

Bedford Housing Coalition

Jan. 28, 2022 Meeting

Attending were Angela Hill, Lake Christian Ministries; Denise Kennedy, Bedford Dept. of Social Services; Rachel Seale and Carolyn Furmage, interns at DSS from Liberty University; and Pam Bailey, Director of Economic Development for Bedford County.

Angela shared that the Redwood United Methodist Church warming shelter is running and operating at about half to three-quarters of its 20-person capacity. Redwood is located just outside the town of Rocky Mount but will accept unsheltered from Bedford County. Residents may check in from 7 to 8 p.m. and must check out by 8 a.m. the following morning; seven days per week. Residents are provided a hot meal for dinner and a brown bag breakfast to take with them. The shelter is open through March 4. A day space in Rocky Mount is currently under development as well.

Slides are attached from the Central Virginia Continuum of Care meeting held January 25, 2022. These slides reflect 2001 expected outcomes on various aspects of homelessness as reported by the CVCoC. In the Jan. 25 meeting, Central Va. Legal Aid shared that Central Virginia landlords and tenants have reported long waits for payment from Virginia Rent Relief Program. It *should* take 15 days from initial application to review; and an additional 15 days from review to payment, Legal Aid shared. (As an aside, Angela had a client who called Gov2Go today and was told 45 days for the entire process.)

Angela, Denise and Lisa Bailey have completed an ask letter for donations toward a hotel room program to be administered by Bedford County DSS. Please see attached and circulate as you wish. Denise will canvas churches in town and Angela will send to Lake area churches and agencies. The hotel room program would be available year-round.

Lisa could not attend the Housing Coalition Meeting, but said the Point in Time Count held Thursday, Jan. 27, 2022, included a tally only of Bedford Domestic Violence shelter guests. Sarah Fuentes shared via email that the PIT count for the region went well this year. They had few interactions with unsheltered homeless sleeping outdoors and that sheltered numbers are back to what they were pre-Pandemic. She said they anticipate increases in unsheltered homeless as safety nets are removed and weather warms.

A list of landlords is forthcoming in the next week or so for everyone's review. Angela's hope is that we can use that to pull out a list of landlords open to agency referrals. We can also use the list for future landlord education seminars.

Discussion ensued on housing data for Bedford County, requested by intern Rachel Seale for a paper. Pam recommended Rusty Mansel as a contact.

Pam also shared that Vector Space in Lynchburg is opening a training program for women interested in becoming machinists and that Blue Ridge Optical is seeking unskilled laborers.

We talked about re-establishing a connection with Bedford County Public Schools since schools may be aware of homeless students whose families could use referrals for assistance. Denise reached out and we welcome Diane Isenhour of Bedford County Public Schools.

Welcome also to Aaron Watkins, case manager with Horizon Behavioral Health, who fills representation previously provided by Regina Banks. Also, Zanita Robinson with LynCAG did call Angela and hopes to rejoin us soon.

Angela attended SAMSA's Homelessness and Housing Resource Center webinar Thursday, Feb. 3, on obtaining ID for the homeless. Tips include starting with obtaining a birth certificate as that's a primary document to be used for secondary and most state IDs; and networking with your local DMV office to build connections that fast-track the process.

The Bedford Housing Coalition meets again on Friday, Feb. 15, at 10 a.m. To join, email Angela at lcmntc@gmail.com or call 336-268-1401.