

Marion County Children & Families Commission

October 15, 2020

11:30 PM – 1:00 PM

Online Virtual Meeting

Commission Members Present: Patrice Altenhofen, Phil Blea, Sue Bloom, George Burke, Paige Clarkson, Jayne Downing, Melissa Glover, Josh Graves, Troy Gregg, Lisa Harnisch, Jimmy Jones, Sheriff Joe Kast, Levi Herrera Lopez, Stacy Lake, Kimberly Lemman, Pete McCallum, Honorable Judge Cheryl Pellegrini, Chris Pineda, Allan Pollock, Sam Skillern, Shaney Starr, Commissioner Colm Willis

Guests: Kevin Karvandi, MCSO; Franni Filzen, Catholic Community Services

Staff: Tamra Goettsch, Melinda Hautala, Heather Johnson

Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 11:03 pm. Welcome and introductions were made.

Outward Mindset

Tamra asked those present to share what their organizations have been doing in response to the Beachie Creek Fire Disaster, and how other CFC members might be able to help.

St Francis Shelter has been proactive in going to the canyon to provide assistance to those needing shelter.

Family Building Blocks has been working with the Service Integration Team and the mobile resource center to fulfill basic needs and services, and they have opened a satellite location in Stayton. Patrice noted that her staff are serving those affected by the wildfires in addition to continuing to serve their existing client families, and it is overwhelming.

Marion County Health & Human Services has provided housing in Woodburn for evacuated families. They are providing mental health and drug/alcohol services on site, as well as case management assistance with FEMA procedures. They also provided these services to evacuees at the state fairgrounds, and at Anthony Hall in Stayton, partnering with the city of Gates and Early Learning Hub to provide parenting classes and other assistance. MCHHS is staffing a warmline where families can call if they don't know where to go for services or if they just need help and don't know where to start.

Center for Hope and Safety has fielded calls from the Canyon Crisis Center, and taken in survivors who were displaced. They have also coordinated distribution of donated supplies.

DHS located bilingual staff to help communicate with evacuees at the fairgrounds emergency center. They set up a resource phone line to handle calls from around the country and abroad, and have hired three staff to assist with wildfire recovery in the three counties affected, including Marion County. There will be at least one permanent bilingual position. Stacy noted that DHS staff are also overwhelmed, not only because they have already been stretched while working on pandemic-related issues, and trying to

help their own kids with distance learning, but also because many of them were personally affected by the fires. She has staff who were evacuated and some who lost their homes.

Cherriots provided evacuation transport to residents of a senior home in Sublimity. Beginning October 16, Cherriots will have regular bus service three times a day between the Salem Downtown Transit Center and the Park & Ride in Gates.

Community Action Agency brought their mobile shower unit to the fairgrounds for use by evacuees. CAA had an existing outreach center in Mill City which was not damaged by the fires, so they have reopened this location. Jimmy pointed out that they regularly provide services to around 300 unhoused persons in that area, who had nowhere to go when residents were asked to evacuate, so they have provided shelter for many of them in motels. CAA has been working with the governor's wildlife relief council as well as the Service Integration Team, St Francis Shelter, and Salem Housing Authority. They have compiled a list of about 150 people for whom they are working to secure housing. The state is expected to release funding to purchase motels that can be used for emergency housing, not only during the fire disaster and the pandemic, but for any unhoused persons in future.

Chemeketa Community College set up emergency housing for about 500 fire personnel who came to fight not only the Beachie Creek fire but also the Riverside fire. These firefighters came from across the US as well as from Canada and Mexico.

Woodburn has housed fire evacuees in a motel that had been previously used for COVID victims.

Marion County Sheriff's Office collaborated with Salem Police Department to help canyon residents escape the fires, assuring that there were teams of two officers in each vehicle. They also checked for animals and went to homes to find anyone who needed assistance. Officers are providing water, masks, and resource guides to evacuees. Kevin said that he was impressed with the way people came together to coordinate staff and volunteers to accomplish needed tasks, like saving boats at the marina in Detroit. Deputy Chief Burke commended the Sheriff's Department for their work.

Phil shared some resources that Marion County Health & Human Services has shared with families and schools, which Tamra forwarded to all via email.

Tamra also commended everyone who stepped outside their normal activities to help with the fire emergency, and noted that it was a reminder of the good that the commission members can do collectively in the community.

HOPE ALIVE

Community Meeting Task Group

Melinda organized a task group to plan community café meetings in East Salem, to connect with the neighborhood and get input to guide the CFC's work there. The task group met three times and they recommended that the CFC partner with Fostering Hope Initiative who were in the process of coordinating a Community Café training with facilitators from Washington. Melinda invited representatives from CFC organizations as well as from Hayesville Elementary, Scott Elementary, Stephens Middle School, and McKay High School to participate in the training, which will be held

virtually, on three consecutive Friday evenings during October. This orientation will train some residents in East Salem to host or co-host Community Cafes and will also begin the process of planning the content of the Cafes that the CFC will host. The evening meeting time was chosen to accommodate parents attending the training, but Melinda hopes there can be another training at some point. The CFC will share the cost of the training with FHI and also with CBEL and Early Learning Hub.

- **The task group for planning community meetings in East Salem recommended participating in a Community Café training workshop.**
- **Parents, school staff, and organization staff have been invited to participate in this training, which will occur during October.**

Community Resource Network

Melinda completed user testing of the new system and Wasi and his team are completing the technical side of the updates. There will be a new how-to document, new FAQs, and tutorial videos for common functions. Melinda shared some existing data to show why it is inaccurate and why improvements were needed. Once the system updates are in place, Melinda will begin data clean-up and member outreach to inform existing members of new features and how to use them. Melinda will also continue working with Jackie Franke at CBEL to devise marketing and promotion strategies, as well as meeting with the CRN Progress Team. Another new feature will permit the CRN to approve members as donor-only, which will not only allow recruitment of philanthropic partners, but also make it possible for individuals to join even if they are not affiliated with an organization that serves children and their caregivers. These members will be able to fulfill requests, but not make requests.

Sue said that she had spoken to Salem Health about some surplus furniture they will have as a result of renovations, and asked if the CRN could be used to distribute this. Melinda said that right now, the Terms of Agreement approved by legal counsel state that the CRN can only be used for goods that benefit children and their caregivers, but it has been under discussion to possibly expand this requirement to allow for a broader reach. Tamra suggested that because the CRN is a project of the CFC, there should be some discussion about what the CFC wants the CRN's end goal to be, so that when Tamra consults legal counsel about making these changes, she has a definitive proposal. She added that she had also talked to Salem Health about ways to help with recovery in the canyon and suggested that Melinda will coordinate some feedback from CFC members about the risks and benefits to this change.

- **The CRN updates are still in progress and will include new features that should make the system easier to use.**
- **The new CRN will allow donor-only members, including business partners and individuals, in an effort to increase the number of fulfilled requests.**
- **Melinda will request guidance from the CFC about whether the CRN's reach should be expanded to assist persons who are neither children nor caregivers of children.**

East Salem Action Plan

The Phase One plan currently underway addresses planning community meetings in East Salem, and since the Community Café training is ongoing until the end of October, and will be followed by planning the events in the neighborhood, these tasks are on track and other tasks cannot be addressed until these are completed. Tamra suggested that the CFC might be able to use the next couple of months to collaborate on a smaller project, possibly over the holiday season, to spread hope and have a community presence.

Shaney said that due to the pandemic, there has not been as much planning of “giving trees” that are usually set up each year by multiple organizations. She said that there will definitely be children in need this year, but with fewer people in public places, and school not in session, there is not as much personal interaction. She and Sue agreed that with SKEF gone and churches not meeting, many of the traditional avenues for procuring donations for kids are missing this year. Patrice said that FBB is doing its annual Hope for the Holidays drive, but they too have not heard from as many businesses who want to contribute. Pete said the Love, Santa organization in Woodburn is still planning to provide items to families, but they have not been able to do the outreach they usually do to recruit donors and identify families. All of the organizations that usually do holiday drives must think creatively, and Shaney asked the commission if this might be something they could address.

Melissa said that each school has wellness coordinators who interact with kids via home visits, and they are beginning to have some limited in-person instruction for kids of greatest concern. Josh proposed an idea where Cherriots could provide a bus to take items to kids, like a mobile shopping bus. Allan said it might be difficult to maintain distancing enough to allow people to come onto a bus, but Cherriots could provide a bus to shuttle people to a location.

Holly asked how CFC organizations identify families most in need of these types of services. Shaney said that for CASA, they know all of the kids in foster care already, and Josh said they too have families that they are already working with. Jayne said they typically serve families who have been in shelter throughout the year, though this year they are requesting that people give gift cards only.

Tamra asked if the project should focus on the East Salem schools that the CFC has been working with already. She said that the CFC should be able to work with the schools and come up with solutions to some of these issues. Melissa said that schools would be able to identify what kids need. Tamra then asked the commission to give some direction and authorization or if there might be a different idea.

Shaney asked for a motion to move forward with the proposal to collaborate on a project over the holiday season, but heard none.

Motion: Not Approved

- **Phase One of the East Salem Action Plan is on track but there will be some time before the next tasks can be addressed.**
- **The CFC declined to take on an additional small project at this time.**

Membership

- Holly Nelson from Chemeketa Community College has been appointed to the CFC.
- Stacy Lake has joined the Steering Committee.
- Jayne Downing has stepped down from the Steering Committee but will remain a member of the CFC.

Approval of Meeting Summary Notes

Pete moved to approve the meeting summary notes for July 9, 2020. Sue seconded the motion.

Motion: Approved

November CFC Meeting

Shaney asked if the commission would like to try to meet in person at Broadway Commons in November, but the consensus was to continue meeting virtually for now.

Additional Comments:

Tamra reminded everyone to make sure that the Mid-Valley Resource Network has current information about services that their organizations are providing, especially any additional services related to the fire disaster. [www.midvalleyresources.org and 800-560-5535]

Sue thanked Phil for sharing resources related to self-care and asked if any other members had resources for mental health at this time, it would be greatly appreciated.

Jayne thanked Patrice for bringing up the subject of staff mental health, as all service organizations are experiencing an unprecedented level of stress, working through multiple crises simultaneously. She said that she has provided some self-care training for non-profits, including St Francis Shelter and Boys and Girls Club, and offered this service to others that might find it helpful.

Meeting adjourned at 12:56 pm