

Buffalo and Erie County Food Policy Council Meeting Minutes
August 8, 2017

Present:

Elias Reden
Kathy Petersen
Della Miller
Rob Free
Julie Barry
Kelly Fletcher
Cheryl Thayer
Lucia Leone
Matt Kauffman
Connie Ervin

Guests:

Mary Comtois – United Way
Joe Roccisano - United Way
Beth Machina - BNMC

The meeting was called to order by Cheryl Thayer. The minutes from the previous meeting were accepted as written.

Caleb Graham is starting college and resigned from his youth position with the Council. There are now two vacant youth seats.

United Way Food Systems Grant Program

The United Way passed around information to the members regarding a Food Systems Grant Program opportunity. Mr. Roccisano went on to explain that this endeavor was a national competition at the United Way. United Way received one million dollars as a one-time commitment from the General Mills Foundation, supported by Greater Twin Cities United Way, for local food systems work. The money will be used to promote food equity in our community. Mr. Roccisano said that they are putting out a request for information to organizations who are interested in talking with them. After information is compiled they will invite selected organizations to apply. He went on to explain that the FPC could apply. Capacity building, strategic planning, as well as a sustainability plan i.e. expanding existing programs or starting new programs in areas such as access to affordable healthy foods. Entrepreneurship through, training kits. They would like those interested to put together something by September 7. It will be a competitive application process. The RFP will go out in the fall, two year awards will be given out by March 2018.

Cheryl Thayer asked if this included Buffalo and was extended to Erie County as well. She asked if they had given any thought to the geographic preference. Mr. Roccisano said that the

food systems lab is developing priority maps for them. Food access, sovereignty and justice are frameworks in targeted areas. This could be broken down among agencies. The average award size would be a minimum of \$25,000, the maximum possibly a couple hundred thousand.

Cheryl Thayer asked after the RFI goes out and the more formal RFP is created, will part of that involve a scoring criteria, with weight or preference to certain aspects of a grant? Mr. Roccisano replied grants would be evaluated as part of a portfolio relating to access, sovereignty and justice. Lucia Leone asked if they would be allowing for any overhead costs and if there would be a limit. Mr. Roccisano answered that they would and it would possibly be 15%.

Cheryl Thayer also mentioned that there would be no match requirement. Contractors and their roles would need to be defined and identified in the application. The information will be disseminated to the FPC member's networks also. She also asked is the FPC does not apply, could there be a small subcommittee to review applicants. Mr. Roccisano replied FPC could be part of a larger group for this, to initiate FPC's expertise.

Cheryl Thayer told the group that in order to be on the review panel, your individual organization cannot be an applicant for the grant. This is assuming the FPC decides not to apply. Initially when they met with Mr. Roccisano FPC did not think they would be applying. She said that she would be applying through Cornell, but did not think the ECDOH could apply. Kelly Fletcher said that they had talked about money for staff support through C3. Kelly is currently getting reimbursed for staff support through 2018.

Connie Ervin talked about funding for a marketing plan in which we could purchase incentives that advertise the FPC. In the spring we could plan an event or conference to promote planting, perhaps a seed distribution.

Meeting dates are: Sept. 27, November 29, January 31, March 28 and May 30. Meeting invites will be sent out for these dates.

Lucia Leone said that in their working group there was mention of putting together a searchable map of all the different healthy food resources. This could be done as a website or a text messaging system. This could be something that people actually would use to find information; with a potential of following up. An extension of this that has been discussed with Independent Health Foundation is having a healthy food retail certification that could be potentially co-sponsored by FPC and the healthy options done for restaurants. There could be some promotion done for this. Several things combined into one, the searching option, and helping people find food, and the second component being the certification.

Della Miller said that in certain communities the stores do not have a lot of waste, since they reside in the same building or close by they consume the food themselves. Even if they are considered to be a healthy market and people do not purchase it, they are using it themselves so it is not really helping the community. She mentioned this has been reiterated to her many times. Lucia Leone said that if people are not purchasing the food, this indicates lack of marketing and education. Ms. Miller said that a mechanism needs to be found that goes into place so that the community is actually buying healthy foods. Lucia Leone said that in the Healthy Corner Stores

Initiative tracking was being done with some interns on what the stores were buying, but do not track what the customers are actually buying. The next piece of this needs to be addressed. She said that the Healthy Corner Store Initiative is interested in the United Way grant. She said that they will be applying, perhaps through the UB Foundation.

Cheryl Thayer said that a component for the FPC could be capacity building. Assuming we had good uses for the money now, staff support, marketing materials. This is something that we have not had so we in turn fell short on getting our message out to people. She thought that the web site is a good tool, we can reference people to it. A community engagement event could be done. This would fall under capacity building to some degree. Do we have the capacity to execute on a grant. Connie Ervin said that we could reach out to local colleges for interns or volunteers.

Kelly Fletcher asked if there were any evidence based programs for nutrition education. Buffalo Public Schools have the CATCH grant. There was also a two part grant for physical activity and healthy eating PEP grant. Cheryl Thayer said that there is more emphasis on physical activity as opposed to healthy eating. Kelly Fletcher mentioned doing community events with children in the summer, challenging them to come up with creative recipes. Cheryl Thayer said that this could be tied into farm to school programs. The nutrition education component is critical. She said that they are serving kids food, some are eating it, some are not. However education is missing. When they are taken to a farm it is a learning experience on site, but the nutrition education is still missing. Ms. Thayer said that there could be an opportunity for a partnership there with Buffalo Public Schools. Connie Ervin reiterated once people understand what certain foods are they will begin to support and buy them.

Cheryl Thayer said that we need to find out where the ECDOH stands with continuing to fund Kelly Fletcher as a support person for the FPC. Would they like the FPC to apply for funds to support this position. She is currently in for 20 hours a month. Could Kelly Fletcher contribute more if we had more funding, and if not who would do it and should we get funding. Ms. Thayer said that if we decide to apply as a FPC, we could let them know that we are considering putting in an application for capacity by Sept.7. If we decide not as a council to apply there will be four slots open for the review panel. Let Kelly Fletcher know if you are interested.

Review of Attendance Policy

Kelly Fletcher reiterated from the Operating Principles that all members are required to attend all full council meetings and any working groups and standing committees. Standing Committees are consolidated into full council meetings. We will be taking attendance at each meeting and the expectation is that if a member has missed four out of the last six full council meetings, the full council can vote on whether or not that member will be retained in their seat. There are also rules under expectations of members or meetings, members must have been present for two out of the last three meetings of the full council to vote on any action item. Ms. Fletcher took a look at the last three meetings from the sign in sheets to determine voting rights. She was not sure if two out of the three included the current meeting or if it was the three preceding. She took it to be the three preceding. If there is an N next to your name on the sign in roster you are not eligible to vote. Ms. Fletcher will be doing this for each meeting. She also asked if everyone

received the invitation to BOX. Some said they were unable to open it, but would forward it to their home e-mail.

Lucia Leone questioned if the FPC would change meeting dates if we know ahead of time that someone cannot make it, or if there was a special meeting where there is not more time notice will this be considered the same way. Kelly Fletcher thought that this should apply to the regularly scheduled meetings. For the latest special meeting she thought it was a “grey” area, and the special meetings should not count regarding voting privileges. The operating principles are also on-line on our website. Ms. Fletcher thought that we should take time once a year to review the operating principles. This applies also to new members coming on board.

Cheryl Thayer said that the FPC has been struggling with attendance as a full council and in having quorums. Kelly Fletcher said that she has been attempting to be consistent with holding meetings the last Wednesday of the month at a certain time, so that would make it easier for members to attend. We will send out a reminder with the dates of the next five meeting dates.

Julie Barry asked if members could call in for a teleconference for meetings. Cheryl Thayer thought that would work as there is a conference line available. We should let members know that this is also an option for them. Lucia Leone questioned if someone misses 4 out of 6 and we can vote to replace a member how does this work for the appointed seats? Special meeting attendance will be taken out of the equation in counting missed meetings.

Cheryl Thayer asked who was on the recruitment committee. Kelly Fletcher responded that Kelly Asher, Pat Watson and Connie Erwin were on that committee. She went on to say that Kelly Asher sent out an invite to set up a meeting for the end of August or early September to get them together. Cheryl Thayer said that there were some open seats. She indicated getting an application round out so that these seats could be filled.

Youth Seats

Cheryl Thayer said that there were 2 open youth seats. She asked if everyone had a chance to look at the candidates resumes’. Rebecca Williams identified two candidates from MAP. The resumes were reviewed. They were two year terms, Caleb has about a year left on his term. Both candidates are involved in MAP, one attends Emerson and the other City Honors and both are graduating in 2019.

Della Miller suggested that if we accepted the two youth candidates if they would be allowed to get other youth into a committee to work with them. Such as a working group which would be open to the community. She said that this would be an opportunity for others to come in and have an idea of how the FPC operates which perhaps would enable them to play a bigger role.

A motion was made to appoint the two candidates to the youth seats, the motion was seconded and all were in favor. We will e-mail Rebekah Williams to let her know that the candidates could start immediately. Cheryl Thayer told the group that if anyone else is working directly with youth that might be interested in submitting a proposal for a youth tract for the Northeast

Sustainable Ag Working Group ; and are interested in submitting proposals for a youth workshop tract . Cheryl Thayer has contact information for that.

Working Group Updates

Healthy Food Retail

Lucia Leone said that they are looking for developing a guide around food sampling and mobile markets and are looking at policies in other places. She said that she had exhausted her contacts. She said that she is not really sure if they should create their own policy, or find a student who wants to do some research. They are looking at policy that the stat or municipality has on how they handle food demonstrations. Lucia reached out to mobile markets, but could not find anyone with a link to a policy. She did come upon someone who is in the process of writing a policy. She will be writing up best practices. She called upon Beth Machnica who said that she had a meeting with Independent Health regarding healthy food retail. She said that they are actually going to propose a policy regarding mandatory healthy options at restaurants. This will be something to work with them on. Cheryl Thayer asked how you can mandate a private business to do this. Healthy Corner stores are looking into having this written into their license. This would tie into the healthy options program. Healthy Retail Certification would be the retail partner to their healthy options. This could be potentially co-sponsored with the FPC.

Cheryl Thayer asked regarding the policy on food demonstrations, ideally what is the key to establish clarity on this issue? Lucia Leone said that the key changes are that they do not have food demonstrations be treated like a booth at the EC Fair. They would have to follow food safety guidelines but not have to be so rigorous in just giving out samples. Cheryl Thayer suggested reaching out to the Cleveland Food Policy Council as they are very active. She said that she could reach out to see if they had any examples.

Urban Food Production

Matt Kauffman said that they submitted the Farmer's proposal and letter of support from the FPC in July. They met with the Buffalo Common Council. Mike Raleigh and Matt spoke to the council. There were other organizations present. Mike has since met with Legislative Aides for Councilman Pridgen, and both have been in contact with Sean Mulligan. Matt also forwarded Cleveland's policy for water access. The Council is in recess in August but will resume again in September.

Procurement

Cheryl Thayer said that they did an initial survey and they have been attempting to set up a date to meet. The goal would be expanding the survey to more schools. They asked what needed to be done for more local procurement from small farms.

Nutrition Education

Della Miller said that Connie Ervin had left her some notes to discuss. The committee decided that they wanted to talk with other organizations to see if they had a nutrition education policy. They were tasked to phone various locations and it was found that UB is in the process of writing up a policy. Della said that it was the Parent Network that wanted to know more. Through the information gathered they decided upon 7 or 8 questions for a survey. No one seems to have a nutrition education policy. The questions were: beyond serving food what do you do to purvey concepts of eating, define what nutrition education means, Do you have a nutrition education policy and why not. Do you have nutrition education for all ages, how frequently is the education administered. Are you aware of the guidelines available to help you create a nutrition education program, how do you monitor and regulate policy for nutrition education, who is responsible, how often do you monitor, when do you think of your nutrition education programming and what would be some improvements you would like to see and would you be willing to share your policy with other organizations. This is building a framework toward developing a policy that the FPC could review and submit back, or educate them on how to put a policy together that they could adapt a policy that we have. This would go out to K through 12 classes. They also thought about presenting these questions to daycare centers as well as schools; or possibly Boys and Girls clubs or after school programs. WIC was also contacted, and they could possibly offer information to parents regarding nutrition education. Cheryl Thayer said that there is a Wellness Policy at Buffalo Public Schools with regulations that are loosely recommended. Della Miller said that at the Head Start program there was a committee with Pediatricians, Dieticians, nutritionists as well as parents and food suppliers that monitored and developed menus for the children. This model could possibly be used as an example.

There was no more new or old business. The meeting was then adjourned.

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