

Highland Community Collaboration Council  
Meeting Minutes  
September 11, 2017

The Highlands Community Collaboration Council had a meeting on September 11, 2017 at the Smyth County DSS conference room.

**Welcome and Introductions**

Chris opened the meeting at 9:30 and members introduced themselves. A sign-in sheet was passed around the room. He asked for additions or corrections to the agenda.

**Review and approval of Minutes of August 14, 2017 meeting**

Matt motioned and Joe seconded the minutes. All in favor. The minutes are approved

**New Business**

- **Matt Sackwitz: Grant update**

Matt followed up on the AEP grant last week and has not received a response as of today. He has also viewed grants.gov but hasn't seen anything lately that would be appropriate for our council. Matt requests that we begin tracking the number of individuals served by the council. This will assist with grant applications. He requests that members e-mail a service integration committee member when an individual is served by the council. Individuals will be assigned and tracked by a number. This will protect the privacy of the individual and the name will not be shared with the other members of the council.

Chris reported that two inmates were released this month. One is in a hotel and the other is in a homeless apartment in Bristol. Tax dollars are used to purchase clothing and re-entry packages (blankets, hygiene products, etc.) are provided. Often, these individuals need all resources to assist with re-entry. He asks for ideas on how these services could be approved.

Linda: How much notice do you receive? Chris: unless it is a rush release, we normally know a few weeks in advance. It is sometimes difficult when family members do not want to help. There is a Salvation Army shelter but it is on the Tennessee side. Matt says the Highlands Thrift store in Abingdon is available to assist with clothing and household items.

Ruth says she assumes inmates with mental health issues would be prescribed a medication regimen and would continue that upon release.

Howard mentioned an individual who has recently heard of a model in the state of Tennessee that assists those who are recently released. Chris says Healing Hands in Bristol is also doing good work. Howard says his agency operates with Federal funds and that is subject to be cut.

Chris welcomed members to visit his office for a day and see how the process works.

- **Manuel Street: Website maintenance fees**

The website is getting 200 views per week. \$100 per year is the annual fee. The annual fee covers costs from August 2017-August 2018. Manuel says his church is donating some money and he says he is ok with the council using those funds to pay website fees. Felisha says OEI has been covering some fees for a couple of years now, it may be good to raise some funds within the council to pay these common fees. Website fees and regularly occurring fees are around \$200 per year. Chris asked if the group has any ideas. Ruth asked if members could be charged a fee. Matt says that would change our tax filing. He recommends that we just pass the hat and give the money to Felisha. OEI will track the funds. She can bring a financial report to each meeting. OEI is prepared to receive donations for the council. Checks can be made out to OEI. Manuel can place a “donate now” button to the website. We will add a financial report to the agenda. Felisha can provide the report. Ruth mentioned that Linda spoke about rallying support for BLR through local churches. Chris says the request is that a local church can sponsor a bed at BLR each month. Matt says Kim had an intern call and request assistance from churches and only around seven of them agreed to help. Linda says the giving may already be assigned to assist with another entity.

**Continued discussion from last meeting: Future goals of HCCC**

Chris says it would be good if we have some focused goals for the council. It seems to be a moving target. Felisha says it may be difficult to get donors to pay for administrative fees. Howard says he invited 125 churches to attend a breakfast and only a handful showed up. It is difficult to get them involved. Tommy says goals and objectives are like a roadmap. He recommends that we dedicate a meeting to list some goals and put our efforts toward that. Chris recommends that he bring his person from DOC to mediate a planning meeting. He thinks we need to make the best use of our valuable time. That would occur in November. Ruth said there are goals and objectives that were created by this council several years ago. It may be good to re-visit those documents and see where we stand. Felisha says we have a lot of knowledge in this group. We need to figure out what void this group is filling. This will assist is in determining what we can do together that we cannot accomplish individually. Chris says this is a common drawback...that we try to do everything instead of focusing. Matt says there used to be monthly service meetings and there was some concern about PII being shared. The SIC was formed and the information wasn't publicly broadcast. We lost the tracking of individuals.

Linda says she thinks the offer of Bland DOC staff to allow us to meet and have some input from those who will soon be released. Tommy says the council began as a substance abuse coalition focused on raising awareness. The members of the group were here to coordinate services. We created a white paper that brought out the fact that we have a drug epidemic in southwest Virginia. It supported the CSB's and faith-based efforts. When we brought the re-entry and substance abuse efforts together, we brought people in and discussed ways to help them. It is a lot to ask of someone to come and share their story with 15 strangers. It would be better to let that discussion happen within the committee. Tommy is a member of OneCare and they ask agencies to contribute. CSB's and DSS's provided annual financial support. Their efforts center around substance abuse. This council needs to see what we want to be. Linda asks what the governor's intentions were in creating re-entry councils. Tommy says that was two governors ago and we are about to elect a third one. Tommy likes the idea of being proactive by meeting with the DOC and those who are about to be released.

Joe says there are regular releases (those with family support) and non-regular releases (those with no family support). Some are released to another part of the state. Those with mental health issues receive transition planning one-year in advance of release.

Ruth says the training in October will include a discussion of the four local coalition goals.

Chris says we will have goal setting session on November 13<sup>th</sup>.

- **Sub -Committee Reports:**

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

*Employment Committee: (Jimmy with DARS, Mike)*

*Mentoring Committee/ Substance Abuse Committee: (Ruth, Teresa, Chris, Chuck)*

*Public Relations Committee: (Kim, Manuel)*

*Executive Committee: (Chris, Kim, Felisha and Chris).*

## **Re-entry Updates**

See above.

## **Local Coalition Updates**

See above.

**Questions/Concerns/Comments/Announcements:**

Felisha asks those who are making donations, please provide your name and address.

Chris asked if we should consider changing the meeting location. Matt says he thinks we will lose momentum if we do that.

Chris encourages everyone to attend the November meeting. We will be discussing direction, goals and objectives.

Ruth reminded everyone about the Trauma training in November and brochures are available.

**Next meeting –November 13, 2017 (October 9: STATE HOLIDAY)**

<http://www.highlandsgccc.org>

<https://www.facebook.com/Highlands-Community-Collaboration-Council-292297421224552/>

**The meeting adjourned at 10:46am.**

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.

[christopher.shortt@vadoc.virginia.gov](mailto:christopher.shortt@vadoc.virginia.gov)

[kimberly.sobey@dss.virginia.gov](mailto:kimberly.sobey@dss.virginia.gov)

[manuelstreet14@gmail.com](mailto:manuelstreet14@gmail.com)

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Austin  
Secretary