

Auburn/Cayuga County Homeless Task Force

Meeting Minutes

July 14, 2021

Present: Renee Jensen, City of Auburn; Kristine Raus, Life Simply Managed; Grace Wiseman, Intern; Shane Truman, Cayuga DSS; Christina Bennet, CAP; Kristina Zettlemyer, CAP; Pam Sanchez, James Breslin, Gavras Center; Erica Ryan, Homsite; MacKenzie Deordio, 211; Tori Trufant, CAP; Ruth Stewart, Cayuga Counseling; Pam Garrino; Shari Weiss, Cayuga Community Health Network; Josh Manuel, Darlene Podolak, Unity House; Tim Donovan, Community Member; Kim Dunn, Chapel House;

Next meeting: September 8th, 11 am, 24 South Street and Via Zoom .

1. Welcome and Introduction

Meeting called to order 11:04.

2. Discussion

Christine Ross from Life Simply Managed presented her program for hoarding and cluttering. They have been busy throughout the pandemic, they saw an increase in abuse, domestic violence, and mental health. They help at home, whatever is needed to be safe and clean as possible. They work with Unity House, Cayuga County Mental Health. Her specialty is hoarding and chronic disorganization. The point is to not see the clutter and dirty- but to see the person. The social worker's best friend. Trust-building is the most important part of the therapy and helping them to gain support. Dealing with clutter is very emotional because people have to look at the history- the past present and future of the item. They also go in to clean. They try to move quickly because people feel invaded. Their geographic service area is Ithaca to Rochester, Auburn to Syracuse. There is 6-10 staff with specialties of lifting, organizing, senior care, etc.

Erica Ryan from Homsite has a cluttering/hoarding issue with one of her clients. She has tried DSS, Adult protective service, and mental health support. There is not a lot of support from the client's family; they are enabling. She asked Christine for advice. Christine said finding the motivation. If it's important to them, it's important to us. A one-and-done never works. The proven success comes from consistency and maintenance with either once a week or an hour a day. Hoarding typically comes from trauma and it's a coping skill.

3. HHC Updates

- New Emergency Housing vouchers were released from HUD to the Housing Authorities. Auburn did not receive a direct allocation but will receive them from the state. The HHC has to administer the referral process. July 20th @ 10 am- next Tuesday will be a zoom

meeting for the details- targeted populations and expectations. Currently homeless, CoC-funded projects or individuals fleeing DV.

- YHDP: currently writing the grant application. Pilot project from HUD, \$1 mil to \$15. Submitting early next week. Please let Megan know if you would like to read the draft. If funded, we have 9 months to create a community plan to end youth homelessness.
- There has been no information on the NOFA. If you are CoC-funded, keep an eye out because we will be reaching out when we do hear. There is an increase in funding from the McKinney-Vento so now would be a good time to apply to be funded if you are not yet.
- The state is releasing Year 6 of ESSHI. If you are applying for it, you will need a letter of support from the CoC. Please give us at least a week because all approvals go through the HHC board. This is timeframe also a requirement with data requests.
- Strategic Plan was presented to the Advisory Board yesterday and it was approved. In the September meeting, we would love to review it with Cayuga County, maybe a quarterly

4. Chapel House

OTDA inspection from the Men's House. Some of the rooms don't meet the requirements. So they are working to be in compliance. Housing 15, normally it would be 17, however, 2 rooms are out of commission right now. 20 beds at Roles. Recently started doing hotel case management. 15 assigned. PSH working with 17, 6 clients pending, affordable housing is the biggest barrier. 19 in STEHHP. Roles now has 24/7 staffing. They are always looking for shelter aides for evenings, overnights, or weekends. They have seen increased cluttering through COVID.

5. CAP

Currently 13, 3 openings, 1 pending, Just started ESG program for RRH and homeless prevention with new case managers Tori and Josh. McKenzie shared the ERAP updated numbers are 709 applications have been submitted. Perspective 30% annual 3 months of rental assistance. 652 applications, utilities 217 applications received

6. Agency updates

Cayuga DSS seeing an uptick in out of county from Onondaga, Monroe, Tompkins inflow. Lack of affordable housing, working with adult protective services trying to get individuals on the CE list. Chronically homeless individuals are problematic because they need releases to input them. OPWDD increases, there is no housing for these individuals. Shelters are getting worse, hotels are filling up. No weekend availability. Issues in Weedsport, treating the hotel rooms like a campground and yelling at hotel staff, selling and using drugs. They need programs that work

with substance misuse and housing. Reforming relationships with landlords because the Landlords have had to pay out a lot for damages. The individuals with severe mental health are making it difficult for those who need affordable housing that

Ruth Stewart runs the RHY committee meeting- 2 youth who were experiencing homelessness. One was 17 yr old female, came asking for help, but rejected help to live with her boyfriend. The youth don't want the help as it is not local. They do not want to go to Syracuse for help. The youth with criminal justice history is couch surfing but is not able to leave the county due to the charges. Megan asked if they collect data on the youth- they do.

Shari Weiss shared that yesterday, they received their CDBG funding. They have been hosting the landlord and tenant workshops, educating on rights, health, and safety information. They partnered more with the city because of ERAP and the eviction protections, 8 tenants attended, 14 landlords attended. It was well-received. A lot of information was given from Homsite, Housing Auth, and Legal Aid. With the city and county and United Way, the need for street outreach was expressed. A lot of meetings with Chapel House, Unity House, street outreach will be provided by Cayuga County Health Network. A street outreach & advocacy position, \$25k from city and county, \$5k from UW. Homeless and at-risk of homelessness individuals will be the focus, along with mediation with landlords and the connection of services. The position will be posted on Friday.

7. New Business

James Breslin that yesterday \$1.3 received conditional funding from OPWDD. 42 apartments, 9 for intellectual disability, 3 homeless.

Tim made an announcement: he would like to create a hoarding and cluttering task force- he has reached out to several community stakeholders.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:03.