

**FOOD BANK OF THE SOUTHERN TIER  
ADVOCACY COMMITTEE MEETING  
June 1st, 2020  
2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.  
AGENDA**

<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>FACILITATOR</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>TIME</b>
1. Welcome and Check-ins	Erin Summerlee	Discussion	15
2. Approve February Minutes	Erin Summerlee	Approve	5
3. FBST COVID-19 Updates a. Operations changes b. Federal and State program participation c. Recent advocacy actions	Natasha Thompson	Discussion	15
4. Committee Member COVID-19 Updates a. Effects of COVID-19 on your constituents b. Policy priorities for your organization/constituents given COVID-19	Erin Summerlee	Discussion	20
5. Updated FBST Legislative Priorities Given COVID-19 a. Short-term vs. Long-term b. Two Feet of Catholic Social Teaching: Charity + Justice	Lyndsey Lyman	Discussion	30
6. Committee Next Steps	Erin Summerlee	Discussion	15
6. Wrap up / Adjourn	Erin Summerlee		5

**Next Meeting**  
August 3rd, 2020  
2:00-4:00 p.m.

**FOOD BANK OF THE SOUTHERN TIER**  
**Advocacy Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**February 3, 2020      2:00-4:00 pm**

<b>Committee Member</b>	<b>In Attendance</b>	<b>Unable to Attend</b>
Erin Summerlee (Chair)	<b>X</b>	
Lorna Swaine-Abdallah		<b>X</b>
Mark Bordeau		<b>X</b>
Catherine Rogers		<b>X</b>
Wendy Pursel	<b>X</b> (zoom)	
Nancy Eckstrom		<b>X</b>
Steve Fowler	<b>X</b> (zoom)	
Maggie Coffey	<b>X</b>	
Dave Radin	<b>X</b>	
Jessica Gosa	<b>X</b> (zoom)	
Tess McKinley	<b>X</b> (zoom)	
Joe Thomas		<b>X</b>
Charles Thomas		<b>X</b>
Kathy Greene	<b>X</b>	
Samantha Hillson	<b>X</b> (zoom)	
<b>Ex-Officio</b>		
Natasha Thompson	<b>X</b>	
<b>Staff</b>		
Lyndsey Lyman	<b>X</b>	
Randi Quackenbush	<b>X</b>	
Lynn Dates	<b>X</b>	

**1. Welcome and Check-ins**

Randi welcomed the group, new member Jessica Gosa, and Kathy Greene from the Addison Pantry, is attending this meeting to see if she's like to join the committee.

**2. Approval of January Minutes**

*Dave Radin made a motion to approve the April 2019 minutes.  
Maggie Coffey seconded. All were in favor. None opposed.*

**3. Policy and Events Update**

- a. SNAP – Lyndsey sent legislative updates and explained how changes to the SNAP program will affect Childless adults between the ages of 18 and 49—referred to in SNAP regulations as Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD)—are subject to a time limit rule. More information is available online at <https://hungersolutionsny.org/ABAWD>. Randi added that 15 states have filed lawsuits and that more than 100,000 people across New York State will lose waivers. The group discussed ideas to illustrate needs and talked about who they know that they can involve or reach out to.
- b. Commissioner Ball event on 9/25 – The repack event was held during Hunger Action Month at FBST and attended by NYS Agriculture and Markets Commissioner Richard A. Ball, Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo, Assemblyman Phil Palmesano, a Farm Bureau representative and the owners of Reisinger's Apple Country, who were introduced to the operation and repacked apples that were donated by Reisinger's. Randi noted that Commissioner Ball is dedicated to the mission.
- c. Legislative Repack – Lyndsey explained how Legislative Repacks are a holiday tradition and provide contact with County Executives, members of the Legislature, people from State and Federal offices, and school administrators. One was held in December in Tioga County for

## FOOD BANK OF THE SOUTHERN TIER

### Advocacy Committee Meeting Minutes

Broome and Tioga leaders, however the one planned for Chemung and Steuben Counties was canceled due to weather.

A conversation ensued about how FBST can work with different Legislatures since counties have different funding processes, noting that Tioga, Schuyler and Chemung do not currently contribute to FBST through the Legislature. Randi told the group that FBST is planning to engage with county legislators more through Hunger Tours this year. Kathy Greene explained that the Steuben County pantries compile statistics each year to present to the Legislature, noting that Steuben has always been supportive. Jessica Gosa said Tompkins County Legislature is very approachable and that funding is distributed through the Health & Human Service Coalition, which is where FBST's funds originate. The group discussed their thoughts around addressing hunger issues with those running for congressional seats and will reach out to other agencies to see how they have done this.

#### 4. Committee Members Discussion

- a. Committee Matrix – The group reviewed the Committee Matrix and discussed possible additions to the committee noting that Charles Thomas is a veteran and advocate. Lyndsey noted there was a [blog post on FBST's website](#) last Fall about Charles and noted that 30% of FBST clients are veterans. Randi suggested that the Advocacy Committee should volunteer at the 2020 Vets Stand Down event held in Elmira.
- b. Issue area – Each committee member shared hunger awareness issues from their respective organization and noted where they were able to work to address issues or share additional information.
- c. New Committee Member Recruitment – Members discussed strategically populating the committee and shared names.

#### 5. 2020 Action Planning

- a. Review 2020 calendar of events and meetings – Lyndsey reviewed a draft 2020 Advocacy Committee Calendar and noted committee member additions to the document, she pointed out that FBST will not attend Albany lobby day this year.
- b. 2020 Legislative Agenda Creation –potential priorities discussed include:
  - i. Supporting the Older Americans Act
  - ii. Opposing block granting Medicaid
  - iii. )

#### 6. Committee Member Updates

- Erin talked about produce prescription programs and that there is an affinity group forming for policy action to support programs like this and noted serious issues of rural access to food that need to be addressed.
- Erin also mentioned that the NYS Farm to School program is being moved from being under the umbrella of NYS Education Department (“State Ed”) to NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets (“Ag & Markets”). Erin can share one-pagers on this.
- Maggie shared that the Town of Monterey (Beaver Dams) was awarded \$25K to build a pavilion that will serve as a covered area to provide summertime lunches since youth are required to eat onsite.
- Sam asked for more information about food prescription programs.
- Tess shared information about her new position at Steuben Cornell Cooperative Extension and noted the names of new people filling positions.

#### Wrap up/Adjourn

The next meeting is on June 1, 2020, 2:00-4:00 pm.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:59 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by,

*Lynn Dates*

*Executive Assistant to*

*Natasha Thompson, President & CEO*

## **Why Is Strengthening SNAP Important for Ending Hunger —and Saving the Economy —in the Face of the Coronavirus Crisis?**

In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, our neighbors across New York State are struggling against unprecedented hardships, including hunger.

With schools closed, millions of children are missing out on critical meals. As businesses lay off or furlough workers, local families – many of them for the first time -- are forced to make difficult choices at the grocery store, or rely on the emergency food system.

Our organizations, along with the entire Feeding America network of 200 member food banks and 60,000 partner pantries and meal programs, are working around the clock to help families put food on the table. However, we cannot do this work alone. The only way to ensure no one goes hungry during, and after, the coronavirus crisis is through stronger government investment in our federal nutrition programs, namely the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

According to a recent survey of the Feeding America network, food banks reported an average 60 percent increase in demand. While organizations like Food Bank of the Southern Tier, Foodlink, and FeedMore WNY are doing what we do best — feeding people in crisis — we are struggling to keep up with the demand due to what Feeding America’s CEO called a “perfect storm” of complications: a rapid rise in demand combined with a weakened food supply chain.

Our organizations have distributed an average of 48% more pounds of food due to the impacts of the pandemic. We’ve had to adapt the way we distribute food to keep our community members safe and as healthy as possible. Each week, we see an increased need.

But we cannot expect food banks to completely shoulder the task of feeding our nation’s most vulnerable citizens during one of its greatest times of need. If we’re serious about adequately addressing the spike in hunger in our region, strengthening SNAP must be prioritized by our elected officials.

During a recent food distribution in Painted Post, when the topic of SNAP was mentioned, Rep. Tom Reed said, “We really need to focus on relief for the working individuals.” Of the 37,903 families that depend on SNAP in the 23rd Congressional District, 70% are working families, according to the USDA. These households desperately need help, which is why Congress should increase SNAP benefits by 15 percent — similar to what was done following the Great Recession — so we can help feed families who are struggling against hunger. SNAP is proven to help safeguard the food security of people in times of need and its strength is unparalleled. In fact, for every meal the Feeding America network provides, SNAP provides nine.

SNAP is not only an anti-hunger powerhouse; it is also a critical economic multiplier. When low-income families receive SNAP benefits to purchase groceries, those dollars are circulated within and stimulate local economies. As unemployment claims across the country continue to surge, it is likely that an economic downturn will follow the end of our present public health emergency. Increasing SNAP benefits will help make the program even more responsive to any economic downswing that is sure to come. To that point, the Congressional Budget Office rated an increase in SNAP benefits as one of the most cost-effective ways to boost economic growth and create jobs in a weak economy.

In the midst of heightened hunger and impending economic distress, strengthening SNAP is a no-brainer. Congress and the administration have already passed legislation that includes some much-needed support. However, they need to do more to help our New York State neighbors in need. As our organizations continue to find ways to cope with the huge breadth of need for emergency food assistance, we call on our lawmakers to swiftly increase SNAP benefits by 15 percent in any upcoming COVID-19 relief legislation for the duration of the economic downturn. As our communities continue to weather extraordinary circumstances, we need extraordinary help. More than ever, this means increasing SNAP benefits for people facing hunger.

Natasha R. Thompson, President & CEO, Food Bank of the Southern Tier

Julia Tedesco, President & CEO, Foodlink

Tara A. Ellis, President & CEO, FeedMore WNY