

Bedford Housing Coalition Meeting Notes

9:45 a.m. on Friday, July 22, 2022

Bedrock Church, Town of Bedford

Attending were Denise Kennedy with Bedford Dept. of Social Services; Angela Hill with Lake Christian Ministries; Lisa Bailey with Bedford Domestic Violence Services; Meagan Hurst, intern with Bedford Dept. of Social Services; Heather Dooley with Lynchburg Area Center for Independent Living; Aaron Watkins, case manager for Horizon Behavioral Health; Dara Cranney, site coordinator at Bedford Memorial Hospital; Betty Easter, coordinator for Bedford Area Resource Council; Pam Bailey, Economic Development Director for Bedford County; and guest Sarah Turner with The Crosswalk, a new nonprofit in Lynchburg.

In agency updates, Angela is continuing to see an increase in unsheltered homeless that mirrors national trends, as is Denise.

Lisa added that many of her DV clients want to stay in Bedford but must relocate due to lack of housing. Lisa also shared that sex trafficking has become a concern for the unsheltered homeless in that those leading sex trafficking operations are getting into shelters as guest and then approaching others shelter guest to become involved in various activities. This has led to increased screening for Bedford DV.

Heather shared that many unsheltered have pets, a recurring problem seen by other agencies. Options exist for temporary fostering and reduced fee boarding if clients will agree to do so.

Dara shared that finding housing for discharged patients remains a problem, particularly sex offenders. Dara has reached out to Oxford House and is waiting to hear back.

Sarah Turner, representing new nonprofit The Crosswalk, shared that her organization will focus on helping those in situational poverty navigate resources. Employees will serve as a consultant/guide, providing case management at no charge to client. She'll share developments as they obtain funding and proceed with hiring.

Angela and her program director Susan Hughes met with Dawn Compton at First United Methodist Church regarding a possible warming shelter. Post-meeting, Angela set up a meeting for Aug. 17 with Susan to speak with Tim Brooke and clergy at St. John's Episcopal about joining in the warming shelter effort.

Megan, a Liberty University student, has been interning with Bedford DSS since May 10. Her experience lies in psychiatric nursing and her dedication to housing stems from seeing patients released to the streets.

Pam spoke to the effects of affordable housing on workforce attraction and retention. She shared that two new county employees are unable to start their new positions until August because they can't find housing. The new apartments in Forest will sell for \$250,000 and up, which is out of reach for many employees.

Betty shared she's working on 211 updates for all BARC categories. Pam suggested Kenita Withers and Joan Phelps as contacts.

Aaron shared his clients are experiencing problems with the rising cost of living. He also helps clients with the process of having psychiatric providers provide documentation for therapy animal designation.

Heather mentioned the flow chart discussed in June. Denise and Angela have not yet begun that effort. The flow chart will be designed to help agency and departmental case managers navigate housing solutions.

Dara helped Angela locate the more robust version of housing goals on page 2 of the current goals worksheet. Angela will redistribute via email.

Angela confirmed Beidler with Legal Aid will address landlords Aug. 25 at 2 p.m. at the Bedford Welcome Center. Post-meeting, Angela firmed up presentation material with David, printed flyers and letters, and delivered to DSS for postage. As of August 9, Angela has received one email and three phone calls from landlords looking forward to both the presentation and participating in the housing coalition.

Angela shared that students at Susie G. Gibson Center, BCPS, are willing to work on trailer repairs if anyone has clients who need assistance.

Angela continues to work toward understanding housing needs for BC parole department's re-entry program. Post-meeting she requested a meeting with John Fedor and Tecora Johnson to specifically address their parolee's housing needs and understand existing resources for that demographic.

Denise and Angela shared that their meeting with Robert Hiss, County Administrator, went well. He is supportive of the idea of a county-wide housing study that could be conducted in sync with the upcoming Town of Bedford housing study. He will informally talk with individual Bedford County supervisors about the study. Centra may be a possible funding source.

Angela heard back from Lauren DiSimone with Virginia Community Capital. She may join us for a housing coalition meeting in August or later.

Angela connected with Donna Vincent, executive director for Lynchburg's Habitat for Humanity. They do have an office in the Town of Bedford and are there on Tuesdays from 10 to 4. Donna is waiting for Habitat International to review their application to acquire Bedford as a new service area. Pam also suggested the CVCC trades class as a source for Habitat volunteers.

Since the meeting, Denise and Angela have been notified that the Central Va. Continuum of Care will allow a Bedford housing agency or department to apply for as a local agent through the Notice of

Funding Opportunity on an upcoming HUD grant for homelessness services. DSS may be best equipped to handle this due to its knowledge of the grant administration process and access to grant writers.

Action Items:

Angela to start flow chart questions via email

Angela to collect feedback for housing coalition goals via email

Dara to share any info received from Oxford House and/or McGurk House of Lynchburg

Aaron shared Horizon's Revive Narcan training class info via email

Aaron to share more about therapy pet certification

Denise and Angela to work with Central Va. CoC on Notice of Funding Opportunity

Angela to meet with St. John's about a warming shelter