



COUNTY OF HUNTERDON NEW JERSEY
HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL
LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ALCOHOLISM & DRUG ABUSE
YOUTH SERVICES COMMISSION
MENTAL HEALTH BOARD



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REFERENCE:

- Council
- Mental Health
- Youth
- Disability Services
- Substance Abuse
- Transportation

Approved July 26, 2023

HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL

Regular Meeting
Wednesday, June 28, 2023, 3:30 p.m.
Human Services Conference Room I
And via Microsoft Teams

MINUTES

| <u>MEMBERS PRESENT</u> | <u>EX-OFFICIO</u> | <u>STAFF</u> | <u>GUESTS</u> | <u>COUNTY DIV. REPS.</u> |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| J. Gorman | L. Piazza-Long | C. Baxevane | K. Burghardt | L. Haynes |
| R. Horoschak | L. Case | E. Neukum | E. Kesler | C. Sagona |
| S. Elliot | M. Eichorn | M. O'Reilly | K. Fullerton | E. Kesler |
| F. Leddy | R. Cooper | | T. Kero | S. Lax |
| M. LaQuaglia | J. Cassano | | S. Freedman | L. Bivona |
| | | | B. Renkens | M. Scherer |
| | | | | S. Nekola |

I. CONVENE: OPEN PUBLIC MEETING STATEMENT:

“This meeting is being held in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 – 10:4-21. Notice of this meeting has been published in the Hunterdon County Democrat and the Courier News. A public notice announcing this meeting has also been placed in the lobby of the Hunterdon County Department of Human Services; the first floor on the Main Street County Complex, 71 Main Street, Flemington, NJ; the Route 12 County Complex, Building #3, 314 State Route 12, Flemington, NJ; and the County Clerk’s Office.”

The Council allows time for comments from the public at the end of each meeting. Public comments are limited to three (3) minutes per person per meeting, in order to ensure that all attendees have an opportunity to be heard. Brief written comments may also be submitted for distribution during the meeting.

PURPOSE:

The Hunterdon County Human Services Advisory Council (HSAC) is a county-based planning, advisory, and advocacy organization dedicated to helping the community meet its human service needs. The HSAC seeks to facilitate, coordinate, and enhance the delivery of human services

through collaborative relationships within the county, and between the counties and private and State agencies.

- II. ***APPROVAL OF MINUTES**: A motion was made by S. Elliot to approve the meeting minutes of May 24, 2023. F. Leddy seconded the motion. All members were in favor. The motion passed and the minutes were approved.

III. **PRESENTATION**: ComMITT Meal Kit

J. Gorman conveyed the ComMITT Meal Kit originated from one of the Partnership for Health's key initiatives. She advised there are many benefits to family meals, with much research to confirm this. Research indicates family meals support better nutrition, healthier weight, portion control, promotes well-being, increases self-esteem, promotes stronger family relationships, improves grades, and reduces risky behavior. For these reasons, the Flemington Area Food Pantry (FAFP) wants to ensure their clients have access to family meals. J. Gorman advised the ComMITT Meal Kit was created to be a commitment to family meals.

J. Gorman communicated K. Blanda, and Partnership for Health do an excellent job linking individuals together. America's Grow a Row (AGAR) and Chef Shauna Alvarez were the first partners for the ComMITT Meal Kits. J. Gorman reported there are seventy-five (75) pantry families with each family having two to four (2-4) school aged children. J. Gorman shared a story of a child whose family loved the program because they cannot afford to eat out, but the Meal Kit provides the feeling of eating out. J. Gorman stated the kits include a recipe, all required ingredients as well as nutritional activities and information. The kit also includes suggested out-door activities or family activities for the family to do. Flemington Area Food Pantry (FAFP) partners with Prevention Resources and they provide information cards to include in the meal kits that discuss healthy behaviors.

J. Gorman reported Flemington Area Food Pantry submits their shopping list to ShopRite, ShopRite prepares the order, the order is picked up, and the meal kits are assembled. Once the meal kits are assembled, they are ready to be picked up by clients. Chef Shauna Alvarez prepares a monthly video on how to prepare the meals. J. Gorman shared quotes from clients that received the meal kits. Discussion ensued.

J. Gorman shared that clients are asked to complete a short survey after each meal kit. The majority of responses ranked last months meal being a 4 out of 5, and a few ranked the meal being 5 out of 5. The survey also asks if the family reviewed the insert provided by Hunterdon County Prevention Resources. She outlined the inserts provided are good conversation starters for family dinners. J. Gorman added agencies interested in including information in the meal kits can contact herself via email (info@flemingtonfoodpantry.org).

R. Horoschak asked if there is a target family size for the meal kits. J. Gorman conveyed the meal kits are one size and are assembled to serve between two to five (2-5) individuals. She added there is one larger family who the food pantry supplies two kits to. Discussion ensued.

R. Horoschak asked J. Gorman what the qualifications were to receive the ComMITT Meal Kits. J. Gorman informed the group individuals must be a pantry client and the pantry uses the USDA eligibility requirements which states 185% of the U.S. poverty level.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

- A. State HSAC Meeting Updates:** M. O'Reilly reported the Department of Children and Families (DCF) is focusing on their contract with 2-1-1 to enhance their website. She thanked those who have participated in the focus groups. She conveyed DCF is examining the feedback and she hopes the website will be available to preview in the next six (6) months or so. M. O'Reilly stated the overarching theme for the counties that participated in the DCF needs assessment was clients not knowing where to access services. DCF's plan is to enhance the NJ 211 website, and have it mirror other websites that receive more traffic.

V. OLD BUSINESS:

- A. Housing Social Worker Position:** J. Gorman asked K. Burghardt what the status was on the Housing Social Worker position that will be opening. K. Burghardt advised the position is not yet posted. The salary will be \$49,750.00 and the duties of the position will be to assist clients with finding housing.

VI. REPORTS:

- A. County Department of Human Services (CDHS):** M. O'Reilly reported the Hunterdon County Opioid Settlement Task Force began meeting a few weeks ago. They plan to release a survey to the community by the end of the week. The survey will be live for thirty (30) days. The Task Force's next steps will be to hold focus groups and listening sessions to seek public input on the distribution of the funds. She conveyed it is the Task Force's hope to complete this in July and August. Once completed, a plan will be created to spend the funds. The plan will go before the Board of County Commissioners, once approved, the plan will be shared with the community. M. O'Reilly encouraged the group to share the survey with their contacts once it is live.

M. O'Reilly announced the Hunterdon County Parks Division is hosting a grand re-opening of Deer Path Park tomorrow, Thursday, June 29, 2023 at 4:30 p.m. The Parks Division will be unveiling an accessible park for children. Eric LeGrand, Rutgers football star will be present to celebrate the grand reopening with his mother, Karen. M. O'Reilly stated she believes this is the first accessible park in Hunterdon County.

M. O'Reilly shared that the Hunterdon County Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition Program is available for residents. She stated the program is limited to senior citizens at least sixty (60) years or older or who turn sixty (60) by July 31, 2023 and meet the household gross income guidelines of \$26,973.00 for one person and \$36,482.00 for two persons. If anyone has questions regarding this program, they are encouraged to contact Pia Rey at the Division of Seniors Disabilities and Veterans Services.

M. O'Reilly communicated Barbara Metzger announced her retirement from her position with Hunterdon County. Her last day will be June 30, 2023. M. O'Reilly thanked Barbara Metzger for her dedication to her clients and wished her the best on her well-deserved retirement.

S. Elliot asked if the County will be posting the opening position or if the Division will be hiring from within. M. O'Reilly advised it is a work in progress due to the new Division Head, S. Nekola, and the announcement of B. Metzger and P. Rey both retiring. M. O'Reilly

stated H. Pappas will temporarily taking over B. Metzger's duties.

J. Gorman asked if P. Rey was distributing the Farmer's Market Coupons at the Senior Center. M. O'Reilly advised that was correct. Coupons can be picked up on Thursdays or Fridays from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. at the Senior Center. The vouchers are good for \$50.00 of produce this year.

B. NJ Department of Human Services (DHS): No report at this time.

C. NJ Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P): M. Scherer reported for the month of May 2023, the Hunterdon local office is currently working with 197 children. 11 children are in placement and DCP&P received 50 referrals for the month of May.

J. Gorman asked M. Scherer under what circumstances would DCP&P place a family in a hotel? He advised they would consult with the Board of Social Services for those types of situations. L. Piazza-Long conveyed DCP&P will step in at times when the Social Services Board cannot meet a need that DCP&P feels is necessary. She advised it is a rare occurrence, but it does happen.

C. Baxevane stated DCP&P works well with the Board of Social Services. She advised if they are unable to pay for a client's hotel stay, Social Services may cover the first two weeks of the clients stay until DCP&P is able to cover the remainder of their stay while looking for housing. Discussion ensued.

D. HSAC Committee Reports:

By-Laws Committee: R. Horoschak conveyed the committee membership list needs to be updated to reflect the new HSAC year. He added the By-Laws committee currently has three (3) members, but he would like to increase membership to four (4) or five (5) members. R. Horoschak remains the chair of the By-Laws committee. Discussion ensued.

Planning and Integration Committee: M. O'Reilly stated she will be touching base with B. Renkens about scheduling a meeting.

Legislative Committee: S. Elliot reported there were a few bills of interest that are going through Legislature now. S. Lax presented the Code Red legislation. The Code Red Program provides cooling centers for residents experiencing homelessness throughout the state during periods of extreme heat.

S. Elliot stated it is budget season. He added the bills he shared previously are live and well. One bill is for a permanent office and staff in the Office of Emergency Management (OEM). These staff would assist seniors, disabled and others who may have difficulties during disasters.

L. Haynes asked how individuals will be informed of the cooling center hours and location. M. O'Reilly informed the Code Red legislation is still pending but the Office of Emergency Management shares the emergency response emails. M. O'Reilly added the Division of Social Services and the County Libraries operate as a cooling center during normal business hours. Discussion ensued.

Housing Committee: R. Horoschak stated a Housing Committee meeting was held last Friday. M. O'Reilly was present and shared the results from the DHS Community Needs Assessment Survey.

R. Horoschak added the committee completed their reorganization for the year, R. Cooper is chair and R. Horoschak will be serving as co-chair. The Housing Committee suggested inviting Habitat for Humanity to present to HSAC since they have not in several years.

VII. GOALS & ACTION:

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT AND QUESTIONS PERIOD: Public comments are limited to a maximum of three (3) minutes per person. Brief written comments may be submitted prior to the meeting for distribution during the meeting.

M. Eichorn asked when and how often the committees met. J. Gorman stated each committee meets at different times and occurrences based upon their needs. The Nomination Committee meets once per year, Planning and Integration Committee meets based upon survey results being available, By-Laws Committee was meeting often while they were reviewing the By-Laws but are not currently meeting. J. Gorman conveyed the Housing Committee is currently the most active committee.

E. Kesler asked to be added to the HSAC email distribution list. She stated she is the Family Engagement Specialist at Norwescap in Hunterdon County. She announced Norwescap will be holding their own Community Needs Assessment Survey, it will be available from July 1, 2023 through July 31, 2023. E. Kesler shared the link for the survey <https://forms.office.com/r/ey54Twb7G2>.

IX. *MOTION TO ADJOURN: R. Horoschak made a motion to adjourn the meeting. B. Renkens seconded the motion. There being no further business, the meeting of June 28, 2023. Adjourned at 4:17 p.m. The next meeting will be held July 26, 2023.

*** = Item Requires Action**

Note to Council Members: If members are unable to attend the meeting, please notify the Hunterdon County Department of Human Services at 908-788-1253.