DCA in regard to this. They will let us know who to meet with at NJDCA. The committee was in agreement with these suggestions.

#### **CoC Status and Plan – Ms. Carter**

The Notices of Intent (NOI) announcement is out and both new and renewal applications are due on June 17. The New Project and Renewal Project information is on the Morris County website.

The CoC submitted their application for 2016. Information went out to all agencies to verify (see the Grant Inventory Worksheet). All information was verified and should be correct. Information was submitted to HUD. The CoC will be able to participate in the HUD reviews. HUD and SNAP offices will both review. They will return and verify information and let us know if any problems. Final approval on the Grant Inventory Worksheet is due back to us by June 27. Next will have to do the actual application.

Monarch expects the NOFA to be released the end of June. As soon as they receive all letters of intent (June 17) they should be working on doing the review process and schedule presentations. There is only 60 days to get this done from when the NOFA comes out.

Mr. Bashe stated that the 2015 grant for Hope House for rapid-rehousing needs to be re-assigned. Hope House doesn't expect to spend the grant. They are questioning if they should sign the contract if they don't expect to spend the money. This involves \$49,000 that perhaps another agency is interested in. This money is for rapid rehousing.

Ms. Carter stated that Ms. Kelly suggested Hope House should take the money so the county doesn't lose it. Once the county gets it the money can be transferred to another agency. Ms. Zydel suggested that perhaps they can do a modification for six months and then transfer the funding to someone else.

Hope House agreed to sign the grant and then will need to talk to community members to see if another agency is interested in taking it over. If it is transferred to another agency they may wish to make some modifications, but at least there will be a signed grant and the money is available to the community.

Ms. Carter stated there is a Technical Assistance Session on June 2 and perhaps at that time this can be addressed. Mr. Bashe stated that Hope House needs to attend the technical assistance session and sign the agreement.

### **Emergency Solutions Grant Recommendations – Ms. Carter**

Distributed the funding recommendations. Everything recommended is the amount that was requested. Since there isn't a 2016 contract with HUD yet, until the contract is received these are only recommendations. The HSAC will still have to review and approve. Next year would like to work with the HSAC on this more. Mr. Bashe and Ms. Becker will develop a plan for this.

### **2016 Point In Time Update – Mr. Everett**

Distributed copies of the 2016 results. In 2015 Morris County had 384 homeless people and in 2016 there are 410 homeless. This is an increase of 6.8% or 26 persons. It is a small increase but doesn't look good on our performance record. Uncertain why this increase occurred. Possibly it's due to the weather. There were 245 persons and 242 households. That is an increase of 17 households. Veterans' numbers also went up. HMIS data is used to find the folks in shelters and transitional motels. The County and Data Committee is also consulted in regard to duplicates.

### **Community Assistance Services Report – Mr. Bashe**

Ms. Fieno is working with the committee to be as effective as possible. There are work groups every other meeting. They are looking at program standards. At the last meeting there was not a high attendance. Perhaps it's difficult for some to attend since there are so many meetings. Mr. Bashe and Ms. Fieno will meet with others to develop a revised CAS model.

### **HMIS Data Committee Report – Mr. Bashe**

There is a new Chair, Ms. Allison Delcalzo. She has taken her duties to heart and is trying to understand the client entry procedures, etc. Not all agencies that submit HMIS data attend the meetings which is a problem. The committee would like attendance to be mandatory for the 19 agencies that utilize HMIS data with a strong statement made at the Data Committee meetings that attendance should be mandatory.

It is important that agencies funded by the CoC have a seat at these meetings. A letter should be sent from the EC to agency directors requesting the site administrator attend the meetings. HMIS training will be done at these meetings. The Data Committee is planning training specific to Morris County. Need to get people to attend.

It was recommended that each agency should have an alternate that can attend the meetings.

Mr. Bashe stated that the Data Committee is working on the roles and responsibilities of the site administrator. There should be more consistency now since there is a dedicated chair. Ms. Carter stated that the trainings will be built into these meetings which will be helpful. Mr. Bashe stated the notice will go out for the next Data Committee meeting shortly. It is very important to get everyone's support.

#### **4. Other Business/System Advocacy Housing 1<sup>st</sup> Application – Mr. Jeff Bashe**

Like to commend the Mental Health Association for pulling together the proposal for 50 rental assistance vouchers. There are six agencies in the consortium. The proposal is almost ready to go. They have done a great job. Thanks MHA for all your hard work.

Mr. Schwarcz stated that in regard to the Morris County Permanent Housing Consortium the MHA will chair the Steering Committee which consists of six agencies. They applied for 50 vouchers. MHA sees itself as the facilitator. They are optimistic that they will get the money since they have a collaboration with the county and the county has a good reputation. DCA is commended for doing this. Community Hope is doing their own application as well. This could be more money for veterans in Morris County.

Mr. Schwarcz stated that he got more information last night that he will incorporate into the proposal. It is being submitted tonight and is due tomorrow.

#### **Partnering with Housing Alliance/Housing Authorities – Mr. Bashe**

There is a lot of cross over membership between the EC and the Housing Alliance. At the last HA meeting it was voted to work collaboratively on advocacy issues. This is a good entrée to the Housing Authorities and opens doors to collaborate with the Housing Authorities on use of vouchers. Mr. Bashe and Mr. Hall will explore the benefits of creating a new CAS Permanent Housing sub-committee.

#### **Project Homeless Connect – Ms. Becker**

Met with Lisa Falcone and Anna Ribeiro, MHAMC and they made good progress. St. Peters Church is secured for Dec. 1. There is a \$100 fee for the use of the church. The event is back to the usual time of year. Discussed resources needed to make this event successful. Need to get lots of goodies: coupons, socks, coats, toiletries, bags, etc. Need to make a wish list of items collecting. Ms. Becker has put a wish list together and will send it out to the committee. Like to get a lot of items for this event and widely promote the event. Ms. Becker will email information out and get it on the county website.

Mr. Schwarcz stated that MHAMC has been running this event for 10 years and more support is needed from the community. They are taking financial donations and collecting give away items. Would like to get media coverage. It is also helpful in breaking down stigma and aiding people to understand the things the community providers do. In addition to other items mentioned they are collecting sleeping bags. There are usually a few hundred folks that show up so they need 250 or more items. It is not only the homeless that come to this event. Ms. Becker spoke with Ms. Bjornson and will inquire to OTA to determine if there is help with transportation for the event.

**Freeholder Communications –**

There appears to some individuals who would like to influence the Freeholders not to accept HUD money. Ms. Becker stated that the Freeholder meetings are open to the public and all are welcome to attend the meetings. Mr. Schwarcz stated it is important to educate the Freeholders where HUD money goes. Mr. Schwarcz stated that perhaps it would be a good idea for some providers to speak at the Freeholder meetings. Ms. Becker suggested he call or email Ms. Carpinteri about next steps.

**Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 12:10 p.m.