

Highland Community Collaboration Council
Via Zoom
Meeting Minutes
July 12, 2021
9:30am

The Highlands Community Collaboration Council had a virtual meeting via Zoom on July 12, 2021.

Welcome and Introductions

Chris opened the meeting at 9:30 and members introduced themselves. He asked for additions or corrections to the agenda. There were 20 members in attendance today. Chris Shortt, Jimmy Makenzie, Linda Austin, Felisha McNabb, Candice Morris, Chuck Stanley, Chris Snipes, Kathy Fugate, Seekqumarie Hawkins, Carissa South, Bobby Cartwright, Susan Smith, Manuel Street, Emma Eaton, Stan Rose, Kim Coe, Chris Austin, Richard Keene, Howard Chapman and Matthew Sackwitz were in attendance.

- Review and approval of June 14, 2021 meeting minutes.

Linda motioned and Emma seconded the motion. All in favor. The minutes are approved

Guest Speakers:

- Felicia McNabb

Executive Director

Occupational Enterprises Inc.

Overview of OEI services and an update regarding Council's SCC status. The SCC is active and in good standing as of March 9th. We have an address change that is still pending. She will call and make sure that is updated.

OEI was founded 24 years ago by a group of 8 DSS Directors. The VIEW program had many restrictions so they were able to tap into some funding and hire a director of the organization. There are caseworkers placed in several DSS agencies. They take some the hardest to serve VIEW clients and walk along the path with them.

There are job readiness training courses being offered at several DSS offices. It is a week long course. They are assessed for barriers and goals. We help them register with the VEC. There are parenting classes offered in some areas. This works with families that are involved with CPS. There is a Cars program. Vehicles for Change provides cars for \$92 per month and a warranty. Recent

changes to the program is that it now requires a \$2300 down payment. We recently wrote a grant for \$89,000 and received it. It will help some with a down payment. If credit score is about 500, we can help them get financed locally. Unfortunately, this is a 29% interest rate. The grant will allow us to hire someone to oversee the program and develop some partner deals. It should provide about 15 cars. It is a very popular program and we want to see it grow and help more clients.

We offer transportation services in some localities. They provide 24-hour service in some localities. The 3 R's program is partially funded by a grant and through contracts with local agencies. We work closely with them to eliminate barriers to employment.

Together We Can is a program that works with families to assist them working through the steps of a service plan to provide a stable home and get their kids back. It is a hugely successful program. They are able to close a case eight months early. This results in a huge cost savings.

Ticket to Work is open to anyone receiving disability. It gives them the opportunity to return to work. It will protect their Medicaid. After a period of time, they will lose their SSDI check. It is a great program for those who are temporarily receiving disability benefits.

The Bargain Basement is a thrift store located in Lebanon. It is open 9-5 Monday through Friday and 9-1 on Saturday. We do vouchers for those who are unable to pay. We average around 400 volunteer hours per month. They received 29 referrals from probation and parole. 23 took advantage of the program.

The new address is:

450 Commerce Drive, Suite 6
Abingdon, VA 24311

A PowerPoint presentation was provided to the group.

- Matthew Sackwitz

Update regarding planned Q&A with Pocahontas State Correction Center for August 2021.

Matt will provide Chris with a copy of the questions from inmates at Pocahontas. The inmates have several questions. Kim Coe will organize a Zoom meeting Q&A session. There will be three inmates on the video. They are all being released within 6-months and will return to our catchment area. We want to help them overcome some of the barriers. The inmates have a lot of anxiety about re-entry and this session will be a great benefit to them. Especially for those who do not have family support. It will also help us understand what they are going through. Kim will coordinate the meeting with Chris Austin. Most of the questions can be handled by a handful of people. Chris shared the questions with the group. The questions are about SNAP, transportation, clothing, mental health, job search and housing. Kim says they are requesting permission to use the cameras. The three inmates will be returning to Wythe and Tazewell Counties.

New Business

- Refer to committee members:
- Tentative IN-PERSON meeting for Monday August 9, 2021 (Smyth Co): Refer to Chris Austin. Those who have not received the vaccine are required to wear a mask while in the building.

September 2021 Council Presentations:

Presenters Needed

Sub-Committee Reports

Housing Committee/ Service Integration Committee/ Grants/Finance Committee
(Matt, Emma, Andy, Felisha, and Linda)

Employment Committee: (Jimmy with DARS, Mike with VEC)
None

Mentoring Committee/ Substance Abuse Committee: (Ruth, Teresa, Chris, Chuck)
None

Public Relations Committee: (Manuel)
None

Executive Committee: (Chris, Richard, Felisha and Chris).
None

Re-entry Updates

None

Local Coalition Updates

Questions/Concerns/Comments/Announcements:

Linda provided information about a yearlong \$1000 program in Tennessee. Recovery Soldiers has a website that provides additional information about the program. BLR celebrated their 1-year anniversary last month. Most are in the program for 60-days. Next ASAC meeting is August 12th in Dickenson County. There is also a virtual option. The Saltville/Rich Valley Mountain Movers coalition is becoming active. Faith Community Dinner Meeting with Dr. Carol Pratt is meeting in Damascus. Planning to have Jimmy Wayne stop by in the Fall. He had a traumatic childhood and does public awareness presentations. There is a plan to develop a network for foster families. November 11 in

Abingdon and 12th at UVA Wise. Linda asks that everyone take the 5-minute Narcan training.

Next meeting –August 9, 2021: second Monday

We meet the second Monday of each month.

<http://www.highlandsccc.org>

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The meeting adjourned at 10:42am.

If there is someone you would like for us to invite to a future meeting as either a guest or member, please let one of us know.

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Respectfully submitted,

Chris Austin
Secretary