

Meeting Minutes

Continuum of Care Meeting

Monday, February 4, 2019

11:30am – 1:30pm

Community Shelter Board

Attendees

Continuum of Care (CoC) Members: Andy Keller, Becky Westerfelt, Callie Query, Carl Landry, Ron Lebsock, Chip Spinning, Debbie Donahey, Dennis Jeffrey, Donna Mayer, Emerald Hernandez, Emily Savors, Jeff Pattison, Jerome Johnson, Jonathan Welty, Michelle Missler, Kim Stands, Michael Wilkos, Lisa Defendiefer, Michelle Heritage, Nancy Case, Paula Haines, Robin Harris, Jennifer Sharma, Angie Webber, Terri Power, Rachel Weatherbie

Community Shelter Board (CSB) staff: Tom Albanese, Lianna Barbu, Heather Notter, Hannah King, Aubre Jones, Heather Jones

Guests: Ryan Cassell and Noel Welsh (Community Housing Network), Amy Acton (Youth Core Team), Sheri Chaney Jones (Measurement Resources)

Continuum of Care (CoC) Members (not in attendance): Veterans Service Commission, ADAMH Board, Columbus City Schools – Project Connect, Franklin County Jail, Franklin County, Church and Community Development for all People, Workforce Development Board of Central Ohio, Youth Advisory Board, City Councilmember, Affordable Housing Trust Corporation

Welcome and Agenda Review/Approval

Kim welcomed the group and reviewed the agenda.

PSH Development

Ryan Cassell from Community Housing Network (CHN) was in attendance to present the Creekside Place Project Plan.

- < Lianna gave an overview of the project, which will have 63 total units: 50 units for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness and 13 units for individuals with serious mental illness or co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse.
- < Lianna reviewed the historical development and operating costs for prior PSH projects and referred the group to the CoC Unit Cost Matrix, which is a current assessment of costs relative to other PSH projects. These materials show that the Creekside Place cost per unit is comparable to other similar projects and the project costs are reasonable as presented.
- < The CAC reviewed the project and made recommendations. No partner agency feedback has been received so far.
- < Ryan presented a project plan overview for Creekside Place. The roles of CHN and National Church Residences (N^^) in the project were explained, and details about the project location were provided. The building will be single-entry with social spaces and a nearby bike path. The property owners who surround the proposed location (including a daycare) have been supportive of the project so far.
- < CHN is submitting a tax credit application to Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) in February and will be notified of results in May.

- < Ryan gave a cost overview of the project, including capital sources and uses. Rental assistance and capital funds (\$685,487) comprise the current need.
- < Debbie Donahey asked whether much traffic is anticipated in and out of the property, as traffic moves quickly on North Nelson Road. Ryan responded that few residents are likely to have cars. City traffic and planning has also been consulted.
- < Emerald Hernandez asked if there is a bus stop nearby. The project site is on the #7 bus route, and the building plans include a sidewalk.
- < Ryan explained that there will be a ramp-up process of 12-15 months for Medicaid billing to be in full effect for supportive services.
- < Debbie noted that the project site is close to the Columbus Metropolitan Library's Shepard branch, and asked whether CHN has explored collaboration with the library. Ryan thanked Debbie for the good suggestion and will reach out to the Library.
- < Carl Landry asked what the operational budget impact of billing Medicaid would be in the future. Ryan estimated that Medicaid billing will be robust once N^^ adds the new site to their certification. In the meantime, approximately \$30,000 in gap funding will be needed for the first 12-15 months of operation.
- < Kim asked the group to keep their ears open for funding sources to close the \$685,487 gap in capital funds.

Ryan gave an update on Marsh Brook Place, which is a 40-unit permanent supportive housing project on the south side of Columbus for youth 18-24 years old. Capital funds are in good shape, and Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) will provide rental assistance for 20 units. CHN plans to use Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YDHP) funds for the remaining 20 units. Ryan thanked Ron and CMHA for their support. CHN hopes to start developing this project in the spring and will submit plans and permits at the end of next week. An environmental review is dependent upon HUD's schedule.

Ryan gave an update on Parsons Place, which is a 62-unit permanent supportive housing project on the south side of Columbus. Plans have been approved by the City, County, and State. HUD approval of the environmental review is pending. CHN will submit plans and permits at the end of next week.

Michelle Heritage shared a flow chart that outlines the Permanent Housing Development Process. Michelle noted that CSB will develop similar graphics for other processes with the goal to better educate CoC members in CoC workflows.

Kim requested CoC approval of the Resolution to Prioritize Creekside Place Permanent Supportive Housing development for the 2019 Ohio Housing Finance Agency application. Michelle Heritage moved to approve the plan, Chip Spinning seconded, and the CoC agreed. Jennifer Sharma (CHN) abstained.

Administrative Issues

Kim asked for any corrections to or comments on minutes from the November 13, 2018 CoC meeting. Michelle Heritage moved to approve the minutes, Jonathan Welty seconded, and the CoC agreed.

Coordinated Community Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness Among Youth

Becky Westerfelt explained that the Youth Core Team is submitting the final Coordinated Community Plan (CCP) to the CoC for approval. The CCP will then be submitted to HUD. The CCP has two interacting parts: it is an immediate emergency response to youth experiencing homelessness, and a method for coordinating the community around youth vulnerable to homelessness. The CCP specifically addresses system interaction and intervention, and sets an expectation of system-wide education around best practices and principles for youth contact. The CCP is a call to action for the community, encouraging it to change its approach, rather than expecting youth to change their behavior.

Becky thanked the Youth Action Board (YAB), which is composed of homeless and formerly homeless youth, and the CoC members and agencies who have been involved in developing the CCP. Michelle Heritage acknowledged Becky and Tom Albanese for their work. Tom thanked Amy Acton and the Columbus Foundation for their early support of the initiative, as well as Sheri Chaney Jones from Measurement Resources and Aubre Jones (CSB) for their work. Aubre detailed the work of the YAB and commended its members' multiple-system lenses with which they viewed issues. YAB members often took initiative to speak up for other stakeholders who weren't at the table.

Tom acknowledged YAB's executive board, whose members have experienced challenging circumstances including homelessness while contributing to the CCP and system design. He noted that many partners have been involved in this youth homelessness work, and the funds awarded from HUD have allowed the pace of the work to increase.

- < Tom noted the areas of the plan that have been updated since the CoC's last review in November: the Executive Summary, Sections 7, 8, 9, and 10, and Appendix F. He pointed out the CCP's vision statement and framework goals, and noted that the goals are aligned with stated federal goals.
- < Kim asked for clarification around the endorsement of transitional housing, which he understood to be a program model HUD and the homeless crisis response system is moving away from. Tom explained that transitional housing is an appropriate and beneficial support for many youth, and pointed to Huckleberry House as a good example of this. Becky added that transitional housing is often appropriate given the developmental stage of many youth. HUD recognizes the value of transitional housing for youth.
- < Sheri explained the CCP's multi-year analysis and data-driven approach, which asked, "What is the current need? What interventions are needed?" and then looked at gaps in services and estimated costs. This process found that annually there are 3,033 literally homeless youth, and 1,146 youth at imminent risk of homelessness. With YDHP funding, it is expected that Franklin County will experience a 20% decline in youth needing homeless services. This will be a big improvement, but will still leave a gap in services.
- < Becky acknowledged that it is easy to be a passive participant when reviewing the CCP. She challenged the CoC to dig in with two lenses: to both understand the outcomes and goals, and to find where the CoC members and their organizations fit in to the plan. She stressed that the CCP is of no use if it is not used by the community.
- < Kim asked the group to activate themselves by reading the CCP, finding how they fit in, and educating themselves as to how they can better serve the youth with whom they come into contact. He encouraged the CoC to think about additional funding possibilities and educate others in their circles about youth homelessness and the CCP.

Kim requested CoC approval of the resolution to approve the CCP. Ron moved, Becky seconded, and the CoC agreed.

Tom explained that the next step in the YDHP process is for HUD to give final approval of the CCP. The Youth Core Team will then formally name the CCP, make edits, and email the final version to the CoC. Michelle Heritage noted that resources are being developed to help share the CCP with the community. Nancy Case asked whether the CoC can share the CCP widely upon receipt. Michelle confirmed that it can and should be shared, and CSB will provide customized versions for specific audiences.

Strategic Issues

Michelle Heritage informed the CoC that HUD issued renewal awards from the FY2018 CoC competition. Our CoC will lose funding (\$726,943) for an existing PSH project as of July 1, 2019. Lianna reported that there was nothing unusual or concerning about our application and we did not expect to lose renewal funding. We usually score in the middle of the range, therefore our renewals are funded. A denial of funding suggests a very low score. Lianna contacted other Ohio CoC colleagues and learned that most also lost funding. Of 25 other CoCs contacted nationwide, only two have lost funding. HUD's appeals process is lengthy (we have not received our actual scores), so CSB will ask HUD for an expedited review to ensure there has not been a scoring error. CSB has contacted state senators to support this request.

- < Nancy asked if CSB has insights into why funding was denied. Michelle said there is no clear reason, but that CSB does see a statewide pattern.
- < Becky asked which project had been denied funding. Michelle explained that CSB would like to keep this confidential at this time, so that current program residents and staff do not become alarmed. The affected partner agency has not informed staff and current residents yet.
- < Terri Power asked if every Ohio CoC was planning to contact HUD, or if CSB is representing other CoCs in its communication. CSB is contacting HUD on behalf of other Ohio CoCs, in an effort to convey a unified communication.
- < Debbie asked whether CSB should put a time limit on an answer from HUD. Michelle explained that a deadline request would likely be ineffective, and that CSB needs to start rehousing current residents immediately anyway.
- < Angie asked whether a dollar amount or a specific project was denied. A specific project was denied funding.
- < Carl asked if the rehousing of current residents will affect the pool of clients already in the USHS. Michelle confirmed that this reprioritization will affect the broader USHS pool and we will not be able to house new clients in permanent supportive housing programs until the tenants from the denied program are transferred to other programs.

Kim requested CoC approval of a resolution to support CSB's request for an expedited review of FY18 CoC awards and CSB's official appeal to HUD. Nancy moved, Emerald seconded, and the CoC agreed.

Lianna reviewed a flow chart that depicts the process for the annual Analysis of National and Local Homelessness Data. The report compares homelessness data from Columbus with urban and national data. This report uses both Point-in-Time (PIT) count data and annual data derived from the CoC's homeless management information system. Overall, the data indicate that Columbus is

appropriately focused on serving the most vulnerable homeless individuals and families in our community.

- < Both nationwide and in Columbus, the PIT count of homeless individuals increased, but the increase in Columbus was significantly higher. In Columbus, the unsheltered homeless population decreased significantly and remains proportionally lower than the national statistic. Michelle stressed that the PIT Count is a one-day count and increased PIT counts do not necessarily indicate an increase in the total number of people experiencing homelessness annually – only of the number experiencing homelessness that day. She also pointed out that the affordable housing crisis in Columbus and Franklin County results in longer lengths of stay for people in shelters, thus increasing the shelter census numbers.
- < Becky asked about the 3.3% increase in the total number of people experiencing homelessness in Columbus. Lianna explained that this increase is likely due to long lengths of stay in shelter, and some people being in shelter at multiple reporting times.
- < Michelle spoke to Columbus’ overall population growth rate and the homeless population’s growth rate in relation to the community and CSB’s planning for future service needs. To keep up with anticipated demand, Columbus and Franklin County will either need to build additional emergency shelters or accept higher rates of unsheltered homelessness, neither of which are acceptable solutions. Donna emphasized that Columbus needs more affordable housing. Michelle agreed and reported that the region needs to build 14,000 housing units per year to keep up with population growth; the area currently builds 8,000 units per year.
- < Becky asked whether, in light of population flow, we need to look at intervention methods. Michelle said yes, and Tom stated that one of the most immediate things that can be done is to shorten lengths of stay in shelter. This is one of the reasons CSB created a Community Housing Manager position (filled by Heather Jones).
- < Jerome Johnson asked if the report used data from the 2019 PIT Count. Lianna clarified that the data used is from the 2018 PIT Count, and the annual data is from the year ending 9/30/2018.
- < Emerald reported that the city is looking at how remediations are conducted and is in contact with local churches and organizations. A specific focus is on education around making sure a person who is living outside has safe and healthy immediate surroundings. Related issues include trash disposal, free distributed items, and propane tanks.
- < Michelle Heritage told the group about a program Trent Smith runs in Franklinton in which people experiencing homelessness are paid to pick up trash. Michelle suggested other similar programs may be helpful.
- < During the recent cold snap, Michelle reported that many churches opened their doors to people experiencing homelessness, and some who sought shelter with churches were not literally homeless but did not have heat at home. CSB will survey pastors to find out how common this was at their locations. Angie reported that Columbus Coalition for the Homeless was conducting street outreach during this time and saw 60 camps (approximately 80 people) outside over two days. Michael Wilkos noted that many homes have code violations, but reports sometimes result in tenants being required to leave the property without alternative housing. Michelle added that some people experiencing homelessness can be housed but are unable to get utilities because of past non-payment. There are a number of potential consequences to take into account when trying to remedy housing code violations.
- <

System and Community Framework Updates

Michelle Heritage reported that she attended a City Council press conference this morning on the 2019 budget. The amended City budget includes the continuation of \$75,000 for the pregnant women homelessness prevention program. This effort was championed by Councilmember and Finance Committee Chair Elizabeth Brown and Council President Pro Tem Michael Stinziano.

Tom provided system updates.

- < Families and Pregnant Women: CSB is working with Celebrate One and other partners to develop a consistent care pathway across systems for expectant mothers, including prenatal and postnatal care. YMCA has engaged a consultant and plans to establish the care pathway by July 1, 2019. Families continue to experience long lengths of stay in shelter. CSB is working on cultivating stronger landlord relationships to help house people more quickly and shorten lengths of stay.
- < Veterans: Carl reported that the Veterans Administration (VA) is revamping their coordinated entry process with Netcare Access and other partners. The goal is to establish a process similar to that of the family system. This will allow for problem-solving consultation, possible diversion before the client is triaged, and assessment for PSH eligibility. Implementation is planned for February 19, 2019.
- < Single Adults: Winter overflow is in effect, and last week's weather put a strain on the system. CSB's partner agencies went above and beyond, as did churches and other entities. CSB is connecting with community partners to communicate the system's existing processes and plan for future extreme weather events.
- < PSH and Unified Supportive Housing System (USHS): CSB is working to improve the vulnerability screening process. An *ad hoc* group will report its findings in May 2019.
- < Youth: A coordinated entry process is being developed for youth, with a specific focus on options other than the Netcare Access hotline.

The next CoC meeting is scheduled for May 29, 2019.

Meeting Adjourned.