Welcome and Introductions
Katherine welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded Council members that meetings will be taking a slightly different new: we will be taking more time to discuss how the Council can be involved in each meeting’s topic focus, as well as allowing more time at the end of meetings for announcements and networking.

Protecting & Expanding Summer Meals in the Windham Region
When school lets out, families who rely on school meal programs must fill in the gaps. Summer meal sites can provide this crucial source of nutritious food, but not all eligible communities are providing this resource. Springfield and Townshend are of particular concern, and representatives from these communities will join the Council to share the challenges they are facing, and their successes in helping families access food throughout the summer.

Katherine Jandernoa (Co-Chair) – One in 4 children in Windham County are food insecure. The big break over the summer means that there is a big gap in access to food for many children, and with this year’s summer break being longer than normal (due to the lack of snow days), this is a big concern.

Anore Horton (Hunger Free Vermont) – Anore explained how summer meal programs are organized and promoted normally. The Vermont Agency of Education is the state agency that oversees child nutrition programs, and over the last 5 years, we’ve been very fortunate to have a person working there whose work is primarily dedicated to supporting summer meal programs.

The Agency of Education has certain requirements that must be met to allow a summer meal site to run: The entity sponsoring the meal site must fill out an online form that then must be approved by the State, including the timing of the sites, where they are located, and contact information. The site then must have a “pre-approval visit” from the State to
make sure the site is following all regulations. If a sponsor is running multiple meal sites, they must have trained personnel at each site.

Hunger Free Vermont works closely with the Agency of Education to gather information on all of the sites listed through that process, and in the past, the Agency of Education has sent this list to the schools. Schools are federally required to publish this list for families. However, Nancy Lewis (the summer meal site person at the Agency of Education) is leaving at the end of May, and the Agency of Education is already short-staffed; as a result, the Agency will be down by 3 whole staff positions by the end of May. In addition, the online system for sponsors to submit their paperwork was switched, with many delays and glitches that shut down the system for multiple weeks.

All of this, combined with the fact that schools are ending early this year, has created a lot of challenges for creating a reliable list of sites that schools can hand out at the end of the year.

Hunger Free Vermont’s Child Nutrition team is dedicating the next few weeks to call sponsors directly, get their meal site(s) information, and then distributing that information to schools before they end for the summer. Some Supervisory Unions have already been able to do this work themselves; Hunger Free Vermont is concentrating where this work is not happening.

Once these lists are ready, we’ll be asking for help from Council members to distribute them. There are very few people at the state level able to work on this, so we’ll need a lot of help.

The situation in Windham is pretty good, but we’ll still need help spreading the word. There are 16 sites in Brattleboro, 7 of which are open sites (meaning that any child 18 years old or younger could stop in and get a free meal). The rest are closed sites, meaning that the children signed up for that site (usually a camp or summer program) get a meal for free, but there are no drop-in meals available.

The Council discussed the challenges presented this year, and the importance of focusing on supporting and expanding summer meal sites for next year. For this current year, sponsors have to have already applied or be in the process of applying, so adding a “new” sponsor would be very difficult, especially given the technology challenges. However, adding a new site is not hard, and can done up until June, although if a contact has already been written up to supply meals for a certain number of sites in certain locations, that could pose difficulties in adding new sites in other areas, especially if transportation costs would need to be added to the contract, since transportation is usually covered by meal reimbursements.

Hunger Free Vermont is also helping distribute materials from the USDA to help advertise open meal sites, such as lawn signs and posters.

Tarina Cozza emphasized the importance of transportation outside of Brattleboro to meal sites, especially when there’s not a central location that’s easy to get to. Chelsea Nunez agreed, sharing that the Brattleboro Housing summer meal sites don’t get a lot of drop-ins, although she is hoping that the USDA promotional materials will help draw people in.

Handout: List of Summer Meal Sites in the Windham Region (coming soon – will be sent to the Council ASAP)

Action: Share the list of summer meal sites with clients and families as soon as it is available
The Council then focused on two particular areas of concern: Townshend and Springfield:

Townshend:

*Kathy Squires (Townshend Community Food Shelf)* – Kathy and Lisa Pitcher have been working to make sure that there are summer meals available to children in that area throughout the entire summer. Leland & Grey, which used to operate an open meal site in July, has switched to a closed meal site due to low attendance at the open site in years prior. The Council discussed whether promoting the meal site would have helped attendance, and if the library could be an open meal site, or if Jamaica (which is in the same SU as Townshend) could extend their July program to provide meals in June and August. Katherine Jandernoa has talked with Grace Cottage and Kindle Farms School – Grace Cottage is unable to host a site, but Kindle Farms, which is currently a closed site, might be willing to become an open meals site, although they still are only open in July.

The Council agreed to continue focusing on the Townshend region over the next year with the goal of expanding summer meals ‘coverage’ to the entire summer for children in that region.

Springfield:

*Anore Horton (Hunger Free Vermont)* – The Springfield Family Center has sponsored summer meal sites for the past 4 years, since the Springfield School District has refused to be a meal site sponsor. However, the Family Center is no longer able to manage this whole program and looking for alternatives to help out. All of Springfield is eligible for Universal School Meals, and there is a huge need in this region. Two Rivers Supervisory Union is willing and able to make meals for the Springfield Family Center now, but they’re unable to deliver them, so the Meeting Waters YMCA has stepped up to transport the meals to Springfield. However, the meals still need to be distributed by someone else to all of the different meal sites (and then the materials need to get back to the Y in time to go back to Two Rivers SU).

*Mike Wiese (Springfield Family Center)* – Mike has been working for 6 months as the new Executive Director for the Family Center. When he started in October, there were bills for thousands of dollars from food vendors, and as a whole, it has been very hard to cover the costs of the summer meals program. Mike shared that having Two Rivers SU prepare the meals will be a huge relief.

Mike is now trying to determine what sites the Family Center will be working with, and to find people to supervise each site.

*Will Fritch is the School Liaison for Springfield, and offered to help with outreach and advertisement for the sites.*

The Council discussed the challenges of finding supervisors at sites and the potential of offering stipends to supervisors. Genna Williams recommended reaching out to the Springfield Health Center for site promotion, and Sue Graff recommended contacting Suzanne Stofflet, her counterpart at Granite United Way, which covers Windsor County. Anore asked Council members to email her with recommendations for contacts, and she would then work with Mike
to help organize and reach out to those people (instead of having Mike, who is still figuring out this aspect of his new job, get flooded with emails).

**Brattleboro:**

*Kira Sawyer-Hartigan (Windham Southeast Supervisory Union)* – Kira helps organize the summer meals program in Brattleboro. Brattleboro has been working to steadily increase the nutritional quality of the foods served in the summer meals, and Kira shared a list of the Food Requirements that were included in the bid for meal prep this year. (see attached) Kira shared that the State has done a great job of recommending how to make summer meals high quality, and NOFA-VT has been helping promote local food purchasing.

Kira is looking for a volunteer to cover Fridays at the open summer site at Westgate. The camp that is usually there throughout the week goes on field trips on Fridays, so there needs to be a supervisor to serve any children not enrolled in the camp who drop in on Fridays for meals.

**Hartford:**

*Katherine welcomed Wendy Walsh, who is part of the Hartford Community Coalition, which coordinates a creative summer meals program in Hartford. Wendy was invited to this meeting to describe this program in hopes that it might provide inspiration for folks in the Windham Region looking to start or expand their summer meals programs.*

**Wendy Walsh (Hartford Community Coalition / Vermont Department of Health)** – The Hartford Community Coalition was created a few years ago in response to a rash of suicides that occurred in the community. A huge groups of local organizations came together, and a smaller sub-group started focusing on food insecurity in the community over the summer. Last summer, a camp was a closed site, which served 80 children over 8 weeks, for a total of 3,000 lunches. This year, the local pool has been opened, so an open meals site has been added at the Middle school (directly across from the pool) for lunches and the camp is continuing as a closed site, with both breakfast and lunch served.

In addition to successfully having started an open meals site, the Coalition is working to be able to serve meals to adults. They are also working to provide snacks to go home over the weekends for children who receive the Vermont Foodbank’s Backpack program over the school year.

The Council discussed whether any organization provided a similar Backpack-style resource in Windham County, but none were known of. Genna Williams explained that the Vermont Foodbank does not have the funding to provide Backpacks over the summer.

The Hartford Community Coalition has been applying to many grants to cover the costs of the summer meals program, in addition to $4,000 donated from Upper Valley HEAL (Healthy Eating and Active Living), which is hosted by the Children’s Hospital at Dartmouth-Hitchcock. The program is budgeted around $14,000, including the cost of hiring someone to help serve the meals at the camp site and someone to coordinate the snack program. Wendy shared a sample flyer being used to recruit businesses to provide food or to cover the cost of food over different weeks – almost all of the weeks have been covered already!

### Handouts

- **Handout:** 2016 Summer Food Service Program Food Requirements (attached)
- **Action:** Contact Kira at Kira_Sawyer-Hartigan@wsesu.org for suggestions for volunteers.
- **Handout:** Hartford Community Coalition flyer (attached)
- **Handout:** Healthy Foods Donation Guide (attached and at http://hungerfreevt.org/the-windham-region)
- **For more information:** Contact Wendy Walsh at wendy.walsh@vermont.gov
Anore Horton recommended the Coalition use the Healthy Foods Donation Guide created by the Food Shelves Sub-committee / Healthy Harvest Network, to help guide businesses towards healthier food donations. (see attached)

The Council applauded Wendy for the great work being done by the Coalition, and likened it to what is happening in Townshend’s Community Health and Action Group.

Talking Points & Next Actions
Discussion of how Hunger Council members can help to spread the word about summer meal programs and support communities facing summer challenges.

Anore Horton encouraged Council members to help promote the open meal sites in the region, as well as encourage families to call 2-1-1 or text food to 2-1-1 in order to learn about what open sites are nearest to them.

Council members discussed various avenues for dissemination of the information.

Sub-Committee Reports

Summer Meals Sub-Committee (Sue Graff): The Summer Meals Sub-Committee has been focusing on growing both the number of meal sites and the number of children accessing these sites. They will be hosting the Summer Food Kick-off Event on Friday, June 3rd, from 5:00 – 7:00 outside of the Boys and Girls Club on Flat Street in Brattleboro. (See attached flyer) A free dinner will be served (275 dinners were served at last year’s kick-off) and bags containing information on summer activities and resources will be given to all families attending. Kira and Sue invited all organizations located within the Windham Southeast SU region to table at the event, and asked interested organizations to let Kira know.

The Summer Meals Sub-Committee has also been doing outreach promoting summer meals, including sending a blurb to all 30 schools in Windham County, posting on Front Porch Forum, and scheduling PSAs. Sue and Margaret Atkinson encouraged Council members to share / repost summer meals information posted on the United Way of Windham County and the Windham Child Care Association’s facebook pages. Sue also encouraged Council members to refer people to 2-1-1 to get local and accurate information.

Food Pantries Subcommittee (Telos Whitfield) – Telos gave a quick update on the recent Mail Carriers Food Drive, which delivered approximately 1300 pounds of food to Our Place Drop-In Center, 580 pounds to the Chester Food Shelf, and more to other sites. This was the first year that the food shelves in Healthy Harvest Network did joint promotions of this event, and Telos is looking forward to doing more joint events and PR. Telos would also like to thank the mail carriers who collected all of the food.

Healthy Harvest Network is considering holding a 4th of July “Protein Drive” (including non-meat sources of protein), and piggy-backing on the fall food drives (e.g. Overflow the Opera).

Telos described some of the meals to-go that are available from Our Place Drop-In Center, including frozen meals for seniors that might be able to be extended to children as well. Our Place is also interested in hosting a separate kids’ food shelf, similar to what Townshend
operates. Pat Haine shared that Guilford Cares also operates a food shelf at the school that is very well used.

**Announcements & Wrap-up**

*Bonny White (UVM Extension – EFNEP)* – Bonny shared a flyer describing EFNEP’s programs, which have been expanded to Windham County. Bonny is looking for low-income individuals to participate in 6-session classes that are client-driven and focused on food security, health, and nutrition. According to EFNEP’s research, 91% of adults who participate show healthy eating improvements. Participants receive tools like cutting boards and knives. Bonny *can* hold these classes at clients’ homes, but is looking for a physical location to host the classes that would allow her to do some limited cooking.

*Pat Haine (Guilford Cares)* – The library in Guilford used to participate in the summer meals program but has declined to participate this year. They were concerned about the amount of food that was wasted. *Kira Sawyer-Hartigan shared that many sites donate the food that’s not eaten, but agreed that non-eaten food is a financial loss for sponsors, since they’re only reimbursed for meals consumed. Telos Whitfield was interested in finding and capturing non-eaten meals at other summer sites.*

*Tarina Cozza (Vermont Department of Health)* – The Farm to Family program will be happening this year, but has been a little delayed.

*Helen Rortvedt and Katherine Jandernoa (Food Connects)* – Food Connects is hosting a series of community dinners on the 4th Tuesday of every month through September. These will be celebrating the local food scene in the region, and featuring local food trucks. (see attached flyer)

Food Connects has recently received money from Vermont Yankee to help supply foods over non-summer gaps.

Over the last 7 years, Food Connects has helped organize the “neighborhood” farmers market. The market was designed to help new farmers, but since the food landscape in the region has been changing, it’s been decided that the market was duplicating the Brattleboro Farmers Market, and so, the neighborhood market will not be running this year. Katherine reminded the Council that this is a good thing – the market was started to fill a gap that no longer exists.

The Brattleboro Farmers Market will on Tuesday evenings from 4:00 – 7:00 starting on May 31st. The market used to be held during the lunch hour, so the shift to after-work time is big. The market is still accepting WIC and EBT benefits, same as the Saturday markets.

*Chelsea Nunez (Brattleboro Housing Authority)* – Chelsea is also on the Board of Brattleboro Senior Meals, which is looking for a cook to cover from June 13th – 17th. They don’t have to be Serve Safe certified, but do need to be able to cook for large groups. Contact Chris at 802-257-1236 or chrismcavoy@brattleboroseniormeals.org with recommendations.

*Kathy Squires (Townshend Food Shelf)* – Kathy was very inspired by the Vermont Foodbank’s Hunger Action Conference, especially with the idea of connecting healthcare providers with tools to recognize and treat food insecurity. (see attached 2-item food insecurity screening algorithms)
Jenna Banning (Hunger Free Vermont) – Jenna shared an overview of the All Councils meeting held on May 17th. The event was the first time that representatives from all 10 Hunger Councils were brought together. A film of the event will be sent out separately and posted to the Hunger Free Vermont’s Hunger Councils main page: [http://hungerfreevt.org/what/hunger-councils](http://hungerfreevt.org/what/hunger-councils)

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<th>Handouts: 2-item screen for Primary Care Providers for children, Primary Care Providers for seniors, and Service Providers for children (attached)</th>
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Meeting Adjourned

Next Meeting: July 20, 2016 9:30 – 11:30am at Marlboro College Graduate Center in Brattleboro