

**Southeastern Connecticut
Regional Human Services Coordinating Council**

*A steering committee of the
Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments*

Draft Minutes

Friday, October 15, 2021 8:30 AM

Conducted via Zoom

Attendees: Deb Monahan (Thames Valley Council for Community Action), Mayor Ron McDaniel (Town of Montville), Stephanie Turbes (Colchester Social Services), Joan Wessell (Senior Resources), Dina Sears-Graves (United Way of Eastern CT), Cathy Zall (NL Homeless Hospitality Center), Gino DeMaio (Sound Community Services), Juanita Estrada (CT DPH), Krista Veneziano (CT DPH), Lee-Ann Gomes (Norwich Human Services), Penny Newbury (The Arc), James Butler (SCCOG) Amanda Kennedy (SCCOG), Carly Holzschuh (SCCOG).

1. Call to Order

Ms. Monahan called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM.

2. Welcome and Introductions

3. Shared Services: Board Engagement & Recruitment

4. Ms. Monahan and Ms. Kennedy gave an update on the board recruitment program being developed by the Community Foundation and Chamber of Commerce of Eastern CT. Two webinars re board recruitment are planned on December 1 and December 8 (time TBD) in advance of recruitment opportunities in early 2021.

5. American Rescue Plan/COVID Recovery

Ms. Monahan asked attendees to report on continuing needs they are seeing in their agencies:

- Ms. Gomes says that in Norwich they continue to see needs for basic supports, such as childcare assistance, youth employment, job training, and mortgage assistance. Some ARPA funds will

also be going to parks infrastructure improvement, and 10 homes will be built with Habitat for Humanity.

- Ms. Wessell is still waiting for ARPA funding. Needs addressed will be transportation, meals, caregiver support, and virtual classrooms in senior centers.
- Ms. Zall is still coordinating UniteCT rental assistance; mortgage assistance programs are also coming. There is a need for funding for supporting quarantining in shelters, and they are applying for local ARPA funding. Funding from DOH CDBG CV grants will also be coming soon.
- Ms. Sears-Graves is still seeing need for food pantries to address food insecurity in the region.
- Mr. DeMaio is trying to reconnect with clients who were isolated through teletherapy and telemedicine. They saw many losses among clients and some staff – everyone is experiencing lots of grief.
- Ms. Turbes is focusing on outreach and connection to services.
- Ms. Newbury is seeing a need for workforce retention efforts, keeping clients connected, and IDD work training.
- Ms. Veneziano applauded our local health district leaders.
- Mr. McDaniel said that they didn't feel that they had clear guidance on spending ARPA funds. In Phase I, some funds are being used to address infrastructure needs and food insecurity.
- Ms. Estrada said that many local health districts are struggling to connect quarantined individuals with needed services. Ms. Monahan said that TVCCA fulfills this role – often someone will be surprised by a positive COVID test and not be prepared to quarantine with enough food in the house, etc.
- Ms. Kennedy reported on the latest Region IV Recovery Steering Committee, and efforts to match projects to funding sources. SCCOG will be putting together a page of each town's ARPA spending.
- Ms. Monahan said that she feels the most appropriate use of ARPA funding is to fund bricks and mortar infrastructure, as

expanding services with a one-time infusion of cash is difficult to sustain.

6. New Business

No new business. The next meeting of the RHSCC is scheduled for Friday, January 21st at 8:30 AM.

7. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 AM.