

**Morris County Continuum of Care (CoC) Executive Committee Meeting  
May 25, 2017  
Meeting Notes**

**Meeting began at 10:05 a.m.**

**Voting Members Present:**

Mike Armstrong, Community Hope; Jeffrey Bashe, Community Rep.; Terry Connolly, Community Soup Kitchen; Joseph Gallo, Market Street Mission; Russ Hall, Housing Alliance of MC; Nancy Magee, Community Foundation of NJ; Jodi Miciak, United Way of NNJ; Kesha Moore, Drew University; Meagan Quinn, Morris County Office of Temporary Assistance; Gwen Rippey, Atlantic Health System; David Scott, Market Street Mission; Rebekka Zydel, Child & Family Resources, Inc.

**Ex-Officio Members Present:**

Joanne Bjornson, Family Promise of MC; Dan McGuire, Homeless Solutions; Patty Sly, Jersey Battered Women's Service; Bob Davison, Mental Health Association.

**Ex-Officio Members Absent:**

Jennifer Carpinteri, MCDHS

**Staff and Consultants Present:**

Laurie Becker, Shelia Carter, Patricia Mocarski, Tim Tansey, Morris County Human Services; Taiisa Kelly, Jay Everett, Monarch Housing.

**Others in Attendance:**

Rose Brown, MHAMC; Janice Kaniewski, Gina Plotino, NJ211; Susan Rosenbloom, Drew University.

**1. Welcome & Introductions**

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

**2. Approval of March 23 2017 Minutes**

Mr. Bashe asked for the approval of the March 23 minutes. Mr. Mike Armstrong made a motion to approve the March 23 minutes and Mr. Russ Hall seconded the motion. All were in favor with no opposition and one abstention. Motion carried.

**3. Updates and Open Items**

**CoC/NOI next steps/timetable; feedback from TA session – Monarch**

Mr. Bashe stated that they had the Technical Assistance session and there was some good dialogue. There are still some unresolved questions.

Mr. Everett stated that due to the timing of the NOFA there are usually three steps in the application process. HUD sends the registration, next is the review step (due to HUD June 2) and then the application. The grant inventory worksheet is due on June 9. Thinking the NOFA will be released the end of June.

The 2017 NOFA release and CoC application schedule are still uncertain. The committee will have to review after the NOFA is out. Hoping to schedule the agency presentation session for the first week in July with ranking meeting within the next few days. If there are delays, this time frame will have to be adjusted. Mr. Bashe will be away July 18-28. He will poll members for their availability in June/July/August.

Mr. Bashe stated that he expects all the committee to serve on the review committee unless they are in conflict. Mr. Everett stated that once the NOFA comes out there will be a Technical Assistance session to help everyone understand the process. Then reviewers will have to meet to hear agency presentations and score/rank the proposals. These sessions can be done in one day or there may need to be at least two meetings. The committee has about 30 days from the due date to notify folks.

Mr. McGuire asked about the new category, Transitional Housing and Rapid Re-Housing (TH and RRH) would like to know since Homeless Solutions may make another application. Ms. Kelly stated there will be a lot of details in the NOFA and after it is released there will be more information.

Ms. Kelly stated that May 30 the Notice of Intent was due. These will be compiled and distributed to reviewers by the County.

**Point-in-Time (PIT) Count – Ms. Kelly**

The full PIT report is not yet available. In general, the numbers are good. Mr. Bashe asked Ms. Kelly to find out where we stand. It appears that many folks (last year 36%) were from out of county. Mr. Everett stated that for 2017 it looks like about 42% are out of county or did not specify where they were from.

Discussion ensued. Ms. Kelly stated other counties have the same problem. The question is how to address this problem. Some counties try to return people back to where they came from. Ms. Quinn stated that OTA gives people bus tickets if they want to go back to where they came from. However, it is their decision and many want to stay. Many come to Morris to use the soup kitchen, drop in center, and other services. If we want to decrease this number, we need to identify the reason for the increase and may need to look at doing something about it.

Mr. McGuire provided a preliminary analysis of 2016 data on homeless moves in and out of the county. Mr. Bashe has requested this information for 2014 and 2015 and we will get 2017 data with the full report. If there is a clear trend on net inflows from other counties, we need to fully understand any implications and determine appropriate actions. Ms. Bjornson stated that once we have the Coordinated Entry this could address this and a policy developed. Priority will be given to people from Morris County. Perhaps we can talk to other counties to see how they reduced their numbers. This could also lead to discussions with HUD and others. This will be discussed at the Management Team meeting.

### **Discuss Proposed Changes to CAS Role/Attendance & Role of Provider Resource Committee –Mr. Bashe**

CAS is still struggling to find an identity and purpose. Mr. Bashe believes there was an agreement that the recent role statement, which makes CAS the hub for the CoC subcommittees (including the revived Provider Resource Committee (PRC), which is doing good work) and a key reviewer of CoC subcommittee work, still makes sense. Not sure that the right people are in the room or that there is a two-way information flow. Some suggestions for improvement to the CAS were a more focused and meaty agenda, more senior agency representation, making it an educational forum, less meetings, etc.

Mr. Bashe will draft a job description for CAS representatives that will reflect the group's purpose. After the description is reviewed and finalized, he will request that each CAS member agency consider this when designating a CAS representative. Mr. Bashe requested that agencies now sitting on the EC consider nominating a person who could chair CAS for the next twelve months.

Ms. Becker suggested that the Cross Systems Committee might serve the CoC as a CAS alternative. Perhaps the two groups can be combined. The Management Team will review this.

### **Code Blue Update – Mr. Bashe**

Mr. Bashe stated the Code Blue law passed and was signed with no funding attached. Ms. Becker stated that Morris has an emergency sheltering protocol in place already that appears to meet the requirements. The Department of Human Services and the Office of Temporary Assistance (OTA) are instrumental in activating the "code blue" emergency sheltering plan for Morris County. OTA coordinates with the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and the municipalities to be identify the warming centers that are open when there is a Code Blue. OTA also offers motel placement for some homeless individuals.

Mr. Everett said that if a Code Blue were to happen, it would be important to find out who the folks are that are coming to the warming centers and how to link them to the Coordinated Entry. There is a need to find out if there are geographical gaps in services and if there any areas that are not opening warming sites. Ms. Bjornson and Ms. Connelly will work together on a potential Code Blue warming site at Our Promise.

### **County ID Cards Update – Ms. Becker**

Ms. Becker stated that the County Clerk decided not to provide County ID cards for adults ages 18-54 years. ID cards are very important for treatment and services. Ms. Carpinteri will be sure there is an alternate way County ID cards to be provided. Ms. Kelly stated that the Division of Motor Vehicles will issue people a free ID. You can get a free birth certificate from Trenton if you are born in New Jersey. Ms. Connelly stated this would affect vouchers since vouchers cannot be given to people without a County ID. Ms. Becker stated that Ms. Carpinteri should have an update very soon on the new process.

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

The Mental Health Association and the Department of Human Services will take the lead on Project Homeless Connect and planning will begin shortly.

### **Atlantic Health Homeless Healthcare – Ms. Gwen Rippey**

The AHS/MMH-led health initiative is trying to reduce barriers and ensure that the homeless have access to health services. Atlantic Health has some things in place. They will not send people back out on the street. Comment made that Atlantic Health has been very helpful to the homeless and through their efforts, lives have been saved.

The Zufall Center now has access to Atlantic's records and Atlantic has access to Zufall's records. They have figured this out so that records can be moved and accessed. They are retraining physicians so they can access records from each another.

They have met with Homeless Solutions, the Soup Kitchen, Family Promise and other organizations and are working on barriers and concerns. Mr. Bashe will explore this further with Ms. Rippey. Mr. Bashe feels this is something the CAS should be working on.

### **DCA Housing First Consortium Update – Mr. Bashe**

Mr. Bashe stated that Morris County got 50 vouchers but only about a dozen of them are leased up. The DCA Housing First Consortium is still struggling with this. Ms. Bjornson stated there are many challenges. There are many applications pending. There are six that just were approved and six more to be approved by June. The Permanent Housing subcommittee is focusing its efforts on finding properties/landlords for these clients.

Ms. Bjornson stated that Family Promise is giving landlords a \$1,000 sign on bonus from to encourage them to accept vouchers. They have also gone out and talked to landlords to try to work with them so they will not evict a tenant. Mr. Hall stated that they are trying to get a meeting with DCA to talk to them about the lack of housing in Morris. Even if there was housing, DCA makes it difficult to get approval. Mr. Everett asked if DCA can give us more flexibility or if they can give the landlord extra money as an incentive.

Ms. Bjornson stated that counties vary and some have more housing available. Once Morris has the Coordinated Entry, clients will have their IDs and information already and the application process for DCA vouchers will be easier. Mr. Bashe stated that if folks are not leased up by Sept. 28 Morris will lose these vouchers. He will talk to Ms. Brown to work on this.

### **Affordable Housing FH Presentation – Mr. Bashe/Mr. Hall**

The Affordable Housing presentation went well. There were questions asked. It set the stage for further conversation. The Freeholders seem interested. The hope is to get the community more involved. Mr. Hall talked about landlord issues and the county asked for more information. He spoke with Ms. Carpinteri and they will meet in July to talk about a report and engaging some of the Freeholders regarding Morris's lack of affordable housing units.

Ms. Sly asked about the Central Park Complex. Ms. Becker stated that not much is happening. It is a slow process and there is only one home vacant. Mr. McGuire says he would like to know soon so they can prepare to occupy the space (if they are chosen). Mr.

Bashe stated there will be a lot of competition. Ms. Becker stated the Advisory leadership group will help make the decision.

#### **4. Committee/Subcommittee Reports: CAS – already covered**

##### **Permanent Housing – Mr. Hall**

The committee has been focusing on landlords. There is an issue with the consortium regarding paperwork associated with vouchers. They talked about this to folks in Trenton. In Trenton, vouchers are more attractive to landlords, especially for those who had a high turnover in tenants. It seems finding landlords is less of an issue in other areas. Some counties already have the Coordinated Entry in place and agencies work well together. Some counties get money from other areas to support landlord programs. (Report distributed.)

There is a need to get units lined up in advance. That is the most important part of the committee's job. They need to work together and collectively find housing units. The Coordinated Entry will make this easier. They are considering having landlord recognition events and publicizing their efforts.

The Housing Authority has 634 vouchers that are leased up. They are all around the county. They do not have a high turnover so are more successful. Mr. Hall stated that since they have a different population and a low turnover it is a different situation.

Ms. Moore stated that she has interns from Drew University working with Monarch on a study on landlord attitudes and barriers to using housing vouchers. They passed out their proposal to do this study in Morris. Mr. Bashe asked for the committee's approval on having the interns do the study working with Monarch. Ms. Moore feels that by doing this study we can learn more about how to address the present barriers. They will use this committee and the Housing Alliance as their partners. They will use this research for the purpose of action and in the end create an action plan. This is something that will add to the value of the community. In the past, Drew has worked with Monarch and Homeless Solutions. Ms. Bjornson suggested CAS work with them as well. Mr. Bashe would like the committee to endorse the study. All were in favor with no opposition and no abstentions. Morris will serve as a pilot, and the study will begin this summer.

##### **Coordinated Assessment – Ms. Bjornson (report distributed)**

Ms. Bjornson said 211 is here today and they will attend all EC meetings from now on. They have two grants for the drop in center and the screening center. 211 is ready to begin. The infrastructure is done and they are waiting on a customized screening tool. Gina has collected the scoring information, the policy documents and prioritization summaries that we can use. Ms. Rippey asked if they might be able to add some health questions to the assessment. Ms. Bjornson will look into. The startup is planned for mid-late September and bug fixing during fourth quarter.

##### **HMIS Data Quality – Ms. Carter/Monarch**

Mr. Bashe said this group is doing a great job and our data is greatly improved. Ms. Carter stated she was at a meeting on Friday with Ms. Candy Brewster, State HMIS director. Ms.

Brewster is impressed with Morris County's progress. Morris may be invited to talk about this work and how it all ties together with the Data Quality subcommittee, the Executive Committee, etc. Ms. Bjornson stated there are a few things we need to focus on:

- The agencies that work with the chronically homeless.
- Time it takes for entry of the data. Mr. Everett stated the data needs to be input into HMIS quickly. We need to know who is homeless quickly and try to get them into the system.

Many providers going to the Data Quality meetings have gone to training. There is a need for higher levels to go to training. We can find out more from data if all are trained. Ms. Kelly stated there is a lot of work going on here. The group is winding down setting up their policies and procedures. They will now be able to look more closely at data and how to use data in different ways.

### **System Performance Standards and Monitoring – Ms. Miciak/Monarch**

There will need to be a subcommittee once we get more data. So far, Ms. Miciak is the only one on the subcommittee. Performance information was sent out to the committee and Ms. Kelly stated there are a few pieces to the problem. One area that needs improvement is the need to increase client income and record it correctly. For example we can count annual the cost of living increases as income increases.

There needs to be a monitoring on how Morris is doing system wide and a review process should be done every six months. This will lead to policy and practice changes. Ms. Kelly stated that HUD wants us to get more success at the end of the day and come up with strategies to improve outcomes. Mr. Bashe stated he will need a small group to work on this and how to improve outcomes.

### **Veterans Homelessness – Mr. Armstrong**

Mr. Bashe stated this is an active committee and it is a challenge to identify the homeless veterans. Mr. Armstrong and this committee is doing a great job. They need to reallocate some funding. One third of the homeless veterans come from rural areas. They feel some areas are underserved. He distributed Veteran's Subcommittee Policies and Procedures and Veteran's Referral form. Ms. Mocariski will send an email to all asking for email vote to approve these items. Please respond to her with your comments, concerns and your approval by tomorrow.

Ms. Kelly said that using this form they are trying to create a list of homeless vets. They will then try to connect the vets to the committee and to services.

### **Bridging the Gap Network – Ms. Becker**

Ms. Becker stated the next meeting will be on June 20 at 10:00 a.m. here. A focus is to address youth homelessness. The Network will be gathering information on youth homelessness and trying to strengthen youth services. Ms. Becker asked all to join in to provide input. Ms. Becker will send out an invite and Ms. Arnold will facilitate the group. Mr. Bashe will be attending and all are invited. We are hoping that this committee can become a focal point for addressing youth homelessness, which is a weaker area for Morris in HUD's scoring.

**Other discussion:** Income is a big issue and perhaps the Workforce Investment Board or an agency that provides employment should be invited to the group. Mr. Bashe believes that there is a need for expertise on the Executive Committee in the area of job training and placement for homeless clients. This will also be discussed at the management team meeting..

Ms. Sly would like to know if Monarch could outline the impact of President Trump's proposed budget on Morris County service and how slated cuts will affect our network. Mr. Tansey stated that he did not get approval of the HUD 2017 budget yet. It is usually out by Oct. and so far spending previous year money. The concern is the loss or decrease in the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME and ESG. Ms. Sly said that part of the problem is that the HUD funded programs have not shown outcomes. Ms. Janice Kaniewski stated that utility assistance is very important and slated for elimination. Everyone should lobby and advocate for these important items. Ms. Kelly stated they do not think it will be eliminated but that there will be cuts. Ms. Kelly stated that on July 26 there is an opportunity for advocacy and testimony on this in Washington, D.C. Mr. Hall stated the Housing Alliance has a bus going to D.C. on to advocate at this session. Ms. Rippey suggested inviting Legal Services. Mr. Bashe also suggested this be further discussed at the Management Team meeting.

**Adjournment –**

Motion made by Ms. Connelly to adjourn the meeting at 12:15 p.m. Meeting adjourned.