

# Southern St. Louis County LAC

## Meeting Minutes

5/19/2022

Present: Alexandra/Ali Gronholz, Carly Hiti\*, Craig Honkola, Ina Newton, Justin England-Sullivan, Kathy Wilson, Rochelle Koehne, Roger Raymond Jr., Sonja Wildwood\*, Kevin Beichler\*\*, Michelle Gross\*\*, William C\*\*

\*- Facilitator

\*\* - Guest

### 1. Welcome and check-in

### 2. Business Items

- Open vs Closed Meetings: The state LAC guidebook and other sources indicate that LAC meetings are required to be open to the public/open forums. Additional optional meetings of active LAC committees will continue to include committee members only.
- Three new members were welcomed to our South LAC: Alexandra/Ali Gronholz, Alison/Ali Shulstad, and Craig Honkola.
- Two members of the Travis' Law workgroup (Michelle Gross and William C.) joined tonight's meeting and plan to join us again in the future to share more about this new state-wide law that requires crisis/911 calls that are clearly mental health crises to be sent to mental health crisis responders where available, as opposed to law enforcement. Their group is hoping to host an event in late June in the Duluth area.
- By-Laws: By-laws have been updated to omit the statement regarding closed meetings and North & South St. Louis County LAC by-laws have been consolidated into one document. Sonja will send out to South LAC members for review and approval, and if no revisions are recommended by 5/31/22 the document will be submitted for posting to the LAC page of the county website.
- LAC Google Account: Links to the South LAC Google account will be sent out to new members. There is a wealth of information included in the documents there.
- June Informal Meeting: Formal LAC meetings are not held in June, July, or December, however an informal meeting will be needed to finalize the yearly report. All present at tonight's meeting agreed that the meeting be held on Thursday 6/16/2022 from 5:00-6:30.
- August Meeting: Reminder that County Commissioner Patrick Boyle will be attending the August meeting and our yearly report will be shared.
- Questionnaire Distribution & Plan: The Community Survey Questionnaire has launched virtually, and 7 responses have been received thus far. A survey link was added to the LAC page of the St. Louis County website; members suggested adding it to the SLC PHHS

page and News Release page also. Members are encouraged to share the online link/QR code with their networks; Sonja will send an intro template for emails. The cutoff date for capturing this initial round of questionnaires is June 10<sup>th</sup>. Kathy volunteered to work on data analysis of responses received up to 6/10. Discussion followed regarding scheduled and potential in-person tabling opportunities and the status of the grant monies; we should know more about the grant funds by mid-week next week, and members are encouraged to brainstorm tabling options and let Sonja know of any ideas. Volunteers for tabling events will be needed also.

### **3. Guest Speaker Kevin Beichler – MACV**

- Kevin is the North Regional Director of MACV, heading a team of 17 which includes 9 in the Duluth area.
- MACV is a nonprofit established over 30 years ago, a state-wide program with the goal of addressing Veteran homelessness and creating sustainable housing opportunities. The organization provides services addressing three main areas: housing, employment, and legal aid. Referrals come largely from CVSOs; MACV can work with folks with any number of discharge types (dishonorable discharges may or may not qualify for select services following review) and is able to work with spouses in certain situations also. Case management services assist each Veteran in creating & following a plan that will address their unique needs.
- MACV offers both transitional and permanent supportive housing through numerous programs as well as emergency assistance for costs such as rent, mortgage, utilities, etc.
- Employment services focus on connecting Veterans with meaningful employment and transitioning skill sets/working on employment skills to access sustainable employment opportunities paying living wages.
- The Vetlaw program offers free Veteran legal aid and resources in order to help remove legal obstacles that may prevent folks from obtaining and maintaining stable employment and housing.
- An LAC member asked about gaps with regards to mental health service availability in our area: MACV is always looking for more specialized service availability for those individuals with mental health barriers. Funding is always an issue. They work with many partner organizations including the Duluth Bethel, LSS, landlords, St. Louis County, ARMHS workers, etc, and recently hired their own health care navigator. Individuals experiencing mental health barriers who are also justice-involved are generally referred to SLC Adult Mental Health workers Mike Dickinson (retiring in June 2022) or Jason Stone.
- LAC member asked whether there are adequate/appropriate mental health counseling services available specifically for Veterans in our area: Kevin stated that if a Veteran is going for counseling and is committed to it then the 'language barrier' (not having Veteran background) is not likely to present an issue. He also stated that Veterans seeking mental health treatment services are often referred to the Minneapolis VA Medical Center, which is one of the best in the nation, or other VA treatment centers within the state.

- They have a great website: [MACV's Mission is to End Veteran Homelessness in Minnesota \(mac-v.org\)](http://mac-v.org)

#### 4. Check-out and action items for next meeting

##### **Action Items:**

- Sonja will send out the final draft of the LAC By-Laws to all members for review and approval.
- Co-facilitators will send links to the South LAC Google drive/account to all new members.
- Deanna will follow up with Ric from ABA next week regarding the status of the grant funds for incentive gift cards and inform co-facilitators.
- Community Engagement Sub-Committee will continue to promote and disseminate the questionnaire within our community and table events. **\*Members interested in volunteering should contact Sonja or Carly. \*Members with event/tabling ideas should contact Sonja. \*Members willing to help distribute posters in the community should contact Sonja or Carly.**
- Kathy will begin data analysis of the survey results following the June 10<sup>th</sup> cutoff date.

**Meeting Adjourned at 6:30 PM.**

**Next meeting:            June 16, 2022 (informal meeting to finalize yearly report)**  
**5:00pm-6:30pm**  
**Duluth Gov't Services Center**  
**Miller Creek Room (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)**  
**320 W. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street**  
**Duluth, MN**  
**\*option to attend virtually continues**