

**Hope for Homes Meeting Minutes**  
**September 8, 2023 at 10:00 AM at Winona Community Foundation and online**

Present: Marie Kovecsi, Nancy Brown, Kalene Engel, Patrick Michener, Dan Wilson, Rosemary Fagrelus, Linda Soderstrom, Chris Meyer, Judy Gilow, Megan Toney, Adam Moeschler, Danielle Walther, Dina Robinson, Crystal Hegge

1. **Welcome & Introductions.**
2. **Approval of Minutes:** Minutes were approved by consensus.
3. **Update on Grants:**
  - a. **Winona Community Foundation:** The revised grant application was submitted by Kalene on August 31<sup>st</sup>. Per Nancy, the reviewers have been sent the applications and will come together on September 18<sup>th</sup> to make recommendations for funding. The full board will meet on September 26<sup>th</sup> to consider awards and notifications will start to be made no later than October 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - b. **Strengthening Rural Communities Grant:** The revised grant deadline is October 12<sup>th</sup>; however, Harlan would like to have the application by mid-September. MHP would like the grant to include funding for more direct services, so dollars will be allocated to renovation and mitigation (cleanup of units), education for landlords about housing support and a small amount of advertising. The application can be submitted as an e-mail; Kalene will submit the application once it has been revised.
4. **Scattered Sites Project:**
  - a. **Personnel:** Welcome to Danielle Walther, who was hired as the Housing Resource Specialist and is in the process of onboarding and learning more about community resources. Danielle will be the front-end person to work with clients to form relationships with clients and get them into housing. The housing advocate is the person who will be providing services to the tenant. Currently, an ARMHS practitioner is filling in temporarily as the housing advocate, but the new position is posted.
  - b. **Office:** HVMHC is working on getting final bids for the renovation of the Hiawatha Bluffs Living location to create office space for the HVMHC housing staff, including Danielle, Megan and an as-yet-to-be-hired housing advocate.
  - c. **Funding:** The State of Minnesota has made pathways to housing easier than accessing ARMHS services. The Professional Statement of Need is what is required to qualify someone for housing; not a comprehensive evaluation. Thus, HVMHC will be able to put people into housing who may qualify for clinical services as long as they have a professional statement of need.

**5. Local Housing Trust Fund/Flexible Housing Fund/Other Funding:**

- a. Winona County LHTF:** As noted in previous meetings, the County has approved an increased allocation to SEMMHCRRA for 2024 for the purpose of pursuing additional grant dollars and funding a County Local Housing Trust Fund. A joint city-county trust fund could be established through a Joint Powers Agreement.
  - b. Hope for Hopes Flexible Housing Fund:** Both of the above-mentioned grants seek money to be placed into a flexible housing fund held at Winona Community Foundation. The advisors of the fund would be the Hope for Homes group. A subcommittee or workgroup of Hope for Homes will need to develop policies/procedures for receiving donations, accepting applications and approving and distributing funding. Coordinating this fund with other entities offering emergency or housing-related funding will be important. Nancy noted that WCF has an Emergency Assistance Fund that was established many years ago by an anonymous donor; funds are distributed by various community organizations. Kalene noted that she recently completed updates to the WRAP+ Policies and Procedures Manual which includes policies and forms for accessing funding.
  - c. Other Funding:** Both Winona County and the City of Winona will be getting over \$130,000 each from the state for housing purposes, two years in a row, for a total of over \$500,000. Supportive housing is one of the allowable uses of the funding, as is creating a housing trust fund. This group might consider lobbying the County or City for some of those funds.
- 6. Structure Options for Hope for Homes:** Marie suggested that the group continue to operate under the CJCC for now, but keep other options in mind for the future. Rosemary suggests that this group apply for an implementation grant from MHP.
- 7. Mailing List:** Marie reviewed the current members on the mailing list and make revisions based upon input from those present.
- 8. Member Updates:**
- a. CJCC/WRAP+:** WRAP+ is sponsoring a Poverty Simulation on October 12<sup>th</sup> from 9-11 am and 1-3pm at the VFW. Signup at [hvmhc.org](http://hvmhc.org) by clicking on the Community Mental Health Trainings button. Volunteers (to man the agency stations) and participants are both needed.
  - b. Engage Winona Kitchen Table:** The Kitchen Table is working with 14 participants who have gone through their personal stories and identified themes that are occurring in Winona. Dan is working on a reader's guide to the Winona County Housing Study.
  - c. MHP Stats:** Linda shared Minnesota Housing Partnerships most recent housing stats for Winona County.

- d. Catholic Charities: Catholic Charities hired a new executive director, John Meyers. He will be in Winona twice a week.
  - e. Advocacy Center: Peter's Biergarten is hosting an event on September 9<sup>th</sup> and will be donating some of the proceeds to the Advocacy Center.
  - f. Hiawatha Valley Mental Health Center: HVMHC is hosting, Bringing Light Into Darkness, a suicide prevent event. Duelling Pianos will be at the Minnesota Marine Art Museum on October 6<sup>th</sup> from 5-8pm. Registration is available at: <https://www.hvmhc.org/bringing-light-into-darkness/>
  - g. NAMI: Judy is co-teaching the NAMI Family to Family Class at Winona Middle School. The class is four weeks long and meets on Mondays and Wednesdays at the Winona Middle School from 6:30 to 9:00 a.m. The purpose of the class is to help people better understand mental illness and how to deal with it.
9. **Next Meeting**: Due to the unavailability of several persons, the date was changed to October 6, 2023 at Winona Community Foundation. Future regular meetings will be held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of each month at 10:00 a.m.

Meeting adjourned: 11:40 a.m.

Minutes by Kalene Engel