

DEMHS REGION 4 REGIONAL RECOVERY STEERING COMMITTEE

Community Planning & Capacity Building/Infrastructure Working Group
Economic/Natural & Cultural Resources Working Group
Health & Social Services/Housing Working Group

March 25, 2021

DRAFT Steering Committee Meeting Summary

Members Present: Mayor Fred Allyn, Town of Ledyard/SCCOG Chairman (Co-Chair); Deborah Monahan, TVCCA (Co-Chair); Jim Butler, Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments; Maryam Elahi, Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut; John Filchak, Northeastern Connecticut Council of Governments; Dr. Elsa Nuñez, Eastern Connecticut State University; Mark Oefinger, seCTer; Reverend Benjamin Watts, Shiloh Baptist Church of New London; Reverend Catherine Zall, New London Homeless Hospitality Center; Tony Sheridan, Eastern CT Chamber of Commerce; Alejandro Melendez-Cooper, Hispanic Alliance of Southeastern Connecticut; Mike Licata, Region 4 Long-term Recovery Coordinator.

Others Present: SCCOG: Sam Alexander, Carly Holzschuh, Amanda Kennedy; NECCOG: Hoween Flexer; DEMHS: Darlene Richards, Mike Caplet.

1. Call to Order

Mayor Allyn called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM.

2. Roll Call

Twelve members were in attendance.

3. Review of Meeting Notes from 2/25/21

Mayor Allyn asked that members review the February meeting notes and report any corrections to Amanda Kennedy. Members accepted the meeting notes.

4. Recovery Update- Mike Caplet

Mr. Caplet shared information that just came out from FEMA clarifying that COVID-19 funding must be focused on highest risk populations and grantees must demonstrate compliance.

Three organizations are working to ensure access to UniteCT rental/utility assistance funds in Eastern Connecticut: NL Homeless Hospitality Center, TVCCA, and Access Community Agency. These agencies will share promotional materials to SCCOG for distribution to this group.

5. Status of Reported Unmet Needs

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Ms. Kennedy shared the status of unmet needs that have been reported from Region 4. In most cases, they have been referred to a specific agency or program for follow-up. Elahi: any word about diaper bank solution? Caplet: not yet. Kennedy: some solution being discussed at state level. Elahi: concern that municipalities haven't thought through how they'll spend the stimulus funds. Mayor Allyn shared some guidance materials prepared by CCM. Butler: COGs will help coordinate but are not receiving any additional funding. Outside of Connecticut, counties are receiving funds in addition to municipalities. Filchak: EDA application that could benefit NECCOG will be submitted this week.

6. New Issues Raised

Ms. Kennedy reviewed the new issues raised by the working groups in the previous week's meetings. These will be escalated to the State as unmet needs. The most recent item submitted was about mental health. Dr. Nuñez: students are struggling with mental health due to isolation and the long semester, there are not enough services for the need. Filchak: programs are over-subscribed, children are waiting for inpatient beds (per United Services). Flexer: can stimulus funds be used to cover more counselors? Bury: what programs exist now that could be expended? Allyn: more jobs available than people looking to work. Melendez-Cooper: problems being felt by Latinos and there aren't bilingual mental health professionals. Zall: we should recognize that licensed professionals can't address whole need and ask how to increase community's capacity to support mental health. Bury: can workforce training programs train mental health professionals? Filchak: would like to focus next HHSS working group meeting on mental health to develop suggestions for Steering Committee partner actions and asks to State. Monahan: need to think about how community members can be trained in 'mental health first aid.' Bury: need to start planning to reopen 'community' i.e. reintroduce residents to being neighbors. Caplet: mission includes figuring out how to address problems locally and regionally.

7. Other

Bury: facilities are reporting mask resistance by people who have been vaccinated, we need to continue public health messaging to preserve safety and consumer confidence.

Monahan: energy assistance program has been extended through June and asset test has been waived. Fuel deliveries available through May 20th. Funds are available. Income limits apply.

Elahi: consider testifying in support of pending legislation, especially the child tax credit bill which will be critical for recovery.

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Stonington is hosting QPR training for members of the community (Question, Persuade, Refer suicide prevention training). Butler: Speaker at April 21st SCCOG meeting will be Ann Dagle of the Brian Dagle Foundation (suicide prevention and awareness) discussing available suicide prevention training. Caplet: Sandy Hook Promise will be coming to some schools in the region this spring.

8. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Thursday, April 29th at 9 AM, one week after the next set of steering committee meetings.

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:06 AM.