**Neuse Trent Housing Alliance**

**Monthly Meeting Minutes**

**8 AM**

**April 6, 2016**

**United Way Building**

Present:

 Latisha Bell, New Bern Housing Authority

 Patricia Benefield, Coastal Community Action

Jackie Dees, City of New Bern Utilities

Ron England, CarolinaEast

Brian Fike, Trillium

Penni Ford, Family Endeavors

Landa Gaskins, City of New Bern Community Development Coordinator

Lt. Linda Godette, New Bern Police Department

Debbie Hodges, Craven County Schools

Hope Koontz, Compassion Outreach

Tharesa Lee, The Living Word Worship Center

 Susan Lucas, Coastal Women’s Shelter

 Sandra Phelps, United Way

 Glenda Riggs, Carteret County Domestic Violence

Juliet Rogers, RCS

Lovay Singleton, VEBOG

Rosemary Stark, Faith Connection

Reeshema Walker, DWS NC Works

Della Walley, New Bern Housing Authority

* Jackie called the meeting to order.
* March minutes were approved with the addition of Sandra as an attendee.
* As a result of the Choice Neighborhoods Iniative, new jobs were created, Resident Service Coordiantors, to be a voice for residents of the Housing Authority. Della and Latisha have joined our group.
* Juliet gave some background prior to the discussion. We are a regional committee of the Balance of Stae, which is an arm of HUD and makes us eligible to apply for ESG funds. There are 27 regional commiees in North Carolina, which is too many to manage. We have been asked to look at reorganizing and it has been proposed that we merge with the Onslow County regional committee. A receommendation needs to be made by April 30.
* Tharesa faciliated a discussion of the questions wer have been asked to address. Questions and responses follow.

 1. Why do we have to change and not Onslow? Onslow doesn't see it that way and has concerns of their own. They will have a meeting on Friday to which we are invited. The meeting will be at the Trillium Building in Jacksonville at 165 Center Street at 8:30 AM.

 2. People in Onslow are easy to work with. Regional committees are just now receiving ESG funds. All committees have funding concerns. Pamlico and Jones counties get no funding. We need to get our county governments to see the support that Onslow County gets.

 3. Will we get lost in the shuffle by merging with a larger committee? Merging might make us both stronger. It would increase the resources available to all of us.

 4. How do we meet? Maybe separate and joint meetings? Other groups that have geographical challenges meet via conference call to overcome distance.

 5. BoS does not well utilize ESG funds. Merger could make us more competitive for ESG funding.

 6. Meetings could be held in Jones County. This also could bring Jones County interests to the table.

 7. Is the pot of money shrinking? No.

 8. Are there alternate counties we could consider merging with? Some agencies need to be sensitive to service area issues. We can suggest another county, such as Beaufort. For grant purposes, agencies would not have to include counties they do not serve.

 9. Disadvantage: We have worked so hard to get where we are.

 10. Travel could be a barrier to participation. We need to consider losing the voices of those who could not travel.

 11. Agenda items might be specific to region—would our interests be lost

 12. Which priorities, challenges and needs should be addressed in out response? Funding, service areas, and losing regional feel. This group has a bond that could be lost with the merger. Our needs are different from those of Onslow. There is a huge waiting list for housing in Onslow County.

 13. There is an economy of scale to consider as well as a loss of momentum if we merge.

 14. The majority of NTHA members are committed to continuing regardless.

* Landa, Sandra. and Tharesa (and possibly Jackie) can attend the meeting in Onslow on Friday. IF anyone else would like to attend, contact Tharesa (tharesalee@gmail.com) or Landa (gaskinsl@newbern-nc.org).
* Compassion Outreach is offering food and clothing in Bridgeton. They hope to also offer educational programs and maybe emergency housing. Hope Koontz is the contact person; her contact information is hope95431@yahoo.com; 814-573-2111; 244-0729.
* There are two upcoming CWBG public listening sessions at the Stanley White Center this month—call Landa for more information (639-7586).

**\*\*\*\*\*NEXT MEETING MAY 4 – 8 AM at UNITED WAY\*\*\*\*\***