In Attendance:
Andrea Simonett, Department of Human Services
Andrew Pietsch, Blue Earth County Human Services
Angie Thomas, Partners for Affordable Housing
Ashley McCarthy, Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership
Bill Franken, Olmsted County
Carrie Erickson, Institute for Community Alliances
Cindy Norgard, The Salvation Army, Rochester
Janie Holliday, Center City Housing
Jen Jorgensen, Semcac
Jen Theneman, Partners for Affordable Housing
Jennifer Cook, Red Wing HRA
Jessica Barnick, DFO Community Corrections, Olmsted County
Julie Anderson, Steele County Transitional Housing
Kara Hoel-Kleese, Women’s Shelter
Kelly McDonough, Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging
Kimberly Stewart, SCHRC
Kris Kvols, Hope Coalition
Mary Vrieze, Southern MN Regional Legal Services
Mathias Antony, DFO Community Corrections – Olmsted County
Meghan Sawicki, Ruth’s House
Melanie Graves, CommonBond
Meredith Stolte, Northfield Union of Youth
Michele Merxbauer, Olmsted County HRA
Nichelle Shannon, Community Representative
Randi Callahan, Three Rivers Community Action
Rebecca Rand, SCHRC
Rick Sundberg, 180 Degrees
Ruth Lee, MN Prairie County Alliance
Sheila Alba, Project Home HRC
Sue Worlds, Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans
Sybil Betsinger, Community Action Center of Northfield
Tammy Moses, Lutheran Social Services
Victoria Heun, The Salvation Army, Mankato
Wes Brandenburger, Center City Housing

Facilitator: Irasema Hernandez, Semcac
CoC Staff: Jennifer Prins
Recorder: Michelle Loken, Three Rivers Community Action, Inc.
Welcome, Introductions, and Announcements: Rick Sundberg from 180 Degrees informed the group of the upcoming golf fundraiser next month. Registration can be done online. Mathias Antony announced he has taken a different position. He introduced Jessica Barnick, who will be taking his place. Mary Vrieze reminded everyone that the Project Review Committee will be meeting on August 16th. Kara Hoel-Kleese stated that a new director has officially been hired at the Women’s Shelter, and will be starting on August 26th. Jennifer Prins announced six scholarships have been awarded to attend the Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless Conference. HUD (Housing and Urban Development) announced they are doing some national conferences around permanent housing. If you are a CoC or ESG (Emergency Shelter Grant) grantee, these conferences count as training sessions.

Approval of July Minutes & August Agenda: Julie Anderson motioned to approve the June meeting minutes. Andrew Pietsch seconded. The motion was carried. PHA (Public Housing Authorities) Preferences, under System Performance Workgroup Implementation Plans will be omitted from the agenda today. Fostering Youth for Independence will be tabled until next month. Mary Vrieze motioned to accept the amended agenda. Victoria Heun seconded. The motion was carried.

Projects seeking CoC (Continuum of Care) Support (Votes): SCHRC (South Central Human Relations Center) has requested approval of the Youngdahl Living project. This project is geared towards people with serious mental illnesses. It is a 16-unit facility, with 24 hour supervision. A letter and Cooperative Agreement for HSAMI (House Support for Adults with Severe Mental Illnesses) were reviewed by the committee. Mary Vrieze motioned to enter a Cooperative Agreement with the SCHRC and other project partners who work together to support adults with serious mental illness who are experiencing homelessness in our project area. Rick Sundberg seconded. The motion was carried. Please see attachment of the documents.

PHAs - Mainstream Voucher Program: Michele Merxbauer explained the Mainstream Voucher Program. HUD released the availability of additional mainstream vouchers for PHAs (Public Housing Authority) across the nation. These vouchers are specifically for non-elderly, disabled adults. The disabled individual does not have to be the head of the household. It is allowed to be used for families, and in multi-unit living arrangements. This is geared toward cognitive and developmental disabilities. This does not include chemical dependency/substance abuse. It is for people 18 to 61 years old. There is no homeless criteria, but extra points are given if there is an agreement to pull from Coordinated Entry to fill the vouchers. They are looking for CoC support for PHAs in the 20-county region to submit an additional funding request. Ruth Lee motioned that, upon request in consultation with the CoC, the CoC provide a letter of support to any PHA in the region that applies to expand the Mainstream Voucher Programs in the 2019 HUD Mainstream Voucher funding round. Mary Vrieze seconded. The motion was carried.

PHAs – Fostering Youth to Independence Initiative: HUD has made vouchers available for youth ages 18 to 24 years old who have left foster care and are homeless or at-risk of homelessness. See attachment for more details.

Policy Revision (Vote): Coordinated Entry Committee – Rapid Rehousing Order of Priority: Jennifer Prins stated that the implementation date for the Order of Priority will be October 1, 2019. Due to variation in provider grant start dates that may not align with this policy implementation start date, the following exception to implementation start date is allowed: Providers unable to comply with this Order of Priority as of October 1, 2019 due to current funding restrictions must: 1) communicate with the Coordinated Entry list manager regarding current funding restriction, and 2) revise program prioritization with funder to comply with this Order of Priority at the earliest opportunity. Jennifer noted another revision in the Order of Priority; under the 2nd Priority, the wording “and has been identified as having severe service needs” will be deleted. Persons with
severe service needs was clarified under Category 4 Fleeing/Attempting to Flee DV. Please see attachment for details. Randi motioned to accept the changes to the Order of Priority. Victoria Heun seconded. The motion was carried.

Housing Support - GRH (Group Residential Housing): Ruth Lee stated their workgroup developed a guide for Housing Support. The guide will be given to prospective providers to give them an introduction to the program, and give them a general idea of how to start the process. It will be published on the CoC webpage next week. They will be rolling it out in partnership with DHS (Department of Human Services) in September, at the Region 9 and Region 10 Director meetings.

Andrew Pietsch stated that he thought the Ending Veteran Homelessness event went great! He stressed the importance of advocating for affordable housing when speaking with policy makers. Andrew references the annual Harvard Study when approaching political figures because it is a reputable resource. Julie Anderson added that if you get an opportunity to speak with a representative, be prepared with talking points: the challenges of affordable housing, housing stock, the gap between stagnant wages, and the rising cost of rent. Julie also suggested bringing people with personal testimonials, and keeping your presence year-round. Nichelle Shannon mentioned that not every landlord will accept Section 8 vouchers. She would propose to policy makers that some sort of incentive to landlords be offered, in order to overcome some of the barriers.

2019 HUD CoC Application (NOFA Notice of Funding Availability) Planning: Priority Action Areas: This is the time of year we have to reapply to HUD for project funding. Community and region action is what we report on and what we get scored on. The Executive Committee would like input on two key topics. The first topic is protecting against discrimination. HUD wants specifics on what we are doing to protect against discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, and disability. There is also an Equal Access Rule. This prohibits discrimination to access HUD assisted or HUD-insured housing because of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status. The Minnesota Human Rights Act pulls in creed, public assistance status, and local human rights commission activity. The second topic the Executive Committee wants the Plenary Committee to have conversations about is related to promoting employment, volunteerism, and community service. The goal is to connect project participants to their communities, increase their resources, and increase their income.

The committee was asked to break into small groups and have conversations regarding how to go about approaching the topics above. Brainstorming ideas for promoting employment, volunteerism and community service: 1) Coordinate regular workshops for participants and invite WorkForce Center representatives or community mentors. 2) Financial literacy program. 3) Resume building and job coaching opportunities. 4) Transportation options. 5) Coordinate volunteer transportation. 6) Create an incentive program – stipend to attend meetings, diapers, groceries, Wal-Mart cards, 7) Experience Works at the Salvation Army. 8) Volunteer to ring bells for the Salvation Army. 9) Connecting with HR managers to ask what employers are looking for. 10) Training/tapping into expertise possibly through webinars. 11) Diversity and equity training. 12) When stable, a participant should be encouraged to give back to the community. 13) Productivity tools – talk about how productivity is measured. 14) Ask people with lived experience to speak to students about being homeless. 15) Create a volunteer list. 16) Spotlight volunteering and employment engagement during the CoC meeting. 17) Formal gender identity training. 18) Create a template for developing a program. 19) Have conversations with employers about employing non-traditional employees/disabled or elderly.

Protecting against discrimination ideas: 1) More regular training and education, especially for front-line staff. 2) Assessment tools and intake form language. 3) Annual reviews. 4) Provide sample language or documents for what should be incorporated into Equal Access policies. 5) Coordinated
Entry demographic reports. 6) Outreach and advocacy around CE making sure we are a diversified group/ensuring we are getting community leaders from all ethnic groups involved.

### 2019-2020 Workgroup Time:

CoC workgroup plan for next year/goals that we want to attain within our workgroups going forward. 1) Decrease first time homelessness. We have prevention resources with FHPAP(Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program). 2) Engage Housing Resource Coordinators. 3) Diversion from shelters. 4) Reduce length of time homeless. We have prioritized increasing Rapid Rehousing 5) Public Housing Authority preferences. 6) Prioritization for housing based on time homeless is part of Coordinated Entry. 7) Rapid exits from emergency shelter and transitional housing. 8) Landlord engagement. 9) Master leasing 10) Planning for exits. 11) Engage shelters. 12) Rapid Rehousing. 13) After-care planning. 14) Income from employment. 15) Income from other sources.

The Plenary Committee will need to carefully consider and have conversations about what areas we want to continue working on from the list above. We also need to decide strategies on how to go about approaching these topics. HUD is looking for a 5% improvement in each of the above areas each year.

Suggestions from the group for reducing first time homelessness 1) Create an incentive program for landlord engagement. 2) Tenant screening continues to be an issue. 3) Systems, programs, and support needs to be in place to reach our clients, so we get to the functional zero aspect. 4) Decrease long-term homelessness. 5) Eviction prevention, 6) Use Navigators, and do list clean-up, and track impact. 7) Create a template to have consistency in how these programs would operate.

Recommendations for the group to increase income 1) Develop partnerships with WorkForce Centers and have more representation at meetings. 2) Engage, get a list, or develop a relationship with employer Human Resources. 3) Develop good relationships with case managers and temp agencies. 4) Develop a Youth Leadership Council. 5) Connect with employers who are friendly to people who are caregivers. 6) Talk to employers who are willing to employ people of an older age.

The intent of these projects is to help people with significant barriers. It was the consensus of the Plenary Committee that the focus should be to serve people in the following populations; the aged, single parents struggling to outweigh low wages and daycare costs, youth, and people that have fewer employment opportunities due to a disability.

Jennifer said the next steps are to compile the information for the Executive Committee to summarize for the CoC application and determine if we should continue with the same workgroups in 2020.

Sue Worlds motioned to adjourn the meeting. Andrew Pietsch seconded. The meeting was adjourned.