

**Food Bank of the Southern Tier
Agency Advisory Board
Minutes**

June 10, 2016

Present: Kristine Morseman, CC Schuyler County Outreach; Kerm Bossard, TOI-Spencer Van Etten Food Cupboard; Nancy Myers, Lansing Food Pantry; Ruth Williams, Tompkins Community Action; Darlene Bachman, Penn Ave/Feed Elmira Walnut St.; Larry Sanford, Windsor Human Development; Tina Sauter, Christian Hope Center; Kathy Greene, Addison Food Pantry; Lyndsey Lyman, FBST; Vickie Steck, FBST; Bethany Britton, FBST; Matt Griffin, FBST; Elisa Bernardo, JSY; Dave Patterson, FBST.

- **Welcome**

The meeting was called to order at 11:05 am

- **Review & approval of April meeting minutes-** Motion for approval Kristine M; Nancy M. seconded, all in favor-Motion carried.

- **Review & Updates**

- **Warehouse/Food Acquisition**

- Dave asked for agency feedback on deliveries. Responses from board: Nancy M. Lansing has distribution at noon on Mondays and asked why her delivery can't be first instead of last for Tompkins County. Dave: something they can work on to align times better.
- Kerm: Exploring options with the totes. Totes too big to get through doors. Some agencies too small. Can't take on size and/or amount. No storage space. Mostly snack totes, but also produce. Possible to share a tote with other agencies? Or half a tote? Suggestions were made to use shopping carts to transport product inside from totes that cannot fit through the door.
- Dave: half tote not possible. If totes put into repack, takes too long to get back out to agencies. Also significant financial impact, very expensive, but will keep in mind.
- Ruth: agencies loving the fresh produce. Dave: learning process with getting produce, will only get better as figure out what works best as we move on.
- Kerm: Adjusting delivery schedule to better align with agencies' distribution Dave: possible but involves more phone calls and communication. Updates on Listserve. Dave: if agency contacts Bethany wanting certain produce, she notifies Dave. He tries to get it on truck.
- Kris: was not aware of earlier deliveries because of summer hours, didn't see on Listserve, but was not a major issue. Lyndsey will follow up with Caroline about prioritizing calls, especially concerning earlier deliveries so that agencies have more time to prepare.

- **Advocacy & Agency Services**

- **Advocacy & Education**

- Lyndsey: Summer Food Service Program is coming. Cards for handouts are by county. All info posted on FBST website: <http://www.foodbankst.org/summer-food>. FBST launched new website. Works almost the same. Click on "Our Programs", then "Summer Food/Kid's Farmer's Market". Information categorized by county. Steuben listed by school district. The program is still operating like last year, where FBST is not distributing food directly but organizes community groups to do so. Anyone with questions can contact Jen Bertron at the Food Bank.
- Speakers Bureau: (not discussed at meeting) First Speakers Bureau pilot launched in Owego. 7 participants, 6 will be giving speeches at their graduation on June 22nd at 6:30pm at TOI in Owego. Agency reps welcome to attend. Please RSVP to Randi.

These ladies will then be available to speak on the issue of hunger, so keep them in mind if you are looking for someone to share their story.

- **Agency Services**
 - Shutdown week is Monday, July 4th through Friday, July 8th. No deliveries that week, Bethany will send out communication via Listserve, Website, and online ordering.
 - Vickie: HPNAP Food Grant due by Friday, June 17th by 4:00pm. Wednesday, June 15th is the HPNAP OS/CE review.

- **County Hunger Coalition reports to AAB**
 - **Review of items from February & April meetings**
 - Low-sodium items on the menu
 - From Missy Knowles:
 - HPNAP requires FBST purchase only canned chili, pasta meals and other complete/mixed meal entrees items with 720 mg sodium/serving or less. Canned vegetables and beans purchased with HPNAP funds must be low sodium (as defined by FDA labels) and have 140 mg sodium or less per serving.
 - Soups, canned tuna & chicken, and spaghetti sauce are items that do not have HPNAP sodium restrictions.
 - Which items are folks noticing are high in sodium in particular? Kristine and Ruth: Soups.
 - From Paddy Redihan:
 - To some, the items HPNAP considers “low sodium” as still very high in sodium (*HPNAP follows the FDA label definitions of low sodium (140 mg or less per serving), however as Missy notes it does not require all canned food purchased with HPNAP funds to be low sodium*)
 - This is something the Nutrition Team at FBST can further address in the next phase of planning the Nutrition Policy for FBST & its network
 - Accessing toilet paper and diapers through FBST
 - From Missy Knowles:
 - This is an issue that has come up in the past, but FBST has not prioritized acquiring these items because:
 - It takes up space in the warehouse that we could be using for our #1 priority, nutritious food
 - They are not going to be donated, meaning agencies would have to purchase off the menu at wholesale cost.
 - If there was a critical mass of agencies that would order enough of this, we could consider it at that point, but we cannot guarantee it being regularly available, again based on other priorities for FBST warehouse space.
 - Pantries serving samples
 - Food safety is #1 priority when providing samples of foods that are new to clients and may need an extra push.

- Anyone handling food must practice good personal hygiene (hand washing, avoiding bare hand contact, and using a hair restraint).
 - Staff and volunteers should avoid doing samples with any of the major potentially hazardous foods – meat, poultry, eggs, dairy products. Potentially hazardous food also includes cut melons, tomatoes and leafy greens, which must be thoroughly washed and refrigerated after cutting. These foods must be given special attention. Preparing potentially hazardous foods (baking, boiling, steaming, etc.) requires reaching the proper cooking temperature. Keep sampling simple.
 - Resources:
 - http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/wcm/connect/18cece94-747b-44ca-874f-32d69fff1f7d/Basics_for_Safe_Food_Handling.pdf?MOD=AJPERES
 - Full list of potentially hazardous foods: <http://www.restaurant.org/Manage-My-Restaurant/Food-Nutrition/Food-Safety/Recognizing-TCS-food>
 - Be sure to think of Cornell Cooperative Extension and JSY for your food demonstration needs. See the Fresh Bites newsletter for contacting your county resource!
- **Items from May coalition meetings**
 - **Broome:** No increase due to new SNAP ruling. Note that City of Binghamton exempt. Catholic Charities has seen an increase in working people who are having their hours cut.
 - Majority of pantries do not deliver. A note, ID, proof of residence from homebound individual is requested allowing that person to pick up food. Majority assist other agencies who request food for a homebound client, not necessarily in their geographic area.
 - Letter Carriers Drive: donations down significantly from previous years
 - Summer Food sites finalized. 26 sites in Binghamton, 6 in parks. Schedule for all sites available mid-June.
 - Agencies concerned about dented cans from FBST. Lyndsey: was addressed at Broome meeting. Any cans in mixed assorted boxes have been analyzed by FBST volunteers and are safe for distribution.
 - **Steuben:** Increase in clients since SNAP ABAWD time limit ran out. Six agencies do home deliveries. Transportation not an issue. Not many issues due to being rural pantries. Will have sensitivity training at next coalition meeting. Kristine and Nancy interested. Lyndsey: Steuben doing agency spotlight at meetings, great idea for other coalitions to try out
 - **Chemung:** Moving meetings to Penn Ave; Next meeting end of June because of FBST shut down week.
 - **Tompkins:** No updates.
 - **Tioga:** Variety of responses to home deliveries: some deliver once a week while others don't do any. Kerm: how are pantries tracking the potential increase in client load since the SNAP ABAWD time limit came up? Suggestions included comparing # of single or two adult households served

during month of May in 2016 to previous years. Tioga County has done a lot with summer food programs this year. Four new sites.

- **Schuyler:** Schuyler Outreach was the only pantry that saw an increase in ABAWDs due to SNAP time limit.

- **Information on Food Gleaning (Laurie E.)**

- Laurie Ellis (not present): sharing resources about food gleaning. *See handouts: Legal-Guide-to-Food-Recovery and wasted-food-IP.* Lyndsey: if there's enough interest, item can be on agenda next meeting

- **Discussion & Decisions**

- **Today's Agency Spotlight:** Tompkins Community Action's Victory Garden (Ruth W.) –

- Ruth is one of the newest pantry supervisors. Has history working with Headstart and children in a classroom setting. Started out not knowing much about food pantries. Wasn't satisfied with just "feeding the line". Found a way to give to clients so they can grow their own veggies. Met with Doug Robinson (Ithaca, engineer). Discussed handing out vegetables to people in community. Initially proposed Doug grow 2,000-3,000 peppers and tomatoes. Received a lot of rejection to expand project. Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County (CCE) was interested. Wrote seed companies to get seeds. First year served about 100 families. Just finished 6th year with 200 participants. Lowe's and Home Depot provided buckets for container gardening. Partnership with Cayuga Compost for compost. Cargill has partnered for 2 or 3 years. CCE delivered over 15,000 plants this year: veggies, beneficials, and flowers. Had hanging plants but harder to supply due to higher number of participants. Not doing the baskets anymore but still handing out flowers.
- When taking information on those who want garden: find out if they can pick up or have a delivery option. About 10% are delivered. This year, the program provided 242 household gardens. 225 of them were low-income. Staff took some so they can experience and share with families they work with in future.
- A former client who had been victim of domestic violence participated in the Victory Garden project. Became her healing garden. Now started her own mini-program in her community.
- Key lessons for others interested in this work:
 - Need to start small
 - Work to find the right community partners to support project & help it grow.
 - Cargill always looking for volunteer projects.
- Any follow up questions should be directed to Ruth.
- Lyndsey will follow up on the possibility of having a discussion amongst interested parties on the Board about developing similar projects to empower clients to grow their own produce.

- **Agency Capacity Building Discussion (Lyndsey)**

- One piece of new agency capacity focus is EPGs, or Environmental Peer Groups - groups of peers that exist in a similar environment, with similar circumstances
- Purpose is to share best practices outside of just within home county, which already happens at coalition meetings. The idea is that people can learn best from others who are experiencing similar circumstances because their practices would best fit within our parameters of operation
- Context: The idea for having EPGs within the FBST network has a long history, including feedback gleaned through the 2015 strategic planning process, FBST's experience as a member of Feeding America and participating in our Food Bank EPG, the longstanding desire within the Agency Services Department to determine the best way to encourage partner agencies to share

best practices. Lyndsey's new position as Agency Capacity & Engagement Coordinator provides an opportunity for FBST to make it a reality at last.

- Three factors will influence how pantries are grouped into EPGs:
 - Geographic area: Urban vs rural
 - Coordinator type: Paid staff vs. all volunteer
 - Service area size: Large service area (serving “anyone” or whole county) or smaller service area (anyone else)
- Piloting will begin around Aug 1
- Lyndsey asked for feedback and the AAB suggested:
 - The number of hours a pantry is opened per month is an important consideration in grouping pantries
 - Having a “mini-conference” where all EPGs meet at the same time so that folks can carpool from their county
 - Holding trainings within the groups

- **Nutrition Policy Communication with Partner Agencies (Matt)**
 - Matt provided handout to agencies with a sample of letter that will be sent out to agencies explaining new Nutrition Policy.
 - Matt: what's the tone, what's missing, what needs to be changed? This will be emailed, but provide paper copies for those who need
 - Reactions: very concise and to the point. Kerm: put some statistics in to illustrate health concerns related to sugar. Kristine: proud that we are making this nutritional stand. Wants other agencies to embrace this. People have noticed that we are offering better quality food.
 - Matt: With any new policy, we want honest feedback. The more we can encourage that, the better. Larry: majority of agencies in Broome County don't order candy, won't be a large impact. A lot of agencies are already doing this in the way that they order. Ruth: moving forward, will FBST be refusing donations of candy, etc? Matt: we will be in communication with donors.
 - Any questions should be directed to Matt

- **Newsletter Feedback** tabled due to time restrictions. Bethany will send test email to board members.

- **Future Meeting Time**
 - Suggestion to move time of AAB meeting permanently from 11am-1pm (rather than just for summer months). Board in agreement, approved. Lyndsey: meeting will definitely be 11 am – 1 pm for next meeting on August 12th. Then we can confirm that the change be permanent moving forward.

- **Closing**
 - **Three Key Items to Bring Back to Coalitions**
 - Discuss paper products (toilet paper, etc). Is there a critical number of agencies that will order at wholesale if FBST can get it?
 - Discuss Nutrition Policy and Newsletter amongst coalition members
 - EPG groups, factors, etc.
 - **Food Bank Annual Report**
 - Matt: FBST's annual report just came in. Distributed to board members. *See attached handout: FBST_Annual Report 2015.*

- **Motion to adjourn meeting-** Kathy motion for approval. Nancy seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 1:00pm.

**Our next meeting is August 12, 2016,
11 am – 1 pm**

Handouts: April meeting minutes, June Agenda, Legal-Guide-to-Food-Recovery, Wasted-food-IP, FBST_Annual Report 2015