



Community Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, December 17th, 2020

The meeting began at 10 a.m. Attendance: *Jim Tucker, Betty McClintick, Alice Snyder, Deb Looney, Dorothy Pintar (sponsor representative), Amy Cook Otto (staff), Rick Houchin (staff), Susan Bowen (staff), Tom Pettit (guest)*

As there wasn't a quorum, the minutes from the last meeting were presented, but not approved. There were no additions to the agenda.

Project Director's Report

There have been many changes in the past year including program leadership, worksites, and funding.

Beginning mid-March, all staff began working remotely from home due to the COVID-19 shutdown. Many stations closed and volunteers stopped serving. During the months of March, April and May, the only volunteers serving were primarily involved in food security. Others found new ways to volunteer safely from home such as sewing masks, calling on people who live alone to check on them, and writing letters/cards to nursing home residents. Between the months of March on November, 60% of volunteers served. We have lost some who no longer want to volunteer and there has been a few who have left the area.

Leadership – As of August 1, the RSVP is no longer under the umbrella of the Region 9 Area Agency on Aging. It is now part of the Volunteer Programs Division. This change also brought Dorothy Pintar into the mix as our new division director. She has 25+ yrs experience with NEMCSA and it's school success program. Laurie Sauer, director of the AAA will remain on the advisory council because of her connection with the aging network.

Funding – in the last week of July we were told there was a possibility of losing state funding and that we would be given 30 days notice; staff received an email about 10:30 a.m. on July 31 with the message that funding would cease at the close of business that day. Susan was able to spend another \$2,300 on items for volunteers that day (nametag lanyards, shopping bags, patches) so the loss was about \$6000, but could



have been more. Some RSVP projects only have state funding and had to close the doors that day.

In September the state announced it would be funding programs again and NEMCSA was able to apply for and receive funding at the same level as the previous year. (\$32,615) In March Susan and Heidi Powers provided testimony before a House of Representatives appropriations subcommittee on Health and Human Services at the Capital regarding the three senior programs of RSVP, Foster Grandparent, and Senior Companions. Advocacy took place throughout the year and was ramped up in August after the loss of state funds.

The federal grant ended on June 30 and had not been fully expended due to mileage costs being so low. NEMCSA applied for and was approved to carryover about \$5800 from the federal grant to the current year. Initially, funding was earmarked for technology, but later switched to staff wages to make up for loss of state funding in August and September.

The current federal grant began July 1. Due to the pandemic, a one-time augmentation of \$5000 was made available to agencies to engage volunteers in new ways of volunteering or items to increase the safety of volunteers. The NEMCSA request was to use the funding to buy hand sanitizer and have RSVP printed on masks for volunteers. We will be able to print 600 masks and purchase 600 bottles of hand sanitizer. Some of the \$5,000 will be used for advertising in areas that are in need of volunteers to serve in focus areas (food security and non-emergency medical transportation are current needs).

The federal grant has a required match of 30%, which is approximately \$72,000. This was waived for the grant that ended June 30, 2020, and for the grant ending June 30, 2021. Notification has been received that this again will be waived for the year that will start in July 2021. Match of cash or in-kind will need to be reported, but there will be no penalties for not reaching the 30%.

NEMCSA is in the competitive cycle for the 2021/22 federal grant. Although the grant doesn't start until July 1, the grant had to be submitted at the end of August 2020. Award notifications will be made in January 2021.



Program Updates – Rick and Amy

- Volunteers, Stations, and Events – Staff has not been actively recruiting new stations or volunteers due to the pandemic. Following NEMCSA guidelines, only volunteers providing essential services such as food packing or delivery are serving. Amy has had several new program enrollments in the last couple of months, but all have been involved in food programs.
- New Telephone Reassurance Program – Rick has been working on developing a program that will go beyond telephone reassurance. Volunteers will sign up to make a weekly phone call to program participants to chat. Calls will be 20-30 mins and will be solely for socialization. The pandemic and statewide shutdown earlier in the year brought to the forefront social isolation and this program will help to address that. Calls can be made from a volunteer's home. Volunteers will receive training on things such as, but not limited to, confidentiality, boundaries, and reporting any problems.
- New ZOOM Use and its potential – After using ZOOM to conduct a virtual recognition, staff saw potential for it's use...virtual volunteering, programs for volunteers, and council meetings. The cost of the annual subscription was shared between the three volunteer programs (RSVP, SCP, FGP)
- Upcoming MLK Day of Service – Although the program has had very successful service projects in the last two years with funding from the Michigan Community Service Commission, staff will not be applying for funding this year. The scope of the grant was very limiting in what it could be used for and didn't seem to be a good fit for the region.

Old Business

- Volunteer Recognition – The first-ever virtual recognition was held in late October. Prior to the event, all volunteers received a letter/invite, certificate of appreciation and a RSVP patch that could be put on a jacket or shirt. It was well attended with about 25 volunteers participating, as well as NEMCSA staff. Volunteer stations were asked to provide a short video thanking the volunteers. Several stations participated and the submissions were combined into a 7 minute video. During the program, staff highlighted the top 2-3 volunteers in each county; a volunteer of the year; and prize drawings were held. Given away were four \$25 Walmart gift cards and a pan of baklava made by former staff member Persis Sopariwala.



- Bylaws and Advisory Council – The NEMCSA Board of Directors approved the bylaws in March 2020. Moving forward the Advisory Council will be utilizing these in its operations.
- Program assessment comparison from past year – This is required by the state and has to be submitted along with the grant. It was completed by Susan. Most areas stayed the same or improved; there were no areas of decline. Overall the composite was 1.1 and the previous year was 1.5 (with 1 being the highest). Susan would like to have the council do the assessment next year.

New Business

- Meeting dates for 2021 were planned for 10 a.m. on the second Thursday of the month: February 11; May 13; August 12 (annual meeting); and November 11. The February meeting will be held via ZOOM.
- Advisory Council Buy-In/Recruitment/Referrals – We need your help in growing this group and in becoming a working council. The purpose of the council is to provide guidance to the Project Director, promote program awareness, assist with recruitment. This is not an all-inclusive list of duties, just a generalization. In order to provide representation for the entire service area, the council will need to grow and include membership from more counties than just Roscommon and Crawford. A chair person and vice chair will need to be elected, but a quorum was lacking to do so at this meeting.
- Development of Working Committees – At the next council meeting, committee assignments will be made. At least one staff member will be on each committee.
 - Nominating
 - Fundraising
 - Recruitment, Recognition, and Public Relations
- Goals of Program and Advisory Council – The current goal is to grow the council to include representation from at least three new counties.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45.