Minutes for Home Team Executive Committee Meeting

Thursday, January 4, 2021

Zoom Meeting

In Virtual Attendance: Colleen Hammon, Lisa Karle, Linda Lyons-King, Christie Tombaugh, George Fickenworth, Sean O’Neil, Liz McCormick, Mike Wehrer, David Deter, Mary Vigilone, Andy Dimperio, Peter Burke, Danielle Szklenski and Jennie Hagerty

                  \* Thank you to Chris for organizing, and Home Team members for attending, the December 21st National Homeless Memorial Event. A nice turnout and Mayor Schember shared his appreciation for the service.

                   \*Effective January 25th, 2021, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) will provide Pennsylvanians experiencing homelessness the ability to be issued a free state identification card.   <https://www.penndot.gov/pages/all-news-details.aspx?newsid=801>

**DHS Updates: Peter Burke**

* Peter Burke, Erie County Housing Program Director announced that the ESG code Blue Grant funds were released to 5 shelters for hazard pay to shelter workers, to EUMA for Our Neighbor’s Place and Street Outreach, and to Safenet for shelter expansion.
* The new stimulus package from congress awarded 35 Billion dollars in emergency rental assistance funds. Peter reported any county with a population > than 200,000 could directly apply to receive the money. Erie County applied for and were awarded 8,037,065. The money can be used to pay up to 9 months back rent and 3 months forward rent (12 months total). More details on the rental assistance program will be coming from the County.
* HUD’s Continuum of Care Grant will just be renewed for the 2021 Competition due to COVID-19. All grants will remain the same with adjustments made for Fair Market rent.
* Updated on Covid vaccinations and category 1B for shelters. The plan is pending for full initiation of the 1B phase which would include shelters and congregate living situations.
* Hotel vouchers are available and were released to Erie County Care Management in addition to the hotel vouchers awarded to Our Neighbor’s Place. Shelters must be full or individual must be unfit for shelter (i.e.. was exposed to someone positive with COVID).
* Peter introduced the new Housing Program Specialist for Erie County DHS, Mary Viglione. Mary joins both the County and Home Team with experience in D&A, homelessness, and physical health services.
* Both the Erie City and County Housing Authority are collaborating with the Office of Children and Youth and its providers in the Fostering Youth to Independence initiative. This will provide a Section 8 voucher for 3 years to youth transitioning out of foster care who do not have a home, as well as provide support services.

**Data Update: Lisa Karle**

* Lisa has completed the LSA report for submission to Erie County in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). She included the data quality expectation is extensive and must meet a usability requirement nationally for submittal.
* Lisa also noted a client can’t be listed in separate shelters on the same day. They cannot overlap and funders will not pay for both.
* It was pointed out that Erie County providers were helpful and flexible regarding data errors for report submission.
* Lisa advised Home Team that the COC must define a length of time for reduced bed capacity and note this information in HMIS.
* Note Erie City Mission, Refuge and Safe Net have reported reduced bed capacity due to Covid-19. It is determined Lisa will research data related to this concern and share it with the Home Team Members.

**CBCG/Cares Funding: David Deter**

* 62K awarded to GECAC, St. Martin’s Center, and City Mission.
* They monies are available for mortgage and rent availability. Back rent included, and up **to 9 months included with a 3-month renewal.**

**Erie Department of Health Update: Mary Johnson unavailable**

**Emergency Shelter Status Update, including Our Neighbor's Place**

* Funds released to shelters for hazard pay and winter shelter. Shelter screening for COVID is thorough.
* Hospitals did a good job caring for out of state homeless individuals.
* Erie City Mission was closed for 1 week due to Covid outbreak. They did not take in any new individuals during this time. They have reopened and can accommodate 25 people, possibly 28, pending Health Dept guidance.
* What is the length of time as a COC and pandemic guidelines? Lisa Karle will research CDC guidelines and update the Executive Team.
* Emmaus Soup Kitchen is only serving 100 to 200 people. It was reported not everyone is taking advantage of meals being served.
* Pantry Use is way down, and shelters are seeing changes in pantry usage.
* Safenet reported their Transitional Living Facility and Shelter is at 50 percent occupancy.

**Committee Updates: Please note:**

*Reestablishment of committee meetings remotely is high priority for those committees*

*currently not reengaged.*

*Each committee chair should submit their next scheduled meeting date by 1.29.21.*

**Coordinated Entry – Sean O’Neil**

* Sean reported the need for a Covid-19 survey during and after business hours.

**Project ranking/Application Review – Liz McCormick**

* Due to the Continuum of Care grant being renewed for the 2021competion due to COVID, there will be no ranking/scoring of projects this year.
* Strategic Plan should be a discussion moving forward.
* Liz shared there have been unique gaps through Covid. Problems should be solved together.
* Liz asked if the 8 million will provide relief to landlords? The answer is yes, landlords can apply on behalf of their tenants.

**SPIT Count – Mike Wehrer**

* There will be no unsheltered count this year per HUD
* George Fickenworth shared the shelter and housing inventory count will be on January 27th.

**Data Collection & Use – Josh Jaeger (See report summary)**

* Identify collaborations. Discussions with Mike Jarusewicz from the United Way, Mercyhurst University, Susan Hirt Hagen “Core” Program at PSB. There was no feedback from Gannon or Edinboro. Kim Thomas from the DCED would be interested in joining the Data Collection Team
* Next meeting is January 27th.

                                          Written report on Data Committee recommendation to board.

**\*Client Services – Linda Lyons King (Waiting on the report)**

* Linda touched base on the Client Service Committee update. They are working on the following areas: case management, collaboration, communication, hospital, social work and other areas.
* Next meeting: February 9th at 1:30 pm

**Community Engagement & Marketing – Chris Tombaugh**

* Chris shared in her appreciation for all the agencies who united for the Prayer Service. She recommended blessing bags for the next time.

Meeting adjourned at 2:58 pm by Linda Lyons-King