

Monthly Meeting Minutes 5/6/20

3:15 pm, via Zoom video chat

Ventura Social Services Task Force

Attendees: Judy Alexandre, Karyn Bates, Jerry Breiner, Gane Brooking, Tara Carruth, Ninna Castellano, Kevin Clerici, Jim Duran, Jennifer Harkey, Brian Hollander, John Sanders Jones, Pamela Kelley, Megan Knight, Staci Mallett, Robert March, Miguel Marquez, Pam Marshall, Alexa Martin, Sandra Meyer, Jackie Pearce, Kappy Paulson, Karol Schulkin, Jan Schmutte, Susan White Wood,

- I. Call to order - Judy Alexandre
- II. Welcome, introductions
- III. Approval of the agenda for 5/6/20 - MSC
- IV. Approval of the minutes for 3/4/20 - MSC
- V. Treasurer's Report - Jan Schmutte
 - A. Current balance - \$2,356.46. - no change
- VI. Update on mental health letter - Kevin Clerici
 - A. Drafted a version prior to the COVID situation
 1. Requires an update to be more timely
 - B. Intent is to support an increase in the number of mental health beds & chairs in Ventura County; Judy Alexandre will provide a definition of chair versus bed
 - C. Major points:
 1. Want to acknowledge the mental health crisis in Ventura County
 2. Cite a review of Mary Haffner's findings
 3. Express support for county-operated facilities to help people with mental health issues
 4. Asking leaders (county and other) to commit to:
 - a) Open all beds (increase from 30 to 42)
 - b) Open all 12 chairs at Hillmont CSU
 - c) Generate an emergency plan
- VII. Information from Continuum of Care (COC) - Tara Carruth & Jennifer Harkey
 - A. Report on 2020 Point In Time Count
 1. Released full report with demographics
 2. Overall increase in numbers in 2020 (1743 reported)
 - a) One day snapshot
 - b) Ventura saw slight decrease from 555 (2019) to 531 (2020)
 - B. Project Roomkey & response to COVID-19
 1. Office of Emergency Services secured 4 m hotels to shelter people at high risk for COVID-19: older people (65+), people with underlying health conditions
 - a) First group came from emergency shelter
 - b) 335 people in motels
 - (1) 108 from Ventura as of 5/5/20
 - (2) Ventura & Oxnard sites full on 5/6/20

- c) Human Services Agency on site
 - (1) Behavioral Health on site
 - (2) Peer support from Turning Point
 - d) Every person placed gets medically screened
 - e) Program has mostly gone smoothly
 - (1) Challenges associated with self-isolation
 - 2. Backpack medicine - primary field outreach service to the camps
 - 3. Shower Pods and hand washing stations are still available
 - 4. Food Share coordination - especially for people without cooking facilities
 - 5. CDC - Does not recommend moving camps unless there is someplace safer to go
 - a) Educating people in camps about staying safe and healthy
 - b) Got solar chargers for the camp
 - 6. RVs & vehicle encampments
 - a) Can still enforce parking ordinances
 - (1) But public health wants people to not move every day
 - (2) So enforcement is ceasing for now.
 - b) Want Foster Park open so RVs can get water & other services.
 - c) Kappy Paulson - Are people in RVs being included in census outreach?
 - (1) Tara Carruth - outreach to RVs has been delayed
 - (a) But outreach will be going to Project Roomkey sites.
 - d) Need to get local cities to permit RV owners to live in their RVs
 - (1) Currently, many are living in unincorporated areas of the county
 - (2) Will keep us informed of how VSSTF can advocate for RV residents
 - 7. 10 people total have tested positive for COVID-19 from the homeless community
 - a) All recovered without requiring hospitalization
 - b) Access to testing is still limited.
 - 8. Judy Alexandre - we support motel conversions and formal locations for RVs
 - a) General support from the meeting attendees
 - (1) Need to generate a specific document for VSSTF members to approve.
- C. Grant and available funding status
 - 1. Got COC grant award
 - 2. Working with Housing Authority and Behavioral Health to help people remain housed
 - 3. Have lost some grants
 - 4. Currently getting HEAP (Homeless Emergency Aid Program) award out
 - a) Prioritizing on:
 - (1) Hygiene issues
 - (2) Safe distancing
 - (3) Services for Project Roomkey (FEMA currently paying 75% of expenses)

- (a) Project Roomkey - \$1.5M/month for operations
 - (i) Looking for funding sources to cover remaining 25% of costs
 - 5. AB 3300 - State legislation about permanent source of funding focused on housing and homelessness
 - a) CA Access to Housing & Services Act
 - 6. Judy Alexandre - asked Tara Carruth to list areas for advocacy.
- VIII. Current outreach - Kevin Clerici
 - A. Coordination and cooperation between local agencies has been very strong
 - B. Brian Hollander (ILRC) - What about unincorporated areas?
 - 1. Tara Carruth - Backpack Medicine works in those areas.
 - C. Jackie Pearce - Does the term encampment include recently occupied storefronts (of non-essential businesses)?
 - 1. Tara Carruth - Not considered to be encampments, but people occupying private property are being moved.
- IX. Update on the ARCH - Ninna Castellano (Regional Manager), Stacie Mallett, Megan Knight (interim program manager)
 - A. Current status:
 - 1. 18 people onsite
 - 2. 10 people in motels
 - 3. 6 people offsite with families
 - 4. 12 beds open
 - a) 3 for VPD dropoffs
 - b) 3 community partner beds
 - 5. Referral list currently closed
 - 6. Maintaining social distancing in the dorms
 - 7. Sanitizing hourly
 - B. Moving In Project - Judy Alexandre
 - 1. Kathy Powell is collecting items & has storage for stuff that people need when moving into permanent housing
 - a) Getting help from many sources
 - C. Shelter needs - Judy Alexandre
 - 1. Asking for all shelters (Turning Point, The ARCH, Salvation Army, etc.) to provide information about specific needs
- X. Information from Ventura County Behavioral Health housing - Susan White Wood
 - A. Shared data about local populations
 - 1. Seniors, disabled people
 - 2. Numbers of private and public beds.
 - a) Very clear gap between the need & the number of available beds
 - B. Boarding Care Facilities (BCF)
 - 1. Clients hand over SSDI to get all needs met
 - 2. Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly (RCFE) serve persons 60 and older
 - 3. No way to increase this housing right now.

- C. Presenting letter approved at April Search Results Behavioral Health Advisory Board (BHAB) meeting
 - 1. For letter writing campaign to ask for more funding for BCF
 - a) BCFs have historically been run by families.
 - (1) Typically 6 beds or fewer
 - (2) This model is in decline as current caregivers age & as real estate prices continue to rise.
 - b) Advocating for private assisted living facilities (ALFs) to include beds for people with extreme mental illness.
 - (1) Folks who can't be in permanent supportive housing
 - D. Brian Hollander - We should be providing independent living arrangements with as much support as possible.
 - 1. Judy Alexandre - the BCF model is in decline, and we need to address this decline
 - 2. Judy Alexandre - We will include a discussion on independent living as an agenda item for next month's VSSTF meeting.
 - E. Susan White Wood - supports higher level of care than independent living can provide
 - 1. BCFs are in decline
 - a) Goal today: How do we address this decline?
 - F. Judy Alexandre - What are Susan White Wood's recommendations?
 - 1. Susan White Wood - BHAB is working on a letter writing campaign.
 - a) Judy Alexandre - Asked for Susan White Wood to come to next meeting with a motion for VSSTF to write a letter in support of this issue.
- XI. Update from City Center and Tenderlife - Jim Duran
 - A. Tenderlife has 2 open beds
 - 1. 60 people on campus
 - B. City Center - 70 people (39 children) on campus
 - 1. 19 single moms, 3 dads, 3 couples
 - 2. 14 families lost jobs due to COVID-19
 - C. No illness reported at either location
 - D. Can support the Moving In project
 - E. Have been supplying groceries to people
 - 1. Over 1600 people in 5 weeks
 - XII. Update from Salvation Army - Sandra Meyer
 - A. Shelter is fully operational
 - B. Dealing with social distancing
 - C. Finding it difficult to limit the freedom of people used to having no restrictions
 - D. Working with Project Roomkey
 - 1. Providing clothing
 - E. Petit location expanded food pantry; now doing some food distribution at Oak Street location
 - XIII. Update on housing issues - Clyde Reynolds
 - A. Vulnerable Populations Housing Network (VPHN)

1. Efficiency Housing Task Force
 - a) Combined the Project Container Housing in Oxnard and the Tiny Homes Project in Ventura.
 - b) Trying to find a company to take the lead and locate properties for the projects
 - c) Need to deal with local ordinances and city fees.
 - d) When developing housing for vulnerable populations, services need to be included.

XIV. Agency Updates

A. Family To Family - Jan Schmutte

1. Groups have been providing sack lunches.
 - a) Dining room is closed.
 - b) Using security guard to help maintain good physical distancing.

XV. Next meeting is **June 3, 2020, 3:15 pm, via Zoom.**