

**Lee County Continuum of Care (CoC)  
Governing Board Meeting**

February 17, 2021, 1:00 P.M.

Lee County Human and Veteran Services  
Virtual Meeting

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/813218685>

**Members Present:** Adina Bridges, Centerstone of Florida  
Carolyn Johnson, Goodwill Industries SWFL  
Daleen O'Dell, Advocate  
Daniel Kruse, Providence Family Life Center  
Danyale Kinney, The New Beginnings of SWFL  
Eduardo Gloria, Catholic Charities  
Elenia Cooke, Advocate  
Jerod Murphy, Advocate  
Janet Bartos, Lee county Homeless Coalition  
Jennifer Nelson, City of Cape Coral  
Keith Campbell, Celadon Recovery Campus  
Kim Anderson, Lee Health  
Linda Hafner, United Way  
Lisa Vogt Wells, Advocate  
Lue Richardson, Veterans Affairs  
Myra Fiory, Central Florida Behavioral Health Network  
Sharon Rozier, City of Fort Myers Community Development Department  
Tom Felke, FGCU

**Other Present:** Kim Anderson, Lee Health  
Scott Eller, Community Assisted and Supported Living

**Lee County Human  
And Veteran Services**

**Staff Present:** Christine Sebastian  
Emilee Sharp  
Jeannie Sutton  
Kim Hustad  
Mark Tesoro  
Matt Wallace  
Roger Mercado  
Sylvia Ruff  
Tim Gillmore

**I. Call to Order 1:01pm**

*Jennifer Nelson, Chair*

- a. Jennifer Nelson called the meeting to order.  
Mark Tesoro reviewed the list of attendees. He stated there is a quorum
- b. Members Absent with and without excuse:  
Heidi Shoriak, Lee Health absent with an excuse  
Joe Paterno, CareerSources SWFL absent with an excuse  
Sheryl Soukup, ROOF absent without an excuse

**Public Comment - None**

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#### II. Approval of May, August, September, November, December, January Meeting Minutes\*

*Mark Tesoro*

Mark Tesoro sent the board the meeting minutes to look over to approve. He asked if anyone had any corrections they wanted to make. Janet Bartos mentioned she had two corrections to the August 6, 2020 minutes.

**ACTION:** Jennifer Nelson made a motion to approve the minutes with the corrections Janet Bartos mentioned. Adina Bridges seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### III. Approval of New Board Member: Dr. Felke\*

*Jennifer Nelson, Chair*

Dr. Tom Felke introduced himself to the board. He works very closely collaborating with a lot of the local organizations in his role with Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) particularly in the area of food insecurity, affordable housing and homelessness.

**ACTION:** Janet Bartos made a motion to add Dr. Felke to the CoC Board. Elenia Cooke seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### IV. Update Cold Weather Outreach/Severe Weather Plan

*Roger Mercado/Jeannie Sutton*

Roger Mercado presented the Severe Weather/ Street Outreach Surveys collected. He stated the entire purpose of this plan is when temperatures drop to 40 degrees or lower for an extended period of time they may implement a cold weather outreach team that consists of eight different teams though out Lee County. It includes HOT team members, his staff and volunteers.

On the morning of February 1, 2021 they mobilized a team that included the HOT team members to Lions Park. They chose Lions Park because there was an increase of activity and some colder temperatures were expected during the week. They completed 16 surveys. Eight people were offered shelter at the Bob Janes Triage Center, two people were transported to another shelter

On the evening of February 2, 2021 they mobilized the teams across eight different areas. They completed 46 surveys. Sixteen people were offered and agreed to shelter at the Bob Janes Triage Center and two were transported to other shelters.

On the evening of February 3, 2021 it was a colder night. They completed 26 surveys. Seven people were offered the opportunity for shelter at the Bob Janes Triage Center. One person sheltered elsewhere.

Roger stated the team is not expected to go out every time there is a rain storm. They respond to situations that the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) determines as severe weather; either by a watch or warning, but not severe enough to trigger the general population shelters.

When they know they are going to mobilize their teams, the members of the teams will pull up to the building and the staff will bring out bins of blankets, socks, sweatshirts, hot coffee and cups. They have one-way bus tickets to give out for transportation or a member from the HOT team will transport if they

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have the capability. If they come across a family during the severe weather outreach who cannot be accommodated by the Salvation Army, there is the ability to put the family up in a hotel if needed.

#### V. **Update: 2021 PIT Count**

*Janet Bartos/Mark Tesoro*

Janet Bartos said they had approximately 60 volunteers and were able to gather 186 surveys. The data still has to be entered into the system and checked for duplicates. There is a whole process involved to ensure the numbers are as accurate as possible before they provide them to HUD. They are not due to HUD until April 2021.

#### VI. **Presentation: HOT Team**

*Roger Mercado*

Roger Mercado stated they communicated and contracted with an expert in setting up HOT teams. He said the expert is a Police Officer out of Tampa Police Department and out of a thousand Police Officers he is one of just a few that designated HOT teams in Tampa. He has assisted teams in and out of Florida to set up as part of what is originally a homeless outreach team.

Every Friday for the past three months the members from six different law enforcement agencies met with the consultant to go over some policies, protocols, best practices, what they need to include for their local efforts and part of this is an extension into behavioral health.

Centerstone was contracted to be the clinical support for the HOT team members out in the field. They can provide transportation, connect people to resources, whether its medication management, psychiatry, access to prescription medication.

The biggest things they learned through their meetings with Officer McDonald is you cannot arrest your way out of homelessness. The HOT teams are designed not to take the law enforcement role, but rather the outreach role. They all agreed and were instructed while engaging with someone as HOT team members they find that person has a warrant out for their arrest, the HOT team member is not the one who does the arrest. They would call their colleagues in, as a result of that engagement, to hand off to someone else in their department.

Roger Mercado presented a HOT team slide for the board. The first slide is an officer talking with a gentleman at Fort Myers Beach transfer station where some of the people were engaged during the Severe Weather Outreach on a cold night.

The second slide shows a box truck that was found in Lehigh Acres by staff on a piece of property. On the left side of the page an officer engaging with a member of the community on the right side. In the middle of the page a few questions. Why establish a HOT team, What is a HOT Team, Who are HOT Team Members and What does a HOT Team do.

The third slide is a graph with 5 challenges that customers face and what the HOT Teams work with. Homelessness, Socioeconomic Challengers, Substance Use, Behavioral Health and Jail. Some behavioral health challenges, potentially that may all overlap with the contributing factor to someone becoming homeless, or those things as a result of someone becoming homeless. HOT Teams are really designed to be an extension of outreach to work with a population that may have a little more challenges and may need

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a little more attention than someone who just got evicted because they lost their job. Socioeconomic challenges is a little different than someone who has been living on the street for years and can't seem to get connected with employment or income.

The fourth slide is What is a HOT Team? The Traditional Definition of HOT, Homeless Outreach Team. Lee County's Definition of HOT, Housing Outreach and Treatment. The essential goal of the HOT team is to connect people into outreach housing and then access to treatment because we always hear access to treatment is a challenge for people. This is an extension of what outreach currently does. With the goal of getting Coordinated Entry involved, getting someone into shelter potentially as a pathway into housing or rapid rehousing program.

The fifth slide Who are HOT Team Members? An extension of Street Outreach. Cape Coral Police Department, Florida Gulf Coast University Police Department, Fort Myers Police Department, Lee County Port Authority Police Department, Lee County Sheriff's Office, Sanibel Police Department and Centerstone Behavioral Health.

The sixth slide is about Branding with shirts being displayed. The branding of the teams are pretty important for people to be able to identify them. They ordered shirts with different colors. Red- HOT Team Law Enforcement, Blue- HOT Team for Centerstone and Gray for the Outreach Team. The shirts will have logos and will be identified as part of the local HOT Team.

The seventh slide is What Does a HOT Team do? The entire experience is to engage individuals and families that are experiencing homelessness through traditional or nontraditional street outreach with the overall goal of getting people connected to housing and access to treatment.

The eighth slide is about the different types of access points of how somebody gets involved with Coordinated Entry. Law Enforcement and HOT Teams have that direct referral. Using the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). They started using this system in December 2020 and at least 31 people have been admitted to triage as a result of HOT Team engagement.

The ninth slide is the image of the shared business card the HOT Team has. One side is English and the other side is Spanish. They have made Coordinated Entry 24/7 with their partnership and contract with Center of Progress and Excellence. The card also facilitates the mobile crisis unit in our community and then provide that individual that is engaged by HOT Team. If someone needs assistance to call United Way 211 or the Mobile Crisis Unit. If someone is already part of the team and engaged, they have someone over at Centerstone they can connect with regarding their services.

The tenth slide is about a couple different elements of what HOT Team includes; transportation and admission to the Bob Janes Triage Center and Fort Myers Rescue Mission, Connection to Coordinated Entry and Rapid Rehousing, Transportation to the Homeless Resource Day Center, State Identification Cards, Severe Weather Outreach, Targeted Outreach, and Extension of Current Outreach Efforts. They have worked out with the Tax Collector who will assist HOT Team members of fast tracking and doing same day appointments for people in need of State identification cards.

The eleventh slide is about Street Outreach and Severe Weather Outreach. The Severe Weather Outreach points are: Lion's Park, Fort Myers Regional Library, Rosa Parks Bus Terminal, Edison Mall Bus Terminal, Cape Coral Transfer Center, Vacant Shopping Plaza at 41 and Hancock Bridge Parkway, Fort

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Myers Beach Transfer Station and Schandler Hall. They have Hot Coffee, Blankets, Jackets, Sweatshirts, Socks, Access to transportation to Shelter and Pathway to Housing.

**VII. Approval of PERC Reallocation and Ranking Policy\***

*Mark Tesoro/Jeannie Sutton*

Mark Tesoro went over the document required by the Continuum of Care (CoC) to have policies that outline polices for reviewing our Continuum of Care (CoC) and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) in the Department of Children and Families (DCF) funding applications. Mark sent an attachment to the board of the updated policies for the funding review for 2021 including the addition of an appeals process they previously had not had.

**ACTION:** Janet Bartos made a motion to approve the Ranking Policy. Adina Bridges seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**VIII. Update: Connect List/Housing Surge Plan**

*Mark Tesoro*

Mark Tesoro wanted to update everyone that Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced the extension of the Eviction Moratorium. It will be extended to June 30, 2021

The connect list meetings are occurring weekly on Thursdays at two o'clock in the afternoon. This is where they request funded programs and discuss their capacity and if they are ready to take on new additional clients to keep the process moving smoothly. They look at the barriers of housing for some individuals. They also look at the exceptions for those individuals who are experiencing homelessness, who have extenuating circumstances that aren't already documented.

The Homeless Prevention Team has been able to provide onsite rapid rehousing training for their funded providers. Chris Sebastian and Cynthia Bantillo have been going out to their providers who have had either questions or concerns and they are able to share their experiences with them.

The 100 by 100 Campaign is housing 100 household within 100 days and is going very nicely. You can follow the progress of how the program is doing on the County's website <https://www.leegov.com/dhs/coc> The program is currently on week 10 at 70 days. They are at 83% of their goal. They have housed 137 individuals and 47 children. They believe they will be able to hit their goal. After the 100 days, they will pick a month to reassess where they stand; progress made, improvements needed and hurdles impeding them to house more individuals. Then they would start the 100 by 100 again the following month.

**IX. Member Comments – Revisited CoC Logo/Re-Branding\***

*Matt Visaggio*

Matt Visaggio wasn't able to make the meeting. Mark Tesoro explained the CoC wanted to rebrand themselves. The logo they currently have is fairly outdated. They wanted to depict the inclusivity of it and the activity of what they are doing. At the last meeting they presented the board a new logo and it was discussed that having just Lee County Continuum of Care (CoC) did not provide enough information. Matt Visaggio added at the bottom that the goal is to make homeless, rare, brief and one time. Janet

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Bartos made a comment to shorten it a bit and take out “our goal” and just have it read; making homelessness rare, brief and one time. The board liked the shortening of the wording.

**ACTION:** Carolyn Johnson made a motion to approve the new logo and rebranding with the shortening of wording. Dr. Tom Felke seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**X. Funded Agency Updates- Catholic Charities**

*Service Providers*

Alex Olivares stated they are about to start ramping up for more clients because of the additional three case managers they have working in the program now. They will be able to increase their volume of clients. They had 17 clients and they discharged four because they got into housing.

Mark Tesoro stated one of the reasons he wanted to include Catholic Charities on the agenda was because they are doing an outstanding job in housing people. They recently were on Wink News broadcast and did an outstanding job; explaining not only what they do, but the partnerships that are involved and how the funding got acquired.

**XI. Code of Ethical Conduct\***

*Jennifer Nelson, Chair*

Jennifer Nelson stated they implemented ethical code of ethics for the board. The reason they did this was she was getting tagged on several Facebook posts and tagged on information that was true and not true regarding the partner agencies. She was adamant about if you’re going to be a participant on the board you need to conduct yourself professionally and appropriately. You’re representing the Chair of the board, representing the other organizations that are on the board and most importantly representing the homeless. She stated it could really hurt the potential funding that they receive moving forward from any of their partner agencies.

On January 8, 2021 Elenia Cooke sent out a mass email to the Continuum of Care (CoC) suggesting inaccuracies in the Homeless Coalitions accounting. Then another mass email was sent out on January 13, 2021 again questing the accounting of the Homeless Coalition and the need for them to address a pair of earrings valued at \$7900 noted on the books. Jennifer realized she needed to talk with Elenia face to face and they arranged a meeting on January 15, 2021. Amy Davies who chaired the Homeless Coalition also attend. They reviewed the financial statements and no purchase of earrings were on it. Jennifer stated they have to exercise reasonable care, good faith, due diligence. Making blanket statements that are not proven can really hurt them and hurt the organizations which is not something they want to do.

Jennifer is following Roberts Rules of Order as the chairperson for the Continuum of Care (CoC) board and asking for a vote to remove Elenia Cooke as a member of the CoC governing board.

**ACTION:** Janet Bartos made a motion to remove Elenia Cooke from the board. Carolyn Johnson seconded the motion. The motion passed with 13 in favor and 1 abstained.

**XII. Adjourn 2:32pm**

*Jennifer Nelson, Chair*

**\*Item Needing Action**

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For translation services or additional information, please contact: Jeannie Sutton, Lee County Human and Veteran Services at 239-533-7958.

**Meeting minutes and agenda are posted on our website: <https://www.leegov.com/dhs/funding/coc>**