Homelessness and Housing Alliance of Racine County—Membership Meeting

Location: Zoom meeting link -
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85649237356?pwd=TEVyS2dDaTVlWktGZUpzMWpuS3FKQT09

January 15, 2021

Present: (43) **Officers**: President: Teresa Reinders (CoC), Secretary: MaryBeth Kallio (UWRC), Sharen Pease (CVI)

Membership:

Judith Bartelt (VA)
Michael Basford (WI ICH)
Tameka Brockman (LSS)
Chris Broslavick (Racine Dominicans)
Kaylee Cuter (RUSD)
Dale Darrow (HUD Miw. Field Office)
Michelle Gehring (NAMI)
Claire Hackett (HUD Milw. Field Office)
Pam Handrow (Bethany Apartments)
Sarah Hawks (UW-Extension)
Delores Hernandez (RCHA)
Lynda Jackson (HALO)
AJ Jelks (HALO)
Jeff Knott (HALO)
Rhonda King (Acelero)
Traci Lang (WRC)
Francisca Lassa (LAW)
Kim Leslie (Ascension)
Jennifer Loiacano (Burlington TLC)
Gai Lorenzen (HALO)
Amy Mauel (VHAMIW)
Scott Metzel (HOPES Center)
Kerry Milkie (RCHS)
Ed Miller (Revitalize Racine)
Derek Moran (LSS)
Barb Farrar (LGBT Center of SEW)
Seth Raymond (Hospitality Center)
Angela Sanchez (SAFE Haven)
Hale Sargent (HUD)
Brendan Saunders (City of Racine)
Shadiamond Sims (Community)
Jane Skirven (VA)
Shebria Small (SAFE Haven)
Maurika Smith (SAFE Haven)
Denise Staufenbeil (WRC)
Melissa Taggart (HALO)
Nina Thillemann (HALO)
Ron Thomas (Community)
Jean Verber (Racine Dominicans)
Gayle Williams (VHAMIW)

The meeting was called to order by President, Teresa Reinders at 9:02 a.m. with welcome and introductions.

Reminders: *CoC website https://racinecoc.org and the Homeless & Housing Alliance of Racine County email address is homelesshousingalliance@gmail.com*

Agenda: M/S/C to receive and file agenda Motion by Pam Handrow
Consent Agenda – approval needed, requires a motion from the floor to accept all the following items
Treasurer's report: balance $5,926.47: only activity was $1 service fee.
Committee Reports: no written reports from committees at the time of this reporting
New Business:
Election of officers

- **Slate of Officers –** There was only one nomination from the membership, that was Mary Beth to be a combined Secretary and Treasurer given that we did not receive any other nominations.
- **Slate of officers presented**: Teresa Reinders President, Sharen Pease Vice President, Mary Beth Kallio Secretary/Treasurer
- Officer positions accepted through acclamation.

Nominating Committee: request for five volunteers – Ed Miller, Nina Thillemann, Michelle Gehring, Irma Love, Pam Handrow
Membership Committee: request for five volunteers – Gai Lorenzen, Kim Leslie, Kaylee Cutler, Tracy Lang, Judith Butler

Point-in-Time January 2021 During COVID: Report from Scott Metzel Chair of the Point-in-Time workgroup.

Point-in time, it is a HUD mandated estimated count of the number of people experiencing homelessness in each community around the country. It happens every year. We use for service planning and for demonstrating the need for resources. In Racine, we also use it to raise public awareness of homelessness.

It has two components, an unsheltered count, and the sheltered count. The unsheltered count, or the street count, is when we actually go out on that night to see if we can locate people who are unsheltered and living in places not meant for human habitation. Sheltered count consists of the people who are experiencing homelessness and in shelter during that night including transitional housing at Bethany apartments and Union Grove.

Street Outreach will leverage existing outreach teams for PIT. We do have street outreach teams that have been actively engaging with people on the streets throughout COVID. We will have three teams of two people each doing the pitch surveys this year. They all have masks, hand sanitizers, social distance to the extent possible, etc. All of these people are experienced Street Outreach people. One of them is not on the team but is a friend of a team member who has done point in time multiple times and has also been a team leader Point-in-Time multiple times. There is no need to train anybody.

We're using the same tools as before. We know how to do the outreach. We don't have to provide any special equipment other than what we already have with us for doing outreach. The three different teams are not even going to meet together. Before the exercise starts, all the teams already have their assignments or, and are just going to do that independently and then report back. And we're going to conduct this count over multiple days on the night of January 27, we'll have all three teams out. And we're going to cover the entire area east of I 94. We've split it up into zones with different teams taking those zones. This is where we have most of our people. We don't usually get to many West of I 94. But then one of the teams is going to do the western section on Saturday, January 30. Now one of the concerns of doing it on multiple days, is possible duplication. Through our experience, there's not a whole lot of movement, even within the city of Racine and Mount Pleasant from one area to another, but especially not from West of I 94 to East of I 94. We don't expect a duplication to be an issue. We'll do any follow up on Monday, the first again, that same team that did the Saturday, the question when we do follow up and just combing the area, again, is not where they are tonight. But we are going to follow the night of count of January 27 and ask, "Where were you last Wednesday?" when we engage with people to get that count. With the teams that we have and their experience, we should be able to get good coverage during those three days.

Street Outreach Report from Scott Metzel, Director, HOPES Center of Racine, Inc.

We do have people who are on the streets we meet with regularly. Interestingly, they're very difficult to get into shelter and very difficult to get into housing programs. There's been some news on the street that somehow if you call street outreach, you get to a motel, out of those calls this week, not a single one has actually been outside at a location where they are. It's a challenge for us at the moment, anytime there's a motel voucher program. We spend a lot of time doing due diligence to verify cars where no one's sleeping at three o'clock in the morning and things like that. But you know, it's one of those things. But no, you don't call street outreach, and we run and take you to a motel and meet with you someplace. We continue our outreach for people outside. And most of them that we get calls from aren't really outside again,

Presentations:

Presentation: Kerry Milkie, Racine County Human Services Here to Help Program

We had a couple of issues and concerns with general community at the start of the pandemic. We wanted to make sure that we were able to talk to people and contact them and ensure their safety.

Phone number for people to receive help is 262-638-6400. Website is heretohelp@racinecounty.com .

Average response time is immediate to 24 hours. It is little longer if you call on the weekend, it may be as much as 48 hours. Since late November to now, the biggest volume is rent assistance, pending homelessness, eviction, etc. We do mediate with landlords. We have a group of landlords that we're working with individually and collectively. We'll be reaching out to more. We now have a new flyer over at the courthouse directed to landlords on how to connect their tenants to our program. Approximately 80% of landlords are part-time landlords, and they have, you know, one or two rental facilities, they have a mortgage to pay as well.

Community Updates

Rent Smart Program – Sarah Hawks: It is a free virtual offering open statewide. The January session has already started. There are sessions in February, March, April, and May. Participants meet twice a week for one hour. Rent

Smart implemented a pre-session that must be attended because sometimes people were not showing up. Attending the pre-session officially registers participants and provides them with materials for the course.

Bethany Apartments – *Pam Handrow*: new case manager – Marika Smith. She has a master's degree in professional counseling and is excited to be working at Bethany and meeting everyone (virtually)! Welcome, Marika!

Racine Unified School District – *Kaylee Cutler*: with school potentially going back in session soon, just a reminder that if you do have school-aged students that are homeless, please send them my way. Because with COVID, there are bus restrictions of how many kids can be on a bus. So, busing will take a little longer to set up and get going once we go back to school.

Street Outreach – *Scott Metzel*: In December, we had contact with 30 people who are unsheltered here in Racine, which is the same number that we had in 2019. So there was no change, up or down, during December from prior years. During the spring and summer, the numbers have been a little bit low. In January, so far, we've had contact with ten people who have been unsheltered up to last night, which is a little bit lower than some other years by this point, but it's about the same. A little bit of shift geographically fewer people downtown where people from West Racine going westward from there up towards Green Bay road, so a little bit different in where people are, but otherwise, the numbers have been about the same this winter.

HALO – *Gai Lorenzen*: Halo has been consistently running between 75 and 80 people over the last few months, between the shelter and the motels. We have moved some individuals back to the shelter we have about it's pretty split up evenly between the motels and shelter right now. We did have one COVID positive case in the shelter with one of the clients; it was dealt with quickly. We've had staff who have also had COVID; we've had to quarantine. But overall, I think we feel very fortunate at HALO; I'm very glad we took the steps we took early on to go to non-congregate because we have been able to keep things under control pretty well. Thank you, everyone, for all your help.

City Neighborhood Services Division – *Brendan Saunders* update on the $25 billion in rental assistance. The money will be direct money from the Treasury to either States or metropolitan areas of more than 200,000 people. Racine city will not be getting any direct allocations, nor will Racine County, which we believe will be similar to the WRAP (Wisconsin Rent Assistance Program) that existed earlier in 2020. So just a heads up that it's coming. We want to see it coupled together to do interesting work with this. We are looking at ways we can layer subsidies and help people catch up with their rent and have them prepared for the future.

COVID Vaccines for Shelters – *Teresa Reinders*: you should have all received an "Important, your action needed to include the homeless shelter provider staff and clients in the plans for receiving the COVID vaccines." It has been going back and forth as to whether or not to include homeless shelters and staff. And the language is kind of iffy. We have had two cases within our system; one has recovered, one is recovering, but very, very serious, very close to death situations. It's important that you read through that email. It's a template of what you can send to the Wisconsin State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee. If you look at the homeless population, disproportionately people of color, we know greater risk of COVID severe disease. In Wisconsin, 6.7% of the population in 2009 was black. In November of 2020, 43% of the population experiencing homelessness were black. We need to get something out stating our support for including them in the next round of vaccines that are coming through. We have the template. There is a spot in there that that highlights there's a link to the group so you can see what's going, and a link to the document that they're using. There is a section for recommendations. There is a spot highlighted in yellow that says personalization, where you can put in your experiences with your agencies that have experienced the COVID and the need for vaccinations to be considered.

I had one person who expressed that this isn't any different than working in a shelter versus working in an ER where people are coming in and out. We need to take care of them. Caseworkers and staff are just as at risk for getting COVID as the clients are. And if you think about it, the clients are more vulnerable or as vulnerable as staff leave

and mingle with other people and their families. Staff are exposed in multiple ways. And right now, there's a huge, huge influx of people that are being diagnosed with COVID who are asymptomatic. So, I'm urging you to look at Phase 1 B roll out. The emails need to be sent by Monday, before Monday if you can. The comment period ends at 4pm on Monday, January 18. So please, please take a look at that and send it out. Do your best. It's the one way that we have to make our voice known as the Alliance. The four CoCs have met and expressed that it is our belief getting multiple emails from each of us is going to inundate them, which is more effective than me just sending one. Please follow up and please send those out. If you do, please include me as a blind cc or let me know that you sent it out so that I can keep track of the advocacy that we've been able to do. It's not lobbying so as nonprofits, you are able to do this.

Meeting adjourned at 10:35

Respectfully submitted,

TM Reinders