

**Town of Barnstable
Human Services Committee
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, October 10, 2017**

Names in BOLD indicate action items.

Present:

Scott Fitzgerald (chair), Robin Gunderson, Deb Krau, Meghan Mort, Heidi Nelson (recorder), and Steven Xiarhos

Absent:

Stacie Peugh, Heather Stassel, and Jen Cullum, Town Council Liaison

Guests:

Brenda Swain, Executive Director, Falmouth Service Center; Kim Concra, Barnstable County Extension Service; Dave Sheinkopf, member, Cape Cod Synagogue

Order:

The meeting came to order at 5:00 p.m.

Minutes

The minutes of the September 12, 2017 meeting were unanimously approved as written (Mort motion, Xiarhos second).

Public Comment

None.

Discussion

We welcomed Brenda Swain, Kim Concra and David Sheinkopf to talk about the issue of food insecurity, the Cape Cod Hunger Network, and the food pantries that serve the Town of Barnstable.

Brenda explained the history of the Cape Cod Hunger Network, which was formed by Project Bread in Boston, and started as a group that met annually and focused its early efforts on people that used multiple town pantries. Eventually, some members felt that the purpose of the group should be shifted to addressing the unevenness of services across the Cape, and to explore the issue from the eyes of the person who is hungry.

In the early days of the Network, the Hyannis based pantries attended the Network meetings, but participation has fallen off.

A primary purpose of the Network is to communicate and collaborate. At each meeting, the pantry locations and hours are updated on a handout that is used widely in the community. The County also had an interest in providing more nutrition education and attracting grant funds to

the Cape and volunteers to help out. For example, Cape Cod Five developed a volunteer program help grow and distribute fresh produce to the pantries.

Brenda shared statistics about food insecurity, including 5,170 households and 20,080 individuals are food insecure in Barnstable County. Although, according to a Massachusetts algorithm, the existing pantries provide more than enough food to meet the expected demand, the Network maintains that the pantries should be supported at a continued high level because of the high cost of living on the Cape. The food resources that are received are adequate to provide 3 meals per day per person who is food insecure, and the target for the feeding programs in the state is 1 meal per day. Food pantries help to sustain the economic viability of the region, and provide wrap around services and access to benefits.

In Barnstable, the pantries are small, largely because there are more social service agencies providing the services that are often provided by pantries on the lower and upper Cape. Also, there are nearby organizations in Yarmouth and Harwich and Barnstable residents travel to access them.

The Committee discussed the need to encourage our local small pantries to participate with the Hunger Network to decrease fractionalization, and to be present at the table with organizations on and off-Cape. Our local pantries include the Salvation Army, the Cape Cod Synagogue, NamVets and the Baptist Church. Active duty military personnel can access the food pantry on Joint Base Cape Cod, and the Barnstable Senior Center serves lunch daily.

Dr. Sheinkopf explained that the Cape Cod Synagogue pantry serves about 18 families as well as individuals, many of whom are homeless. Whenever the office is open, the pantry can be accessed. There are plenty of resources due to the generosity of the congregation, which hosts an annual food drive on Rosh Hashanah (which is part of the Jewish tradition).

The Committee asked additional questions about services for youth, and use of WIC cards at Farmers Markets.

We agreed that a goal of our group could be to help our local pantries plug into the regional network, and perhaps to partner or consolidate services.

Next Steps

Our next two meetings will begin at 6:00 p.m. due to a scheduling conflict. **Scott** will include Christine Menard at the next meeting to talk about services offered by the Family Pantry in Harwich. We will also talk about committee priorities. **Heidi** will identify what organization provides mental health first aid training on the Cape.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Heidi Nelson", followed by a horizontal line.

Heidi Nelson

Duffy Health Center and Secretary to Committee

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, November 14, 2017 at 6:00 p.m,