



## BEDFORD AREA RESOURCE COUNCIL

402 E Main St, Bedford, VA 24523

October 28, 2022

8:30 AM to 10:00 AM

### Minutes

1. Welcome/Introduction – Andy Crawford
2. Action Group Report Outs (Chairs or Designee)
  - a. Aging/Elder Care – Christy Lucy – We had our first Senior Social. There was low attendance, but good feedback was received from those attending. We plan on having the Senior Social quarterly. The committee is working on some other ideas, such as a mentorship. The Sheriff's Department participated, and spoke about the different scams that are targeting seniors. They have a very good presentation on this topic, if anyone else is interested in having them visit and speak.
  - b. Child Care- Holly Woods Layne. Holly was not present; however, she had submitted her minutes for their Action Group meeting yesterday. These minutes are on the website. Representatives from this action group accompanied representatives of the YMCA for a presentation with Bedford Town Council, and will be meeting with the Bedford County Supervisors, advocating for funding for the child care center that the YMCA is building.
  - c. Healthy Foods - Mary Zirkle. They didn't meet, as most of their focus had been on the event at Elba on October 8. The event helped to share more information with the people who came, providing healthy chili, the recipe, and people could purchase the ingredients from Elba. The next meeting is November 17, 9am, Town Hall.
  - d. Housing - Angela Hill. Angela said that the current focus is to continue their work on getting a warming shelter established, which, hopefully will be one location, and different churches being able to staff the shelter on a rotating schedule. Another thing the group is working on, is streamlining the data gathering for the homeless in Bedford, focusing on accuracy, but also to have data for any potential grant opportunities.
  - e. Employment and Training – Andy Crawford said that this group will have a kick off meeting on December 14. He has high hopes for what can be done through this group.
  - f. Minds Together- Jennifer Smith Ramey. We continue to meet virtually, the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of each month, at 10am. We focus on having broad membership: faith based, public and private entities. We are working toward increasing the 211 providers; and working on grants where we can collaborate. We have a school-based grant that is up and running. We are looking at being a Trauma Informed Community, exploring partnerships with Roanoke, and possibly Lynchburg, who have Trauma Informed Networks.
  - g. Transportation - Denny Huff. Denny is not here, but Mary Zirkle informed that Otter Bus will be expanding to Mondays very soon.
3. Key Partners
  - a. Bedford Area Reentry Council- Tecora Johnson. No report.
  - b. Bedford Community Action Team (BCAT)- Alicia Tuck. Alicia was not present, but others commented that the meeting held in October was speaking about the various dockets being discussed. We currently have a Family Treatment docket, but the question became as to whether to do a Juvenile Drug Docket, as well, or a Juvenile Mental Health docket. The leaning is toward the Juvenile Mental Health docket.
  - c. Bedford Get Together. Heather Dooley shared that this group is still working toward getting their strategic plan developed.
  - d. Partnership for Healthy Communities (PHC)- Christy Lucy. She advised nothing to report at the moment. They had a Steering Committee meeting yesterday. The model is still being considered, thinking of training, best practices. When she has all this finalized, she will send it out to everyone.
  - e. Crime Prevention Council- Tim Brooke. Pastor Carey shared that this group is going through a renovation, with Chief Lewis's input.
  - f. Domestic Violence Coalition – Mary Buchanan Kirby. There is a fund-raiser, via raffle tickets, to win a street-legal three-wheeler electric vehicle/mo-ped. It's on Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/BedfordDVS/> Also, if people don't want to buy raffle tickets, they can also make a donation.

## **Presentation –**

Andy recommended that this section of the meeting should start with the planned presentation. The presentation is on the topic of Adult Education, by Kathryn Smith, Adult Education/GED Coordinator. Brenda (couldn't hear her surname) is her partner. Kathryn began by sharing that, in average, once someone earns their GED, they generally earn \$9,000 dollars a year more income. They also offer ESL classes to speakers of other languages. Currently, they have students from Columbia, China, Ukraine, Japan, and Venezuela. These students are the most persistent in attending classes. We also teach citizenship classes. We help with their visas, etc. We also offer the National External Degree Program (NEDP,) which is competency-based, rather than test-based. If they finish the program, they earn a Bedford County high school diploma. There's lots of things going on with Adult Ed. We also work with Virginia Career Works.

Brenda Goff spoke more about GED. GED changed in 2014, when it became more challenging. It has four tests: The reading/language/arts test is three-hours long. The math test (some parts with calculator, some without calculator) includes geometry and Algebra II, is two-hours long. The science test covers earth science, physical science, and life science, and is 90-minutes long. The Social Studies test is also 90-minutes long, with 50% of the test covering Civics and Government. The writing section of this is more complex, drawing on the students; ability to compare two viewpoints, and determine which is better supported, and explain why.

They passed out the list of classes provided. Textbooks, classes, and materials are free. If they take the practice GED test and achieve an appropriate score, then the \$120 fee is waived for the official test.

Various other ways that Adult Ed and tutoring can help were presented. Some classes can take place at the workplace. Some classes can be arranged to help adults learn to read.

They support an on-line version. They partner with the Bedford Library and teach a Chromebook class.

Denise Hutton shared that Kathryn has hit a big milestone in her career – 50 years of teaching!

## **4. Agency Announcements:**

Angela Hill – Lake Christian Ministries. We are getting slammed by many requests for financial aid for housing/rent, utility bills, etc.

Ron Cordell – Agape. He is also hearing of lots of needs. He has concerns about what their clients will do when the government ends the higher contributions to individuals; especially with utility costs rising. Previously, for Thanksgiving, they served about 650 families with gift cards so they could get a turkey or ham. This year, it's about 800 families. Right now, we're working on raising funds for this. It's a \$25 restricted gift-card for Walmart, and can only be used for a turkey, ham, or side-dishes for their meal. They're also working on Angel Tree. On another note, the Charity Home Tour was very successful; having sold more than 2,000 tickets. Eight charities will get their checks very soon. The home for Agape, was very gracious, even with having thousands of people coming through, the homeowner also gave a gift. There are other activities for Halloween,

Andy Crawford – DSS, explained that the US Government will report their decision to end the Public Health Emergency (PHE) in November, after the elections, and then there is a 60-day notice before any cuts take place. Andy explained that before the pandemic, the SNAP payments in Bedford County totaled about \$6 million dollars a year. When the supplemental SNAP benefits were provided during the Public Health Emergency, it added an additional \$6 million – totaling \$12 million coming into the Bedford economy. One potential factor which may delay any reduction, would be if there's an increase in the number of COVID cases. That's the most concrete data he's been given.

Tammy Lawhorn, DSS, head of the self-sufficiency unit. There are some changes in requirements occurring for people in the VIEW Program (Virginia Initiative for Employment and Work). The State Department of Social Services is providing updated training for the end of exemption starting in January 2023. This program has been voluntary during COVID Public Health Emergency but as of this coming January the work requirement will be reinstated for those citizens receiving TANF who do not meet an exemption.

Amanda Armstrong, Virginia Cooperative Extension. October has been a very busy time, with planning and carrying out the Elba event. Amanda made chili, and was stationed inside Elba. We had more than 100 people come out. My funding is the USDA Snap program, and I do nutrition education. I recently got a grant to work with pre-school families in Bedford County. Susan Prillaman, her coworker, is doing sessions "Balancing with Diabetes", and if anyone has questions, reach out to her.

Christy Lucy, Community Access Network. It's based in Lynchburg. They are again opening their community room if people need a place for a meeting or a class. The capacity is approximately 20; but that's with social distancing. More could fit into the room.

Mary Zirkle, Town of Bedford. Nothing to report.

Tim Brooke, St John's Episcopal Church. They're continuing to celebrate the church's 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Several activities are coming up soon, including November 10, a drive-through dinner, at no cost, but donations are accepted. They will participate in the Faith Summit coming up.

Mary Buchanan Kirby, Community Engagement and Event Coordinator for Centra-Bedford Memorial Hospital. No particular update. There is a "trunk and treat" for staff's children tonight at the front circle at the hospital. As far as the Community Health Needs Assessment, things are coming along well. We're gathering information from several sectors, and hopefully this is forming the basis of real progress in the future. We're at the end of year-one of a three-year program.

Andy Crawford reminded the group that the website now has a Google calendar for events; and to send anything that needs to be added to the calendar.

Jennifer Smith Ramey, Horizon Behavioral Health. We have a satellite office on Independence Blvd., in Bedford. We provide services for mental health, substance use, intellectual disabilities, services, which can include therapy, case management, psychiatric providers. We have one on-site now. Prior, we did tele-psychiatry, but our clients preferred in-person meetings. Jennifer thanked Mary Kirby, who has been helpful in getting more Centra employees involved in the Minds Together Action Group. She added to the information about the Faith Summit. It is a community effort. It will be held on Veteran's Day, November 11, from 9 to 3, at the Main Street United Methodist Church. Wilson Brown, from St. John's Episcopal, has been a great partner in helping to collaborate and coordinate. Betty has it posted on the BARC calendar; people need to sign up for this free event. There will be speakers from across the country, speaking on integrating faith-based, private, and public sectors for working on the Community Health Needs Assessment.

Ula Kauppi, Free Clinic of Central Virginia. One office in Lynchburg, and one in Bedford, on Center Street. At Cenerfest, the flow of pedestrian traffic brought a lot of people toward us, and learn about the Free Clinic. We've seen an uptick in patient counts. We're still open on Tuesdays, 10-to-4. We're contemplating having a second day, and want to coordinate that with the schedule of the Otter Bus. Our eye doctor retired and moved to Memphis, so we have the equipment, but need to locate a volunteer eye doctor.

Pastor Laura Carey, Prayer Outreach Ministries. Today, I'm here for Bedford Christian Ministries. They need some support for their food pantry. They will soon put out a list of their needs. Especially, there's a need for gently used winter clothing, coats, etc. We currently have a campaign for drug use prevention and for anti-bullying. For Centerfest, we had about 300 children who came by to get information, and some took a pledge. I don't have anything from the Ministerial. A lot of seniors are looking for places where they could be a part, be of some support, to feel like they have a 'say' in the community. They need to know that they have a vital role. "All the time that they're spending trying to die, they could be living." She thanked everyone for their continued efforts in the community and for their faithfulness.

Pat Hogue, Prayer Outreach.

Betty Easter, BARC Coordinator. Also, in November, full time with Society of St. Andrew, a 40 year-old nonprofit, started in Bedford County, working on gleaning and feeding America's hungry. We're currently operating in 10 states, and will be expanding.

Denise Hutton, Virginia Career Works, Adult and Dislocated Worker Career Navigator. We had our hiring event on September 26, with 89 job seekers attending, 18 employers, with some great opportunities for employment. We have another hiring event on November 11, with 13 employers. It is at our Work Force Center, in the parking lot. We also had about 250 employees displaced last week from Master Brands, who have decided to close. Also, I'm working with Jeff Bennett, of the Careers Essential Force. He will be doing some workshops on Wednesdays, up to right before Christmas, from 12:30 to 2:30 here in Bedford for some of her clients, and I'm sure he's open for others to attend. The workshops are "No Excuses, No Blame." This is to help them learn to take accountability, employer expectations, and time management. If you know someone who needs work-readiness skills, let Denise know. These classes/trainings will be held at the Bedford Self Sufficiency Center located at 204 East Main Street every Wednesday until nearing Christmas.

Jennifer Hemke, Central Virginia Health District. The health department has flu shots and COVID boosters, and these are even available for home-bound people. We have an outreach team that are available to be at any events.

Mac Duis – We are seeing an increase in enrollment. We're trying to use this year to assess and work with children who've had disruptions in the last few years of their lives. Learning is greater than just academic, but also learning behaviors that will help them be more successful in all parts of their lives. We partner with several agencies, and Horizon to work in this area. We're working to be more efficient in more areas, such as heating and air systems. This is hard, as there are supply chain issues, and so many older building. We're also getting ready to start a solar project, to reduce energy costs. We have our first two electric busses. We are nearing completion of renovations to Bedford Training School, a historic building, which allowed us to take advantage of historic tax credits. An open house will be scheduled for December 7.

Tomi Turner, DSS. Right now, we're in desperate need of foster homes. We also need guardians for disabled or elderly people. There are over 200 people in Bedford County that need a guardian. Currently, the guardians we have are DSS staff. But more are needed. If you are interested in being a guardian or a foster parent, please reach out. Andy Crawford added, that DSS is available to come to churches to present the need and learn if there are interested people.

Ashley Denney, DSS, Domestic Violence. She gave the cost of the raffle tickets for the moped mentioned earlier. One ticket=\$20, five tickets=\$75; 10 tickets=\$100; 20 tickets=\$160. The drawing is on December 16 at noon. October is Domestic Violence month.

Linda Brake, Bedford Ride. We participated for the first time in the home tour. It was a wonderful experience. Bedford Ride is funded independently, and we are looking for more volunteers to be drivers. We provide the gas.

Joan Phelps, United Way. We work with the 211 program. We, like others here, have taken a lot of rent and utility assistance calls.

Josh Benge, Good Samaritan Hospice.

Lori Moorman, Bedford Community Christmas Station. I have brochures for you to take to your clients, for the dates that we can take applications/screenings for Christmas assistance, and what people need to bring with them when they apply. (This is also included on the BARC calendar.) We also have a pantry that works year-round, and we've switched over to USDA.

John Wilks, Bedford County Sheriff's office. We'll soon be starting our Toys for Kids Christmas drive. We started this program when "Toys for Tots" stopped servicing Bedford County. We do this in cooperation with Centra, and Walmart helped out. This year, it's gotten so big. Last year they served 350 kids. These are screened through the Bedford School system. Every year it's growing, and I feel this year will be more. This year the area office of the State Police, Bedford Police Department, and Bedford County Fire and Rescue, and volunteer agencies are on board with us. Our toy boxes will go out next week, at Walmart, Dollar General, and all of our locations. People can donate toys and/or money. Then with volunteers, we go out and shop for the things on the kids' lists. Parents pick up the presents and take them home to wrap. These are all Bedford County kids!

Heather Dooley, Lynchburg Area Center for Independent Living (LACIL). I don't have anything, other than, like others, getting calls for assistance. We cover Bedford, Amherst, Lynchburg, Appomattox, Campbell.

Lila Scroggins, Bedford Celebrate Recovery. I'm so happy to be a part of this group, to find out what's available. I had a call from a family with a 15-year old with substance issues. It was great to learn that there are places for this age child, because Celebrate Recovery does not have a youth program. Ours is a spiritually based, step program, but a child with substance abuse issues, needs intensive help. So we had some place to refer the mother, to seek help.

Harold Scroggins, Bedford Celebrate Recovery. We meet at the Outpost every Thursday night at 6:30pm. We got to take part at Centerfest, for the first time, having a booth. We had good traffic, and people who came and checked us out.

Tim Saunders, we are a comprehensive group of organizations, under one name, for people who are facing barriers to employment, and to employers. We have a job fair next week. We have some Bedford employers who will be there.

Kevin Cloran, Bedford Community Church. There is a Sexual Integrity meeting at the church, Grief Share meets every Sunday at 4:30pm. We have lots of local organizations participating Monday, 10/31, for Trunk or Treat at Bedrock, from 5 to 8pm. We have a youth, 50 or so, that meet on Sunday nights. Refer any youth to Outpost for Wednesday & Sunday nights. We will participate in Agape's Angel Tree program. We are also interested in increasing families for fostering. We are looking to build our foster network, for fostering and mentoring.