

Notes for Southern Mountains Homeless Coalition online/Zoom meeting
9 AM April 2, 2020

Persons attending (incomplete, secretary late to join): Kristen Martin, Emily Lowery, Stephanie Gilliam, Alyce Knaflich, Amanda Stancil, Jessica Hartz-Rice, John Lauterbach, Madeline Offen, Brenda Ploss, Jennifer ____, Matt Gruebmeier, Nikki Kilgore, Grace _____ (till 9:30), Shelley Miller with Transylvania County Schools, Chris Berg, Beth Branagan, Teena Willis, Trisha Ecklund, Sarah Kowalak, Michael Absher (Can refer to the recording for attendee information)

Minutes of previous meeting: Consideration postponed – not yet distributed.

No Balance of State Steering Committee has met since the Stay-at-Home order. Emily or Kristen will send update materials from April meetings.

Racial Justice: Stephanie Gilliam said members met Friday by Zoom, to check-in. No policies or agenda has been set to date. Jackie of Blue Ridge Community Health joined this call. The group will postpone a planned May meeting in-person till July or August. Kristen asked for questions, but none were offered.

Children and Youth Homeless Action Coalition 'CYHAC': Beth said their March meeting was postponed and has not yet been rescheduled. Kristen offered to assist remote CYHAC meetings as Thrive has upgraded their Zoom account to allow remote setups.

Coordinated Entry: COVID intrudes on the important regular work of Thrive, and other agencies, to serve a very vulnerable population. It is important to continue regular work as possible, against existing goals. For Coordinated Entry, the process of updating status of listed clients continues. We see more new homelessness ahead with job losses continuing. Evaluation work on our Coordinated Entry process is postponed.

Veterans service providers: Jessica explained that much is now done virtually. The Vets system uses a call center and call routing; these are used to take request burden off the 211 system. Much work concerns food box deliveries. The number served has been steady.

NC Works: Brenda explained there are lots of unemployment claims.

Veterans: Walk-in Clinic: Amanda Stancil said the vouchers have been frozen. Staff is bracing, trying to prep for the expected burden on the hospital. Phones are operational, concerned persons can call Amanda direct (828-273-3266). No new VASH vouchers are offered. The Housing Authority is not taking placements. Jessica Hartz-Rice asked about orientations – is VA offering any?

COVID responses: Henderson: Kristen said the usual work came to a halt last week. There's less face-to-face. Kristen meeting with Department of Health and EMS Directors. They were really unsure how to deal with about 350 people who live outside but need to be sheltered. They are exploring a location, that is not resolved. There were discussions with a hotel, but the hotel wanted support to remodel, while the County thought it could offer cleaning only. There is a call today on the efforts.

Using separation barriers to help is being considered, as are leases of hotels/motels to isolate the sick.

The Rescue Mission had to close its Day Center.

NCCEH suggested sanitation be aided by setting up portable showers and hand washing stations, a number of projects are being worked on. Additional funds for Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) will come to all four counties. Emily will get shelter funds for The Haven.

Cooperative landlords will have to agree to a 'rapid intake'. Case workers would inspect by yourself. Then a client, a lessor and an inspector would meet in some social-distance setting to do sign-offs. Getting a move-in furniture will be hard, so many placements will be sleeping bags and minimal housewares. The point is to reduce chance of illness.

Transylvania: Emily said they have met with County officials, to work on what to do with our unsheltered. A summer camp is being set up for those being tested and in quarantine. There is a conference center, so the kitchen can prep meals and take these to quarantine cabins. They want portable hand-wash stations.

The shelter is open full-time but there have been incidents. Two were asked to leave over the weekend. We have got to find space for unsheltered! There is an offer of tent spaces, but that would be hard to implement. We have word that city and county staffs will be less proactive on zoning enforcement. The point is to encourage campers first. The drawback is a complaint will still start official compliance via enforcement.

Kristen feels this situation is slower, the funding is getting more flexible. It's time to take a deep breath. It is true that very few have programs in place for this. Stuff takes time. We realize that EMS is working 24/7.

Teena Willis said Rutherford County is organizing strike teams. United Way is cooperating. A mobile crisis unit is opening.

Kristen said as Polk has a low population, most of whom are connected to churches. She has spoken to a couple of church workers, who are trying to place.

Trisha Ecklund asked about summer camps. Are County EMS trying to place people? Kristen will send out any calls related to this. Emily asked about if the National Guard might access portable showers?

Jessica Owenby is working with **homeless students**, and with school social workers, to reach out to unhoused students. A nutrition project is to get 'meals on the bus' to adapt to their needs/locations and get good food out, so determining what neighborhoods to add to coverage. We'll need to update McKinney Vento work as well as the HUD-housing efforts.

Beth asks that if anyone becomes homeless we must track on a form- please refer info to Beth.

School systems are reaching out to enable food deliveries. This may include getting grocery gift cards, doing whatever it takes.

Matt said a social worker is organizing meal sharing on the bus. Another gets people organized at bus stops. Kristen asked that these locations be listed to send out to agencies and families.

Sarah Kowalak made three points:

1. That 211 be updated on all service changes. They have handled 11,000 calls since March 18. Their texting platform has sent 60,000 messages. Go online to nc211.org or email to Amanda, or just call 211, to file an update.

2. Henderson United Way is getting lots of folks offering at Volunteer Hendo. If anyone thinks of a way to set them to work contact www.liveunitedhc.org

3. The Community Foundation and United Way set up a rolling fund for grants to meet basic needs of vulnerable people. Grants will begin to open tomorrow.

Matt asked Sarah to get all this info on to Amanda to be available on 211.

Michael Absher said that Only Hope is taking volunteers and making referrals. A donor is bringing 6000# of food which will need to be delivered – they may seek grants to do deliveries.

Emily and Kristen ask all of us to reach out however possible. They will send out local resources info as it is learned.

Madeline Offen said the courts are only hearing emergency matters, so evictions are not being scheduled. A Facebook Live update on housing rights will run at 2 PM.

Sarah asked if we know who will be sent the \$1200 relief amounts, is that tax-return linked? Pisgah Legal will continue to assist with tax filing assistance.

Kristen said some NCCEH regions are adding meetings. If a decision is made to do that we will send out emails. Coordinated Entry meetings will continue on the current schedule. For activity of the CYHAC please contact Kim and Beth.

This concluded the Zoom conference. See Appendix: Zoom chat copy, on next page.

--Chris Berg, note-taker, Southern Mountains coalition

From madeline to Everyone: 09:05 AM sorry my audio doesn't work. Madeline with Pisgah Legal

From Emily Lowery to Everyone: 09:06 AM hey alyce! good morning!

From Alyce Knafllich to Everyone: 09:17 AM aura home business as usual. put COVID 19 procedures in place at Apartment and checking in with veterans housed with necessary supplies.

From Kristen Martin to Everyone: 09:18 AM 828-273-3266 Amanda Stancil with VA

From Alyce Knafllich to Everyone: 09:22 AM forgiveness loans

From Teena Willis to Everyone: 09:23 AM I can speak to Rutherford since Suzanne isn't on

From Alyce Knafllich to Everyone: 09:27 AM aura home was approached for our facility

From Trisha Ecklund to Everyone: 09:28 AM
another thought possibly reaching out to the summer camps for kids that are currently empty??

From Teena Willis to Everyone: 09:34 AM
I have another call that I have to get on at 9:30 -Rutherford county update:

From Alyce Knafllich to Everyone: 09:46 AM
Is 211 going to increase case workers because here is a long wait time

From Sarah Kowalak to Everyone: 09:47 AM
Amanda.bauman@unitedwayabc.org for your 211 updates

From madeline to Everyone: 09:47 AM
I have a couple updates from Pisgah.

In terms of renters rights, the courts are not hearing cases except in emergency situations, which means that eviction hearings are not being heard so no one should be getting evicted right now.

We are doing a Facebook Live Housing Rights KYR at 2 p.m. today

From Sarah Kowalak to Everyone: 09:48 AM
www.liveunitedhc.org or www.cfhcforever.org for grant app

From madeline to Everyone: 09:49 AM
We are also available to help clients who need to file for taxes in order to get the stimulus checks