

Meeting Minutes

Continuum of Care Meeting

Tuesday, December 15, 2020

11:30am – 1:00pm

Virtual Meeting

Attendees

Continuum of Care (CoC) Members: Andy Keller, Tatyanna Lucas, Buck Bramlish, Carl Landry, Scott Scharlach, Tina Rutherford, Debbie Donahey, Dennis Jeffrey, Dion Robinson, Donna Mayer, Emerald Hernandez-Parra, Kythryn Carr Harris, Frank Beel, Hannah Estabrook, Jeff Pattison, Jerome Johnson, Mark Paxson, John Edgar, Jon Welty, Orvell Johns, Keith McCormish, Kelsey Strausbaugh, Kim Stands, Michael Wilkos, Lisa Defendiefer, Lisa Patt-McDaniel, Mason Laurie, Michelle Heritage, Nancy Case, Christopher Maitland, Sheila Prillerman, Sonya Thesing, Steve Gladman, Sue Darby, Terri Power

Community Shelter Board (CSB) staff: Lianna Barbu, Steve Skovensky, Hannah King Boyles

Continuum of Care (CoC) Members not in attendance: Emily Savors (Columbus Foundation), Felisha Lyons (Columbus City Schools), Geoff Stobart (Franklin County Jail), Jon Cardi (CSB Board), Sue Villilo (LSS CHOICES)

Guests: Ryan Cassell (CHN); Amy Rosenthal, Sarajane Steffes, Colleen Bain (N^^); Matt Zelnik (Veterans Service Commission); Lauren Wilson, Kevin Phillips, Cara Cox (Lutheran Social Services)

Welcome and Agenda Review/Approval

Keith welcomed the group and reviewed the agenda. Kythryn moved to approve the agenda, Michelle seconded, and the CoC agreed.

New Permanent Housing Updates

Lianna reviewed the projects requesting prioritization for the 2021 Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) tax credit competition.

- < National Church Residences (N^^) Berwyn East Place: The CoC approved a version of this project plan in January 2020 for last year's OHFA competition. The project did not receive tax credits. N^^ has submitted a revised plan with a reduced number of non-homeless units, which increases the percentage of homeless units in the project. The project's target population is individuals ages 55 and older. N^^ would request CoC bonus funding for capital and services and has secured Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV) from Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA). Medicaid reimbursement and health plan partnerships would also provide services funding. The estimated operating and services cost per homeless unit is \$14,720.
- < Community Housing Network (CHN) Poplar Fen Place: The CoC approved this project plan in January 2020 for last year's OHFA competition. The project did not receive tax credits. There have not been any major changes to the plan aside from timeline updates. The project's target population is also individuals ages 55 and older. CHN would request CoC bonus funding for rental assistance and services, and would request HCV if CoC bonus funds are not available. Medicaid reimbursement and ADAMH funding would also provide services funding. The estimated operating and services cost per homeless unit is \$17,469.

- < CHN Touchstone Field Place – Phase 2: The CoC requested a project plan in June 2020. This project plan is for a 44-unit property. Phases 1 and 2 of Touchstone Field Place will total 100 units, all of which are dedicated to people who have experienced homelessness. The project would provide replacement housing to current residents of YMCA’s 40 W. Long Street building. CHN would use existing CoC services funding and would request additional CoC bonus funds for services only as a last resort. CHN has secured HCV from CMHA for this project. The estimated operating and services cost per homeless unit is \$13,805.

Ryan Cassell presented the Touchstone Field Place – Phase 2 project plan.

- < Touchstone Field Place is planned in two phases. When complete, the project will total 100 units. The project aligns with the goals listed in the *A Place to Call Home* strategic action plan, and partially addresses the need for replacement housing for residents of YMCA’s 40 W. Long Street building. Sue Darby explained that the 40 W. Long Street building is about 100 years old and YMCA is limited in the quality of care it can provide in this location
- < CHN will be the developer, property manager, and managing owner. YMCA will be the service provider and front desk operator, as they are at 40 W. Long Street. The property will have a Community Advisory Council.
- < Sue noted that YMCA has provided case management services for about 30 years and is committed to the Housing First model and evidence-based practices. YMCA is CARF-accredited and has a proven track record of successful Medicaid billing.
- < The project site is located in the Marion-Franklin area of south Columbus. There are many amenities nearby. CHN is continuing community outreach and working on a Good Neighbor Agreement.
- < Tax credit ranking is critical to the project’s funding. Construction will take a little over a year and CHN hopes to start lease-up in August 2023, with the project at full capacity in October 2023. Ryan reviewed the project’s financing and Sue described YMCA’s behavioral health services.
- < Debbie asked whether CHN could share an example of a Good Neighbor Agreement. Ryan will provide examples to be distributed to CoC members.
- < Emerald asked how CHN will proactively handle security concerns at the site, noting that it is beneficial for the City to be informed so they can respond to community concerns. She also recommended Michael Wilkos’s approach for community engagement and acceptance which worked well in Weinland Park. Ryan responded that Touchstone Field Place will have a 24/7 front desk, visitor policy, and closed-circuit camera system, and will utilize defensible design practices which are focused on safety. On occasion, CHN has increased security at PSH properties until the root cause of the problem can be remedied. For the six months following this property’s opening, CHN will provide special duty officers at school bus stops on Lockbourne Road, as requested by the community. After this period, CHN has committed to assisting with advocacy for the bus stops’ relocation, if requested by the community. Any other specific concerns from the community can be shared with Ryan.
- < Kythryn asked whether CHN has any concerns about establishing a Good Neighbor Agreement with the Marion-Franklin community. Ryan reported that CHN is engaged in ongoing conversation with the Marion-Franklin Civic Association and is working on a fifth draft of a Good Neighbor Agreement. There is good engagement with the community, including participation from the Far South Area Commission, City of Columbus, local churches, and other entities. While community pushback has been strong in the past and is an ongoing concern, CHN is hopeful that things are moving in a positive direction.

- < Shelia asked about the project's visitor policy, specifically whether young children without identification would be allowed to visit the property. Sue responded that YMCA would work to honor the wishes of the property owner (CHN) while being respectful of the needs of residents. She did not foresee any issue with young children being allowed to visit the property if accompanied by an adult with identification.
- < Carl asked what is typical for developer fees for these types of projects. Ryan answered that developer fees typically range from around \$800,000 to \$1.2 million, depending on the size and scope of the project. This fee helps mitigate risk for investors and helps cover staff costs for the developing organization.

Ryan presented the Poplar Fen Place project plan.

- < The target population is individuals over age 55. Thirty-two units are designated for chronically homeless individuals and eight units are designated for individuals with a persistent mental illness.
- < CHN will be the developer, property manager, and managing owner. N^^ will be the service provider. Twenty-four/seven front desk services will be provided by Aryes Staffing.
- < Elderly homelessness is on the rise nationwide. CHN estimates that about 157 people in our community over age 51 need permanent supportive housing. CHN's Hotel St. Clair was the community's only PSH development targeted to serve this population; the property was sold in 2017. Poplar Fen Place would help address the community's need. In terms of physical health measures, people who have experienced homelessness present about 20 years older than those who have not been homeless and are high utilizers of emergency rooms and nursing homes.
- < The project's location is next to CHN's Marsh Brook Place and would be served by the same Community Advisory Council. Formation of a Good Neighbor Agreement should go smoothly since one is already in place for Marsh Brook Place. The projects' proximity would make intergenerational programming possible.
- < Ryan noted that CHN and N^^ already partner for service provision at four other CHN properties. Colleen expressed that N^^ is excited about this project's focus on the senior population and would provide the same services at this CHN property as they do for their own properties. N^^ provides case management and integrated primary and behavioral health services, and is CARF-accredited.
- < If this project is ranked high enough, CHN will apply for OHFA tax credits, begin construction in 2022, and open the property in 2023.
- < The property has a focus on universal design so as to make it available to people with a range of abilities. Ryan reviewed the project's financing.
- < Sheila raised concerns about the accessibility of showers for seniors, noting that this population may need bathtubs instead. She also noted that the weight of the units' doors can be problematic for seniors, especially those who use mobility aids. Ryan thanked Sheila for her suggestions and will remind CHN's architects about these accessibility concerns.

Sarajane Steffes presented the Berwyn East Place project plan.

- < Sarajane explained that the primary focus of this project is the growing population of elderly people experiencing homelessness. The project would utilize unique health plan partnerships with United Health Care and Molina Healthcare.
- < Sarajane reviewed N^^'s national portfolio of housing developments for aging and formerly homeless populations. N^^ has observed that these two populations are looking increasingly

similar. Understanding how to meet these needs is critical to helping people age in place with proper supports.

- < For this project, N^^ would use a triple-blend management model integrating property management, care coordination, and onsite health and wellness services. The project site is located on Livingston Avenue, next to Commons at Livingston and across from Argus Green and Argus Court (senior properties). The site is properly zoned and owned by N^^. Sarajane reviewed the designation of units by target population, noting that “advanced geriatric conditions” align with Unified Supportive Housing System assessment criteria.
- < Sarajane reviewed the project’s funding streams and CMHA voucher commitment. She provided brief case studies from Molina Healthcare and United Health Care about health plan members who would benefit from a housing community like Berwyn East Place. If the project is prioritized first for and awarded OHFA tax credits, construction would begin in spring 2022 and the building would be fully leased in the summer 2023. Sarajane noted that the current pandemic has made the need for this project even greater.

Keith reviewed the CoC Board’s recommendation for prioritization: CHN Touchstone Field Place – Phase 2, N^^ Berwyn East Place, CHN Poplar Fen Place. Sue, Steve G., and Sheila abstained from the following discussion.

- < Lisa Patt McDaniel asked for an explanation of the CoC Board’s recommendation. Lianna reviewed the average costs per unit for each project and explained that the CoC Board felt it was important that system resources be used as efficiently as possible. CHN Poplar Fen Place has the highest cost per unit, so was ranked last. CHN Touchstone Field Place – Phase 2 was prioritized over N^^ Berwyn East Place because the CoC Board felt that replacement housing for current PSH residents is more urgently needed than new PSH units.
- < Kim asked whether there is a chance that all three projects would be awarded tax credits from OHFA. Ryan responded that awards are partially dependent upon how many projects are submitted across the state. The number varies each year. CHN would not enter Poplar Fen Place into the OHFA competition with a #3 prioritization. OHFA has awarded two projects within the same Continuum of Care in the past, but this is a rare occurrence. Sarajane agreed with Ryan’s characterization.

Michelle moved to approve the CoC Board’s recommendation for prioritization as presented. Lisa Patt McDaniel seconded. The CoC agreed. Sue, Steve G., and Sheila abstained from the vote.

Keith thanked the presenters and the CoC membership for their time and consideration and commended all three projects.

Administrative Issues

Minutes

Keith asked for any corrections to or comments on the minutes from the June 4, 2020 CoC meeting. Emerald asked that her last name be updated to “Hernandez-Parra.” Kythryn moved to approve the minutes with the correction noted, Sheila seconded, and the CoC agreed.

Annual Financial Report

Lianna presented the annual financial report for FY20 which summarizes system-wide sources and uses of funds and analyzes costs per households served and costs per successful outcomes for all program types. She noted the following:

- < City, County, and State revenues show variances between budgeted and actual amounts because these grants' contract periods do not align with CSB's fiscal year. The variances do not indicate changes in funding amounts.
- < The report shows that CSB received 74% of budgeted federal funding. This is lower than desired, but is mostly due to CSB's two-year YHDP grant. All YHDP-funded projects are new and year one costs are low due to project ramp-up, so CSB did not draw down the full grant amount. COVID-19 has also made it difficult for projects to reach their full operating capacity. The variance is not a result of a change in funding amount.
- < An 849% variance is shown for "other funders." This reflects unanticipated funding for COVID-19 response efforts, including the operation of shelters for social distancing, isolation, and quarantine. \$2,332,230 in COVID-19-related funds were received in FY20.
- < 75% of budgeted partner agency leveraged funds were received. Ideally, this percentage would be higher, but resource generation has been challenging for many partners this year.
- < Expenses for all youth projects were low due to project ramp-up.
- < Expenses for N^^ projects exceeded budgets. N^^ was able to utilize services funding that other partners were unable to spend down. The CoC Board approves these funding reallocations; there are usually four or five reallocations per fiscal year.

Strategic Issues

System Gaps Update

Michelle presented the annual update of system gaps, which is used as both a planning and advocacy tool to demonstrate and detail need. The graphic presented today is based on 2019 numbers and does not attempt to predict the impact of the pandemic on future need. CSB anticipates that homelessness may be a lagging indicator of the pandemic's impact, which is particularly difficult to quantify given interventions like congressional relief packages, eviction moratoria, federal stimulus payments, vaccine availability, etc.

- < Keith asked how recent increases in eviction filings will impact system gaps. Michelle reported that the Legal Aid Society of Columbus (LASC) is advocating for local eviction moratoria to be extended. IMPACT Hope Fund resources have been fully allocated and encumbered. If no additional relief is provided, CSB predicts there will be a large increase in homelessness in the coming months.
- < Donna added that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) eviction moratorium is being challenged by landlords' attorneys and does not always stop evictions. LASC has been able to settle many cases using IMPACT Hope Fund resources, but that will soon cease to be an option, along with the CDC moratorium. The Dayton Municipal Court is closed for evictions, but the Columbus Municipal Court remains open. While Franklin County has moved evictions to the Convention Center, the risk of COVID-19 exposure and spread still makes it dangerous to be at eviction court. It would be helpful if evictions could be halted and eviction court be closed for now in Franklin County. Mason noted that applications for Prevention, Retention, and Contingency (PRC) rental assistance are increasing each week.
- < Michelle expressed that a local moratorium is necessary and the community cannot wait for federal action on this issue. CoC members may be asked to help advocate for local action.

Point-in-Time (PIT) Count Update

Michelle explained that at its December 1, 2020 meeting, the CoC Board gave CSB authority to ask HUD to waive the requirement for conducting an unsheltered PIT Count this year due to COVID-19.

CSB and the CoC Board were concerned about conducting an accurate count given challenges with volunteer availability, magnet site closures, and the safety of participants. If the CoC conducted an unsheltered count and significantly underestimated unsheltered homelessness, local and federal planning and decisions would be negatively impacted. Franklin County Public Health Commissioner Joe Mazzola provided a letter of support for this decision. Michelle thanked Lianna for her work on the waiver request, which was granted expeditiously by HUD. She noted that many other CoCs are requesting waivers as well. CSB will still conduct the sheltered PIT Count this year.

System and Community Framework Updates

Homelessness Prevention Network

Steve S. gave a brief overview of CSB's Homelessness Prevention Network (HPN) which launched in October. The HPN was one of the recommendations made by The Prevent Family Homelessness Collaborative. Six partners (Compass, Gladden Community House, Homeless Families Foundation, Impact Community Action, Physicians CareConnection, and St. Stephen's Community House) have been trained and certified by CSB in housing stabilization best practices. These partners will provide prioritized access to their services for families at highest risk for homelessness as determined by a standardized screening protocol. The HPN's focus will be on families in risk level 3 (will be homeless within 1-14 days). This is a three-year demonstration project funded by the Nationwide Foundation, Battelle, and Cardinal Health. CSB will launch a data collection tool for HPN partners in January to prepare for the likely increase in family need in 2021. Additional access points will be added in 2021.

System and Program Indicator Report

Lianna provided brief highlights from the Quarter 1 System and Program Indicator Report which includes data from 7/1/20 - 9/30/20.

- < Gladden Family Diversion and Maryhaven Engagement Center and Shelter2Housing programs were recognized for meeting all outcomes for numbers served, length of service, and successful outcomes.
- < The main findings for this quarter are in the family system data. 56% less households needed shelter when compared to the same quarter of FY20, likely impacted by federal stimulus funds and unemployment benefits. This is the lowest need reported in the last fifteen years. The average length of shelter stay increased to 54 days - likely a reflection of the extremely difficult re-housing environment. The success rate at exit from shelters increased 4 percentage points to 36% from 32%, in the same period of FY20.

Keith thanked the CoC membership for all of their work on behalf of those experiencing homelessness in our community.

Meeting Adjourned.