

Morris County Continuum of Care Executive Committee Meeting
July 23, 2015
Meeting Notes

Meeting began at 10:05 a.m.

Voting Members Present:

Jeffrey Bashe, HSAC; Joan Bruseo, MCOTA; Joseph Gallo, Market Street Mission; Jodi Miciak, United Way of New Jersey; Patrice Picard, Cornerstone Family Programs; Rebekka Zydel, Child & Family Resources, Inc.

Ex-Officio Members Present:

Mike Armstrong, Community Hope; Lou Schwarcz, MHAMC; Patty Sly, JBWS.

Guests: Taiisa Kelly, Monarch Housing.

Staff: Shelia Carter, Patricia Mocarski, Morris County Human Services.

1. Welcome & Introductions

Ms. Rebekka Zydel, Chair, opened the meeting with welcomes and introductions.

2. Approval of May 28, 2015 Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes was made by Jeff Bashe and seconded by Patrice Picard. All were in favor with one abstention and no opposition. Motion was carried.

3. 2015 CoC Funding Status

Ms. Kelly stated that the Super Notice of Funding Availability (SuperNOFA) is not yet released and we are expecting it by the end of next week. There is a need to plan the date for the review committee to meet. The committee discussed having the meeting in early August. Ms. Miciak offered to send out a doodle to try to figure out the best date for this meeting. Once the date is established packets will be sent out. Ms. Kelly stated that if released next week there will be a September deadline.

Ms. Kelly stated that HUD has sent information on rescoring with more emphasis on performance and assessment. Last year HUD was impressed with the quality of our applications and we are hoping the same will be true this year. The County of Morris, current lead agency, received all renewal and three new applications.

Ms. Sly stated that she thought the reason for having non-voting members was to get their feedback and knowledge. Why is it this information isn't going to be shared with voting and non-voting members. This way the non-voting members have a chance to give input.

Ms. Zydel stated that she thinks the concern is the conflict of interest. She agrees the committee needs the non-voting members' knowledge. However, if there is a conflict of interest – at what point is it a conflict? Someone receiving funding will be aware of information about other applicants. There is a need to balance that. Ms. Kelly stated that

HUD states the conflict of interest is a big piece – agencies involved in funding or that might apply for funding cannot participate in the review of projects.

Ms. Zydel stated that the meetings prior are important. The discussion and information sharing are valuable and their input and information is helpful to the committee. Mr. Armstrong stated that in these type of situations usually the committee gets information from the non-voting members but anyone in conflict is not involved in the review process.

Ms. Carter stated everyone has been notified that we are waiting for the HUD SuperNOFA to be released and will be coming up with a date for committee review within two weeks of its publication. Ms. Zydel added the technical assistance session was held and agencies were notified.

Ms. Picard stated there would be an unfair advantage if other agencies that were going to apply for funding hear or share information that may influence the group. Ms. Sly stated then she is not sure why there are non-voting members. Perhaps they should not be on the committee or just participate in the Ten Year Homeless Plan.

Mr. Bashe stated that their partnership in the community is to try to help. Having the non-voting members around the table, giving input and providing a voice. Once the by-laws and other things are more set – things will change. The process is just beginning and may get worse before it gets better.

Ms. Zydel believes the non-voting members do have a voice and influence. Ms. Carter said that when the committee established the funding priorities the non-voters gave their input on what they felt was important in prioritizing funding.

Mr. Bashe suggested that maybe there should be a separate group that does strategic planning. He said this will keep it fresh and keep discussion on the table. They need to work on the Ten Year Homeless Plan. He suggests this topic be a standing item on the agenda. Ms. Miciak said there have been subcommittee meetings. One subcommittee that has been meeting on the Coordinated Assessment.

Ms. Zydel said the committee needs to set up a few dates probably the second week in August would be best. Mr. Schwarcz asked how much has the work the group has done strengthened our ability to get a higher score. Ms. Kelly said that the group has made good progress and done a lot of what HUD is looking for. The committee's work will strengthen the points we get. HUD told us to get this in place and we did. Ms. Zydel stated the committee will know better after we receive our score. This work should strengthen our score and get us more points and that means more money.

Mr. Schwarcz said Mental Health Association of Morris County (MHAMC) got a letter telling them PATH funding is proposed to be cut by 25%. PATH (Projects for Assistance in Transition for Homelessness) are the homeless outreach services from DMHAS. There is a half million dollars or so that go to Homeless Outreach for the mentally ill.

MHAMC provides case management for these homeless. It is their biggest program. They also have twenty beds at the shelter and a full time outreach worker. They are in the process of drafting a letter to Congressman Frelinghuysen and the Senate in regard to this. Mr. Schwarcz would like to forward this letter to Ms. Carter and asked if this committee might send a letter of support for MHAMC. MHAMC current has 8 full time managers that serve 400 homeless people. These cuts will have a significant impact on the homeless in Morris County.

Ms. Zydel asked what this means to our system. What would it look like in Morris County – would it be more people on the Morristown Green? Does it mean there won't be anyone to call and outreach workers won't be around to go out to see people on the street? Mr. Schwarcz said that the county government gives them \$14,103 for Edna's Haven homeless resources until the end of 2015 and they have in kind in the amount of \$12,000. They will have to fund raise to get additional money. They recently got \$10,000 from fundraising toward programs in jeopardy. MHAMC thinks they will be ok this year and next year provided they continue to get the county funding. Mr. Armstrong stated that we all want to stay in the game and try to hold on. He doesn't think anyone will get more money but all are trying to hold on to what money they now have and get their ducks in a row.

Mr. Schwarcz will forward Ms. Becker and Ms. Carter a sample letter that can be used in regard to supporting MHAMC and PATH funding. Letters could be sent from members or from the Executive Committee from a systems perspective. Ms. Zydel will draft a letter to go to the Committee for their feedback. Ms. Becker stated that it will have to be adjusted to fit our purposes.

4. Updates:

- **By-Laws**

Mr. Bashe stated that two drafts of the By-Laws were done and Ms. Kelly pulled them into one. Ms. Carter suggested that in Ms. Becker and Ms. Carpinteri's absence this vote be held over until the next meeting. There is no immediate hurry on this since the committee already has a set of existing By-Laws. Ms. Carter thanked those that helped with the updates as they did a great job. Ms. Zydel stated there was a change in the membership piece. Mr. Bashe stated that in some places redundancy was removed and some areas were simplified for easier reading. Ms. Miciak stated that they also changed the order of how it read and changed the name of the CEAS CoC to CAS (Community Assistance Services Committee).

Mr. Bashe said they were considering adding more committees but decided to leave things as they are and add on committees as needed. Ms. Carter said there are two standing committees and asked if the CAS is a subcommittee of this committee. Ms. Kelly stated that the CAS is a subcommittee of the CoC and they report to the Executive Committee. Mr. Armstrong suggested Ms. Kelly make some type of a flow chart to help explain this. Ms. Zydel stated that there is the

Nominating Committee, Allocation Committee and the CAS with their own set of rules.

Ms. Miciak drew a flow chart to try to help clarify this. The flow chart had a circle with the Executive Committee on the top – as the decision makers. The CAS was on the bottom (which also has subcommittees). The CAS presents recommendations to the Executive Committee. The whole circle makes up the Continuum of Care.

Ms. Zydel asked Ms. Miciak to make up a flow chart to distribute to the committee. Ms. Sly has notes and suggestions she will send to Ms. Miciak. Ms. Carter suggested this be tabled to the next meeting and any questions be directed to Ms. Miciak.

- **Monitoring**

Ms. Kelly said that Monarch will be doing the monitoring probably in the late fall. The policies are being or need to be rewritten to reflect that the lead agency or approved third party contractor can do the monitoring. Ms. Kelly stated that the group needs to vote on the monitoring tool. It needs to be sent out and voted on.

- **Appeals**

Ms. Miciak stated that this was voted on at the last meeting.

- **Coordinated Assessment**

Ms. Miciak stated this committee met last month and their next meeting is Aug. 6. They are sending out the assessment to agencies and it seems to be working pretty well. The agencies are sending it as well and calling to speak with the client. They spoke with a pro bono lawyer in regard to the confidentiality and verbal release information. They asked how to go about getting a verbal release. They are still working on this. Ms. Zydel stated it was a great conversation with the lawyer and the committee explained their concerns.

The issues are twofold. There is the privacy law which this attorney can help with. However issue two on the liability side she suggested conferring with another attorney more knowledgeable in the liability law. The committee's primary focus is the privacy law and having the form available and the staff trained. During the assessment piece they are gathering information but not verifying it. The attorney will work with the committee on the tool and be sure it is in compliance with the privacy law. She will also help develop the transcript. The liability law comes into play in the verification process.

Mr. Schwarcz stated that the MHAMC may still have an issue since they have standards they have to meet and DMHAS regulations to follow. He is not sure they can get away with only having a verbal release.

Ms. Miciak stated that they are honing in on a single entry person and process since this makes the most sense. Mr. Armstrong stated that the problem is in sharing information with anyone else they need a written release.

Ms. Kelly stated they spoke with A. Hillson, HMIS, and they have agencies that are allowed to take verbal releases, but then the agency have to sign off that the client agreed to share their information. Mr. Armstrong said some are not comfortable with that because the agency may end up liable. Someone in intake collects data and they always get a signed release for a certain time period and can't send out information without the written or faxed signed release.

Ms. Zydel said that is why they are speaking with an attorney since this process is a challenge. They need to know what responsibility the CoC has for the privacy law piece and what responsibility the entity has for the liability piece. They will continue working with the attorney on the privacy law piece to see if it will meet our needs.

Ms. Miciak stated that perhaps there can be multiple points of entry with social workers in the community that can get a written release. Or there can be a single point of entry with a centralized intake. The committee needs to assess the needs and find out what will work best. Ms. Zydel said that perhaps an option would be for the agency can get a recorded consent. That would offer more protection. Ms. Sly said relying on a verbal release is still a liability and their agency is being encouraged not to do that. Mr. Bashe said he is surprised the committee is not pushing for a single point of entry. It seems ideal for the client to only have to go to one place.

Ms. Zydel said if people are not comfortable with a verbal release the alternative might be to have a few places clients can go to sign a written release. Perhaps clients could go to either Edna's Haven or Our Promise. But staff would have to be provided at these sites. They can use 211 for off hours. Ms. Zydel said there is a need to try to get this to work with the system we currently have. Perhaps a combination might be best with use of 211 and a couple of physical places the client can go and sign the release.

- **Conflict of Interest**

Ms. Zydel said once it is approved it needs to be signed. Ms. Picard isn't sure if she has a conflict of interest or not since Morristown Neighborhood House has some children in their childcare programs that are from Homeless Solutions. Ms. Kelly doesn't think she is in conflict since she made the committee aware of this.

Ms. Zydel stated at the next meeting there will be a vote on the updated by-laws, monitoring tool and disclosure on the table about Ms. Picard. Perhaps she can recuse herself from voting. Some discussion ensued on this. Ms. Zydel stated there is no materiality here and Ms. Picard has disclosed her situation and the committee is in agreement.

- **CoC Report** - No report

5. New Business – None

6. Old/Other Business

Mr. Bashe asked where the committee is in regard to membership. There are a few slots that need to be filled. It was suggested that the committee wait until the revised by-laws are completed. Perhaps after the next meeting this can be discussed.

Mr. Armstrong suggested that all items that need approval should be first on the agenda and then funnel it down. He thinks it is best to try to keep the important stuff at the beginning.

Mr. Schwarcz said they are honoring Ms. Betsey Hall for her leadership role in our service system. The event will be held Oct. 5 at 5:00 p.m. It is a celebration for her 20 years of service to the community and for her help with the 20 beds they have at Homeless Solutions. He will send out the invitation..

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:22 p.m.