

Hope for Homes Meeting Minutes
November 3, 2023 at 10:00 AM at Winona Community Foundation and online

Present: Marie Kovcesi, Nancy Brown, Kalene Engel, Linda Soderstrom, Chris Meyer, Judy Gilow, Megan Toney, Danielle Walther, Crystal Hegge, Nick Larsen, Austin Klein, Jess Sullivan

1. **Welcome & Introductions.** Special welcome to Austin Klein, who was recently hired as the Community Development Specialist for the City of Winona. Kalene has accepted employment with SMRLS and will not be able to attend meetings (or take minutes) after the December meeting.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** Minutes were approved by consensus.
3. **Update on Grants:**
 - a. **Winona Community Foundation:** The check that was issued needs to be re-issued in the name of Winona County. The County has signed the grant agreement.
 - b. **Strengthening Rural Communities Grant:** The grant was submitted prior to the October 12th deadline, but Harlan Buckalew of MHP requested some additional clarifications on a few items before he presented it to the grant committee. Crystal spoke with him and clarified that no MHP funds would be used for food or entertainment and that the staff time listed was being paid by a different source. She also provided additional information about how the funds would be used by one year from receipt of funds. Harlan intends to present the information in front of the grant committee, but is currently dealing with a family emergency that has prevented him from doing so thus far. He anticipates that it will take 1-2 weeks before we receive a firm answer. During his conversation with Crystal, Harlan noted that we need to show a 1:1 match for every dollar used.
 - c. **Winona Community Foundation Impact Grant:** The Winona Community Foundation is offering a \$100,000 impact grant to one grantee for a project that will be of benefit to the Winona community. WCF is accepting letters of intent through Sunday, November 5th at midnight. From the applicants, 3-5 entities will be chosen to fill out the grant application. The lead applicant must be a 501(c)(3). Discussion was held about whether this group would want to submit a letter of intent for the Scattered Sites Project. By the end of the meeting, Megan had confirmed that Hiawatha Valley Mental Health Center was submitting a letter of intent which included a portion of funding for the Scattered Sites Project.
4. **Scattered Sites Project:**
 - a. **Project Updates:** Tim Hunter, Danielle and Jennifer Prins (of the Rochester/Southeast MN Continuum of Care) will be meeting soon to discuss processes and develop and agenda of next steps, which are likely to include MOUs (Memoranda of Understanding) to create strong landlord relationships as well as identifying areas of high need. HVMHC has learned a lot with its work at Waters Edge insofar as the landlord arrangement is

concerned. The county is involved because it holds the vendor agreements and reviews all of the documentation. Recently, they also participated in the site inspections. Karen Bunkowski has included Andrea Smith of her department on these activities. However, that landlord is a corporation, not a private landlord. HVMHC wants to develop a clear process detailing the expectations and roles of landlords, tenants, county and HVMHC. Construction on the new housing office starts next week!

- b. Community Event:** Discussion was held on the community event. The event will tentatively be scheduled for the 2nd week of March from 1-2pm at the Garden Room at HVMHC. At the event, HVMHC staff will discuss the Scattered Sites Project and answer questions. This will be an opportunity to get the word out to the community about the program as well as recruit landlords.
5. **Collaborator's List:** Marie had distributed a draft of a collaborator's list prior to the meeting. Additions were made to the list as follows (changes shown in bold:

(People, Organizations, Government Units that need to know about us or that we can work with...)

SEMCAC— housing upgrades? heating assistance? **Sheila, Tressa, Cindy Biste, Melissa FEIN**

SEMMCHRA— Buffy **Beranek** (Local Housing Trust Fund?)

Habitat for Humanity— Brittany Hennessy (rehab assistance?)

MN State College SE (rehab assistance?) **Scott Herold**

Engage Winona—Marcia Ratliff, plus (Kitchen Table/Advocacy?) **Dan Wilson, NDea Young**

Fox Hole Discovery— Malia Fox (Advocacy/Referrals?)

Catholic Charities— Patrick Michener (Advocacy/Referrals)

Winona County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council-**as of 1/1/24 – Kalene's replacement Karlene Engel (Advocacy/Referrals/Workgroup Assistance)**

Winona County—Commissioners, Administrator, DHS **Karen Bunkowski, Andrea Smith, Maureen Holte**

Advocacy/Referrals/Individual client assistances

Winona City—Council Members, City Manager, Housing Staff **Chad Ubl, Nick Larson, Austin Klein, Scott Sherman, Lucy McMartin**

Advocacy/Referrals ???

Hiawatha Valley Mental Health Center

Erik Siever, plus ... Housing Resource Specialist (Danielle Walther), **Megan Toney**
Advocacy/Applications/Services/ongoing assistance

Winona Community Foundation— Nancy Brown

Collect/Disburse flexible housing funds

Advocacy Center of Winona— Crystal Hegge (Advocacy/Referrals)

WeCare MN—Dina Nelson (Housing Provider) **Housing Stabilization Service (MA)**

HUB—Winona Health Clinic— Rachel Stoll (Advocacy/ Referrals) **Jackie Henderson**

Landlord Association **Dave Pringle?**

Winona State University (Bridges Health Care?) **Jen Timm**

CEDA— Dusty Liston (Advocacy/City and County Planning)

Winona Volunteer Services – Kay Peterson

WRAP+-Kalene Engel

6. **Hope for Homes Task List**

- **Charter?:** After discussion, it was agreed that we do not need a charter for the Scattered Sites Program as that is being run under HVMHC.
- **Policies/Guidelines:** Linda, Megan and Crystal volunteered to form a workgroup to develop a flowchart and funding guidelines for the disbursement of funds from the Flex Fund. Kalene will send Crystal the WRAP+ flowchart and documents so she can edit accordingly. The same group will review/revise the Hope for Homes Operating Agreement. Danielle will receive the applications for funding to determine eligibility, but would not be part of the team deciding funding requests. It's not necessary to recreate a new application for housing because all supportive housing has the same requirements for qualification (i.e. Professional Statement of Need).

7. **Other:** (Some of these items were discussed at other points during the meeting, but are included here for clarify in the minutes)

- a. **New housing in Winona:** The 64 unit apartment building going in by Ace Hardware is receiving no government funding, so there are no set asides for low income or disabled persons. It's a 64 unit apartment building.
- b. **New Laws:** Per Linda, there are 20+ new tenant protections as a result of the recent legislative session. Homelinemn.org has webinars and other information on these changes.
- c. **Advocacy:** Make sure to have your voices heard on the comp plan recommendations. Think about writing a letter to the editor as an educational tool.

Meeting adjourned: 11:35 a.m.

Next Meeting: December 8, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.

Minutes by Kalene Engel