The Hunger Council of Chittenden County  
Minutes to the meeting on June 9, 2011

Present  
Co-Chairs: Erik Filkorn and Eileen Elliot  
Council members: Rob Meehan, Chris Meehan, Julie Cole, Vicky Smith, Sister Irene Duchesneau, Vicky Smith, Linda Berlin, Tim Searles, Lauren Curry, Rabbi James Glazier, Chris Saunders, Senator Leahy’s Office, Nancy Cathcart, Director of Development and Communications for Boys and Girls Club of Burlington (for Mary Alice McKenzie)  
Guests: Brianna Farver, Intervale Food Hub, Joel Banner Baird, Burlington Free Press Staff, Zuzy Zvarova, Senator Leahy Staff Intern  
Hunger Free Vermont staff: Dorigen Keeney, Anore Horton, Angela Smith-Dieng, Rebecca O’Reilly, Ayla Walker (Intern) and Tracie Clarke  

Updates:  
Sister Irene: The food shelf in Colchester is expanding in the Fire Department, including with additional freezers.  

Linda Berlin: UVM received a 5 year USDA grant to improve both food security and farm viability (sustainable agriculture) “Dissolving the Double Bind” 12 state 5 year project; focus on getting affordable local foods into local retailers.  

Rob Meehan: There is a 20% increase in participation since last year. We have recently moved to computerized intake forms, and no longer need social security numbers. We upgraded the facility with federal dollars (community kitchen, employment training for participants) and corporate partnerships. We are looking to expand facility (Colchester warehouse, offices/classrooms off site).  

Chris Meehan- The VT Food Bank is sponsoring two summer food service programs in Essex County: Island Pond and Canaan. We are very concerned about the proposed federal cuts to TEFAP and CSFP which will result in empty food shelves.  

Rabbi James Glazier: Here at Temple Sinai, 3% of the money from food events goes to fund anti-hunger work. The Temple will be a CSA drop off point for Full Moon Farm. He offers the kitchen to the community to use and notes that there are no summer food programs in South Burlington.  

Angela Smith-Dieng: Update on farmer’s markets in Chittenden County currently accepting EBT. There are 93,000 Vermonters (1 in 6) receiving 3squaresVT, bringing $11 million/month of federal funds into the state. We are gathering stories from participants about the need for this program to be used for advocacy work to prevent this program from being cut or block granted.  

At this time, 37 farmer’s markets are able to receive EBT benefits. Last year, there was $60,000 in EBT sales in Vermont. We need help to get the word out about the options and benefits of purchasing foods.
at the markets. There has been a statewide press release, we continue to do local media and people can get information from www.vermontfoodhelp.com to get the word out.

*Harvest Health Coupons* increase purchasing capability, paid for with private funds, by providing additional benefits when EBT are used at farmer’s markets. We are working with markets and communities to provide stigma free environments.

**Discussion on how to get the word out about EBT at farmer’s markets:**
- Reach out to the ELL (English Language Learners) or refugee population
- Brattleboro has been successful at bringing mini-markets to low income neighborhoods and hiring teenagers living in the community to run and do outreach for the markets.
- Provide community meals at the markets to help everyone feel comfortable
- Invite market managers to Hunger Council meetings to discuss marketing the use of EBT.

**Brianna Farver: EBT capability at the Intervale Food Hub**

The Intervale Food Hub is a collaboration of 22+ small farms that aggregate products and sell through CSA and wholesale outlets. All farms are within 75 miles of Burlington. Multi-farm CSA allowing for extended season (winter, summer, fall) and provide farmers a higher payment. Recently acquired EBT machine and can accept payment twice a month versus at the beginning of the season (disallowed by federal government for 3SquaresVT). We currently have 3 CSA members using EBT and they can pick up the share at the Intervale or at Joseph’s House.

Discussion:
- EBT machines cost about $1,200 with a monthly fee of $45 and a transaction fee (depending on debit or EBT) of 10 cents per swipe.
- There are some grants available to pay for the machines
- Paying at the time of the CSA pick up does not provide the farmers the money up front, nor does it share the risk with the farmer. This is less of an issue when many farmers are providing product together.
- Ideas for marketing and getting more 3Squares recipients involved:
  - Community Health Center might be a drop off host
  - Fedex/Kinkos might be a drop off host

**Brianna Farver: Gleaning Project**

When farms at the Intervale have extra or blemished produce, community volunteers harvest the produce and the food is distributed to local food shelves. She is initiating a new project to have the recipients of gleaned produce do the gleaning themselves, and give any extra to the food shelves.

**Discussion:**
- Many low income people are working several jobs and poverty takes enormous time (benefit appointments, using public transportation, lack of conveniences like washing machines, lack of child care, etc.) leaving little extra time to devote to gleaning.
- Food Bank may be able to help with organizing groups to glean
- Religious organizations can recruit gleaners
Anore Horton: Update on summer meal sites in Chittenden County

Summer is a difficult time for low-income children in Vermont. During the school year, 33,000 students rely on free and reduced price school meals including breakfast, lunch and after school snack. Last summer only 5,100 (17%) low income VT children received meals. Compared to other states, Vermont is doing well in serving low income children, moving up in ranking from 12th to 11th in the nation. Low income children, who do not have access to summer enrichment activities with meals, have been found to increase weight gain and lose months of math and reading achievement over the summer. The 2011 list of open summer meal sites in the County is not yet complete and will be listed with 211 and on our website. Last year, many towns were not served and the “open” sites that were available were for a particular group of children participating in a program and other children would not have felt comfortable joining them just for the meal.

Discussion of access to summer meal sites and outreach strategies:

- Lack of available programs in Essex, Essex Junction, Westford, Jericho Center, and Milton
- Schools are now required to tell parents about location of summer meals
- Give closed sites the list of open sites so they can refer families
- Important that summer meal programs have a full day of programming so families don’t have to leave work to pick up kids and bring them to lunch.
- Transportation of the food to satellite sites and transportation of the children to the summer meal sites is the biggest obstacle.
- Towns like Springfield are delivering food to households to feed children during the summer but these children lack any social or enrichment activities
- Group was asked to let HFV know about areas in Chittenden County that are high needs and where children are already congregating, so we can begin to plan for next summer.
- Organizations that receive information about summer programs are CAP agencies, AAA, community organizations, WIC, ESD, Farmers’ markets, (summer months). People can call 211 or go to vermonthfoodhelp.com
- Additional ideas for outreach to increase participation at current open sites:
  - Informational flyers into electric bills
  - Postal service
  - Facebook, front porch forum

Adjourn

Minutes respectfully submitted by Tracie Clarke and Dorigen Keeney

Proposed meeting times for next year:

September 15
November 16 (Wednesday) – Joint meeting with other Councils
February 9
May 10

Please let me know if these dates conflict with other events. Thank you.