

Bedford Housing Coalition Meeting Notes

May 27, 2022 at 9:30 a.m. at Bedrock Community Church

*meeting notes transcribed from notes taken by Betty Easter, BARC coordinator

Attending were Denise Kennedy, Bedford County Dept. of Social Services; Pam Bailey, Bedford County Director of Economic Development; Jerett Wingrove, Center for Life; Heather Dooley, Medicaid Coordinator for LACIL; and Meagan Hurst, Bedford County Dept. of Social Services intern.

Denise Kennedy led the meeting.

BHC welcomes Aaron Watkins, case manager for Horizon Behavioral Health. Aaron could not attend today's meeting.

Denise shared updates on an initiative to invite landlords to a legal presentation by David Beidler or other available counsel with Blue Ridge Legal Aid. A pre-COVID presentation attracted 30 landlords of a mailing to 300. A similar presentation for tenants attracted only one person. The presentation is tentatively slated for late July and location for Central Virginia Community College. Andy Crawford, DSS Director, said DSS can fund the next mailing.

Pre-COVID, Mr. Beidler was available at Bedford Christian Ministries once per month for on-site counsel with BCM clients. This was a better option for clients than a large presentation.

Denise has still received only \$500 in donations for temporary lodging. She hopes to get \$3,000.

BHC members discussed shelter for Domestic Violence victims. If a lodging request comes in for a DV victim, DSS is called; this may occur with a single male DV victim who cannot be placed at the DV shelter. DSS has local hotel special pricing for this type of lodging.

The Virginia Rent Relief Program stopped taking new applications May 15.

Angela continues to call and visit Blue Ridge Community Church in an effort to get a cooling and warming shelter revived. If they are not able to host a shelter, they can provide guidance on operations of previous shelters.

BHC discussed asking Thomas Road Baptist Church for donations; and discussing a building at the next meeting.

Parole and Re-entry working group needs help housing sex offenders. Those with felonies may not use subsidized housing. Private landlords may. Discussion ensued about talking with Salvation Army to refurbish a shelter in Lynchburg that could accept felons and sex offenders. This could also be used as a vocational/training facility. Bedford has one client in Adult Protective Services who has been in a hotel for 18 months because no landlord will rent to him. Re-entry now has several and has funding to help. Some of the new releases are due to changes in marijuana decriminalization laws.

BHC also discussed zoning and permits for using existing land and utilizing green energy.

BHC will meet again on Friday, June 24, at Central Virginia Community College following the adjournment of the larger BARC meeting.