# HHC Advisory Board

## Meeting Minutes

September 14, 2021

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| Present: | Laurie Rolnick, Joe King, Allison Brooks, Mary Rathbun, Renee Jensen, Kelly Gonzales, Sherrain Clark, Liz Vuillemot, Lindsay Bentley, Amber VanderPloeg, Diana Jakimoski, Stephanie Pasquale, Kristian Peterson, La’Shonda Hamilton, Sally Santangelo, Karen Goetz, Nan Eaton, Megan Stuart, Miranda Eddy, Marlene Klock, Andrea Wandersee; Sue McMahon, Marty Skahen, Monica Brown |
| Next meeting: | November 2nd , 2:30 pm , Location |

1. Welcome and Introductions

* The meeting was called to order at 2:32 pm by Joe King, co-chair. Introductions were made. Joe called for a motion to approve the July meeting minutes. An edit was requested to add the date of the minutes. Karen Goetz motioned to approve with the edit, Diana Jakimoski seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

1. NOFO Update

* CoC NOFO Local Competition is out.
* The CoC received $9.8M annually for PSH, RRH, HMIS.
* Normally, the application is due in September. The due date this year is November 16.
* HUD has allocated new/bonus funding. $490,905. In the past couple of years, there has been a DV bonus of $1.1 million. The planning grant is 3% at $294,000. The HHC has to submit through a tiered system and typically, 94% of our projects are in tier one. We chose to do that since we are still responding to the pandemic.
* The HHC is in the local application phase. After that is the review period, so those board members on the PES committee will be reviewing and scoring the applications.
* The HHC staff is hoping to submit the application on November 9th- with a week of leeway.
* We are forgoing re-allocations decisions.
* New funding: SSO (Coordinated Entry project), RRH, PSH, and Th-RRH. Bonus project types: DV, Healthcare partnerships, Affordable housing partnerships
* Bonus funding: $1.1m The DV bonus has a different ranking. If we get the DV bonus, it allows us to fund more new projects.
* Healthcare projects: healthcare has to at least supply 25% funding along with a support letter.
* Housing Resource projects: partnering with affordable housing- can be a state, local, HOME, faith-based, or PHA funding. Needs to utilize housing subsidies. PSH has to have 25% existing units. RRH must serve at least 25% of program participants.
* Coordinated Entry project SSO-
* The NOFO workgroup will be coming together throughout this time frame. We can send out the zoom schedule.
* The Board has to approve the ranking- the meeting must be done at least 72 hours prior to submission because the application has to be posted for public comment.

1. Community Response to Eviction Crisis Discussion

* Laurie Rolnick gave a court update on landlord and tenant court. There has been a lot of news. NYS legislature did re-instate the eviction. Warrants are being served if tenants do not show. The tenants are. If people are having issues, the hardship form is helping them. The landlords have not given due process. There has been an affidavit that the landlords are being signed in good faith. There is a lot of chaos and confusion, behind the scene. Being able to prove that it was a COVID-related hardship. In Jan, if there hasn’t been a resolution, there will be evictions unless they are covered in the NY Safe Harbor act. The tenant would have a judgment but not an eviction. It is explicitly applied to non-payment. VLP just received guidance how the motions to test the forms. There are still provisions for landlords to evict for ongoing safety issues. But the hardship declaration form is good protection. Please encourage the clients to get counsel. DSS has been super helpful. The courts now have the rights to the records. But Syracuse has been doing the work to protect people. Monica is open to recommendations from VLP to DSS. Tenant relief is focused more on mom and pop landlords. There are still eviction cases from April and May that have not been assigned. Monica is interested in what the landlords are saying. Federal treasury guidance came out that was forwarded to many legal aid agencies. If tenants are not meeting their lease agreements, the tenants are still at risk.
* Mary shared that Cayuga landlords were reluctant because it extends for a year. DSS did aggressive reaching out. $600k has gone out and still going. If the tenants didn’t apply, the landlords should be able to apply. But she hasn’t seen the notice.
* If we are planning community response, what are the things that the HHC can plan?
* Stephanie was thinking about the new unit timeline and strategic initiatives. How to advance and support the production of new affordable units. With the complexity of production, is there a way that we can inform or educate the developers? She would love to streamline the process.
* We will start convening the meeting of a short-term committee for development. There is a lot of opportunities to share across the counties.
* Monica reported they have been busy with the ERAP. As of Friday, 1,055 payments have been requested in the amount of $8.39m. They have 1,000 applications reviewed. And 3,000 additional applications to review.
* 40 staff pulled from DSS programs to review ERAP. The biggest issue is how to get tenants to start paying their rent, even when they have the capacity to pay. They might be able to partner with the state.
* Mary thinks that people think that they don’t have to pay their rent. She is sitting in the courts. No one has been able to give a legitimate reason.
* Kristian pointed out that the people we serve are living in poverty and this may be a way that they can pay for other things. Sally shared people who are in poverty deserve to have joy and sometimes having that ability may not be legitimate.
* Laurie shared that there are landlords who are not getting paid because they are not up-to-code, which Monica shared that was instituted by Onondaga County. There could be people who are trying to save up to move somewhere else but then are not able to find another place to live because the housing stock is so low.
* In the size of the lien against the tenant, Stephanie wanted to know how these judgments are going to affect people in the long term. Monica has been working on brainstorming some type of deferment. Sally recommended the FEC for language and modeling. Megan supported the possibility of educational materials- she is willing to help cover the cost from the HHC budget- beyond ERAP
* Andrea works with the educational financial groups. They partnered with the school district around rent relief. They had 60 families attend the first meeting. There is an FEC program individual stationed in DSS.
* Stephanie wanted to know if there are marketing people that we could bring in on this.
* Laurie will be able to find out the state-wide strategies on how to avoid the judgments. There is no legal service if it’s just a judgment as there is no capacity for it. There are not a lot of judgments because there is due diligence. The amounts are typically for more than a year’s worth of rent.
* Megan wants to talk about when the eviction wave about when people start hitting the shelters. There is still concern with congregate shelter. Now that there is ESSHI and NOFO, and thinking through funding and response with development funding. How are we preparing for those who will not be able to keep housing? There are problems with the shelters now because of staffing. The county is working on its contacts with the hotels. Many places are working toward hotels instead of congregate shelters that can be turned into permanent housing.
* Amber shared the staffing concern is the #1 issue. Many of the salaried people are covering overnight shifts. Individuals are using more after this last year. How are we going to get mental health and substance misuse services connected? CCA has not had staffing issues. There are not as many referrals for women. They are contemplating transferring some dorms to men’s dorms. People are leaving the academy because they have been getting connected back to family. Parole and probation have been helping even in the inter-state relocation. Kristian has seen a lot more doubling up. The staffing has been ok at CCOC because their census has been down. RRH feels nearly impossible. The lack of safe and affordable housing. There may be issues with the length of stays. CCOC is even looking to go into Oswego county just. Providence House is a transportation service in the Carrier Circle area. Transportation shortages are going to play into the domino effect. Getting priced out of the housing market is going to be a concern.
* Diana shared that the increases aren’t allowed to be more than 2% a year. Kristian said it’s more the private landlords.
* Laurie shared in 2019 with the new act Housing Stability- any community that is 5% unoccupied, there is a provision to freeze the FMR. This is something that our community needs to look into. We are not sure how it may affect things in the long term. Sally will have her team do some research. She recommended that the HHC reach out to our public officials, especially with the state infrastructure

1. Adjournment

* We will create an affordable housing subcommittee. The PPA will come up with some advocacy plans.
* Kristian asked for an official debriefing with the CoC-funded agencies and a separate meeting for the reviewers.
* Sally Santangelo motioned to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 3:45 pm.