**Wilson Greene Housing Committee**

**February 19, 2019**

Present: Candice Rountree, Wilson County DSS; Katrina Mitchell, Greene Lamp; Judi Thurston, United Way; Cameron Cochran, Wilson Forward; Angela Ellis, Greene County DSS; Tony Conner, NC Works; Lynne White, Wesley Shelter, Tim Rogers, Wilson Housing Authority; LaTasha McNair, Eastpointe; Kaydi Roberson, Hope Station; Lori Walston, Wilson County DSS; Linda Walling, Hope Station; Des Taylor, Hope Station; John Apol, Hope Station; James Crowell, Eastpointe; Shana Baum, Hope Station

**Welcome/Introductions**

**BOS Information**

LaTasha shared information about a CoC funding opportunity. She also shared that all Balance of State staff would be attending the Neuse Regional meeting on April 10th in Duplin County.

**ESG – Emergency Solutions Grant**

Linda provided a report and Hope Station as the grantee in Wilson County spent all the funding allocated except $1.14. Good job to Linda and staff. Data was provided regarding numbers served and what type of housing assistance received. Hope Station received funding for 2020 and Linda is hopeful they will be able to receive additional funding not allocated in our region.

**Coordinated Assessment**

Our region has an up-to-date waitlist by name that is kept in HMIS, Housing Management Information System. When agencies make referrals, a release of information and documentation verifying homelessness must be provided. John Apol will be our Coordinated Entry/Coordinated Assessment lead. Weekly case conferences via phone call are being held with participation from all six counties in our region. Referrals with customers who have experienced domestic violence are kept on a separate list. The list is shared via e-mail with initials only. Our goal is to house those who are in the direst need.

**Point in Time Count**

Counts were completed in Wilson, Greene, Duplin, Lenoir and Wayne. No count in Sampson County, although LaTasha and Candice reached out to several stakeholders asking about completing a street or service count. The app seemed to work well. Wilson’s street count was done by Lori Walston, Linda Walling, Tim Rogers, David(chaplain at Barton) and Wilson Police Department. They did find several people. Feedback on the app: it takes too long. We had care packages to share with those we found and we also offered shelter. A service count was held at the soup kitchen with America from Wesley Shelter, Candice from DSS and Judi from United Way. We were able to interview English and Spanish speaking individuals and we also completed surveys. Angela reported that Greene County completed their first count and they did a street and service count. Candice confirmed that Hope Station, Wesley Shelter and St. John’s submitted their shelter data. BOS hosted a webinar to gather feedback about the PIT process this year. Candice shared that she recommended having training available for a longer time period before the count and giving volunteers an opportunity to practice with the app. Candice also communicated with county leads in the Region to ensure the count occurred.

**Veterans**

Tony shared a success story of a veteran and his family members being housed by Volunteers of America. VOA is not participating in our Coordinated Assessment/Entry weekly calls, and Linda and her staff agreed to reach out to remind them. The family was also referred to Veterans Residential Services for household items and furniture. Tony shared information about an event being held in Goldsboro on March 7, 8th that is for veterans.

**Community Partner Updates**

Judi – United Way received funding for emergency shelter/food and there will be information in the local newspaper about this. You can also go to United Way’s website to learn more.

Cameron – Wilson Forward continues to meet to develop a plan to address health and wellness issues and housing and food insecurity are two of the needs being discussed. March 8th we will be developing strategies and all are welcome to participate.

Angela – Greene County DSS has been part of mapping critical needs in Adult Services throughout the state

Candice – shared information about the Trauma Informed Community grant and encouraged folks to complete the survey, as this is our needs assessment and will help us tailor local training

Wesley Shelter – renovations continue at the safe house; their fundraiser, In it To Win it will be 2-21 at Pup’s. Tickets are $50

Wilson Housing Authority – they will begin construction in the spring for new units, Tim said they have been getting a lot of questions about people in need of food assistance. Lori and Angela spoke to SNAP benefits being issued early in January and February due to the government shutdown. Some customers were anxious that benefits would be taken, so they spent their entire allotment. Many may have difficulties stretching their budget to last. Linda spoke up and said that Wilson County has numerous food pantries and the state considers us oversaturated. She hasn’t seen a huge increase in customers presenting for service. SNAP benefits will be issued early in March and the state will do staggered released in April to try to acclimate recipients back to issuance on the first of the month.

LaTasha – Eastpointe received renewal funding for their Permanent Supportive Housing grant

Lori – Greater Wilson Career Fair is April 10th at the Ag Center from 10:00 – 1:00. DSS, Wilson Community College and NC Works are partners. There will be employers who have jobs and job seekers have to be job-ready and complete a screening process. Medicaid is moving to an HMO type system and Wilson County is in the first roll-out in July. This will be a big change for customers

Linda – renovation on the new shelter has begun. Hope Station has very limited financial assistance funding, please send a referral from a community partner in writing if you refer a customer. Wilson continues to have the 3rd highest eviction rate in the state. We have a need to work with landlords and clients to address this issue.

Candice asked people to volunteer to serve as facilitator.

Next meeting is March 19th at Hope Station and our facilitator is LaTasha McNair.