**Meeting Minutes**

**Meeting Date:** September 7, 2018  
**Present:** Tammy Lamoureux (NEKCA), Joanne Giannino (community member), Shannon Choquette (NEKWMD), Heather Morris (Vermont Veterans Outreach), Diane Matthews (Creative Healing and Fitness), Hilary DeCarlo (NVRH), Heidi Cooperstein (NEKCA Head Start), Jane Edwards (Upper Kingdom Food Access), Abbie Montgomery (Vermont Department of Health), Pam Kennedy (Community Seed Exchange), Beth Fauver (Vermont Department of Health), James Merriam (United Church Newport), Martha Braithwaite (Center for an Agricultural Economy)

**Co-Chairs:** Colleen Moore de Ortiz (Vermont Department of Health), Jeff Pierpont (Passumpsic Savings Bank), Ed Sunday-Winters (Greensboro UCC)  
**Hunger Free Vermont staff:** Becca Mitchell and Olivia Peña

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Welcome and Introductions</strong></th>
<th><strong>Handouts:</strong></th>
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<td>Brief introductions from Hunger Council members and guests.</td>
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*Colleen Moore de Ortiz welcomed the group to the meeting and asked that updates be held until the later part of the meeting.*

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<tr>
<th><strong>Hunger Council Structure and Goals for the Upcoming Year</strong></th>
<th><strong>Action Steps &amp; Handouts:</strong></th>
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<td>Last year, the Hunger Council identified some promising openings for cross-sectoral work, including the local food movement, the transportation system, the healthcare system, and municipal and town planning. In light of the many great coalitions and organizations working to strengthen the region, the Council has also been working to connect with partners and related initiatives.</td>
<td>Action: Share information on actions taken / connections made / information learned as a result of the meeting through the Tracking Outcomes Survey.</td>
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*Colleen Moore de Ortiz opened the conversation by reflecting on the rich conversation the group had last year regarding the role of the Council and visions moving forward.*

*Becca shared a brief overview of the Hunger Councils and emphasized that each Council is unique and tailored to its respective communities. She describe approaches and projects that other Councils have taken on, from the long-term work of the Windham Out of School Time (OOST) Subcommittee to support summer meals and OOST meals in the region, to the retailer assessment in Washington County to gauge where residents are accessing their food.*

*Colleen reminded the group that these meetings have previously been identified as a time for learning and sharing, but the co-chairs and Hunger Free Vermont staffers want to support more action-oriented efforts if this is of interest.*

*Jane Edwards (Upper Kingdom Food Access) – UKFA was established over three years ago following a forum facilitated by UVM Extension; while they maintain a larger mailing list to keep communities members in the loop, their work is mostly driven by a core group of about 6 members. They have done work to support food distributions and cooking demos, but are currently at an impasse. Jane expressed interest in seeing where folks are really accessing*
food, and ask if we were to gather data about retailers and food shelves, how it would be applied.

Tammy Lamoureux (NEKA) – NEKA receives donations from 3 local stores 4 days a week, and serve 80-90 people each day in Newport. They also run food shelves in Island Pond and Canaan and have expanded the hours of operation at both sites (4 hours/day and 5 days/week). They've utilized VT Fresh funding to purchase refrigeration and shelving and to cover cooking demos. They have also increased their staff capacity to pick up donated food from grocers.

James Merriam (United Church of Newport) – The church distributes about 250 food bags each month, which serve an estimated 500 people. James expressed his appreciation for Jane’s interest and efforts to collect data, and noted the importance of maintaining privacy and dignity.

Martha Braithwaite (Center for an Agricultural Economy) - The Regional Food System Plan for Vermont’s Northeast Kingdom includes language and action steps regarding food access in Goal 8: The region will achieve food sovereignty, providing residents with economic access to fresh, healthy and local foods, and food-related health outcomes will be improved. Martha asked if the Council would be interested in developing shared metrics over the coming year, to get a sense of what is happening quantitatively, as well as best practices and lessons learned.

The group expressed interest and support, recognizing the value of collaboration and knowing where there are gaps in service as well as replicability. It was decided that a temporary working group would be formed to begin working on identifying metrics and data collection. A separate email will be sent to those who expressed interest in participating.

Colleen led the group in reviewing Hunger Free Vermont’s strategic plan and reminded us of some of the areas of intersection with food access that have been identified at our previous meeting: transportation, municipal planning, local agriculture, health care. She also shared an email from Lallie Mambourg (NEK Council on Aging) who would like to see more grocery stores offering home delivery or pickup at the curb.

The group discussed the need for more stores to offer these services. White’s Market in St. Johnsbury recently began call-ahead delivery. Jane shared that the AARP Age Friendly group in Newport approached Vista Foods last year about this but plans fell through. Council members identified the Walmart in Derby as being a good potential target, since they offer call-ahead grocery services in some stores (though not locally). Hunger Council members who are interested in revisiting this ask are encouraged to participate in the next meeting of this group, or to reach out to Jane directly.

NEKO’s transportation committee is focused on exploring what is needed to build an equitable, accessible transportation network. Bethany Dunbar facilitates this committee and can be contacted for more information (bethany@hardwickagriculture.org ).
# Action Points, Wrap Up, and Adjourn

Hunger Council members identified available opportunities for action.

- A temporary working group will connect before our next Hunger Council meeting to start forming a plan for data collection.
- The Hunger Council will tentatively spent our next meeting focusing on the role of retailers in ensuring food access in local communities.
- We will explore learning about NEAR Science (Neuroscience, Epigenetics, Adverse Childhood Experiences, and Resilience) during future meetings, per Colleen’s suggestion.

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**Becca Mitchell (Hunger Free Vermont)** - The Statewide 3SquaresVT Outreach & Policy Conference is on October 2 at Vermont Law School. [Register here](#).

**Pam Kennedy (Community Seed Exchange)** - All are welcome to bring seeds to the Barton Library.

**Heidi Cooperstein (NEKCA Head Start)** - Head Start is just beginning a new program year. Heidi also shared that the town of Glover has started a farmers’ market, and is hoping to accept 3SquaresVT and Crop Cash next year.

**Diane Matthews (Creative Healing and Fitness)** - Diane’s business is on track to be up and running in the next few months, and she will reach out to the group as needed.

**Martha Braithwaite (Center for an Agricultural Economy)** - Martha emphasized that NEKO is about building relationships and sharing stories, and that they are focused on recognizing community leaders who may not come from traditional leadership positions.

**Heather Morris (Vermont Veterans Outreach)** - Heather reminded the group to please call her if a veteran or their family needs anything; VVO provides wraparound services.

**Pastor James Merriam (United Church of Newport)** - James expressed his excitement for the opening of the Newport Promise Community’s new childcare. He also shared that the Church is seeking volunteers in planning capacities (menu planning for community meals, etc.).

**Shannon Choquette (Northeast Kingdom Waste Management District)** - Shannon shared that the Food Cycle Coalition has hoped to use a USDA Rural Development grant to conduct a feasibility study around food donations and recovery in the region, but that project did not receive funding; they are excited to be hosting a Food Recovery and Donation Summit on October 21 at Highland Center for the Arts.

**Tammy Lamoureux (NEKCA)** - NEKCA is confirming dates for their two upcoming fundraisers, Hungerfest and Hungerbowls; they will also soon start to seek donations for their Thanksgiving turkey baskets.

**Jeff Pierpont (Passumpsic Savings Bank)** - Jeff shared that he is stepping down from his role of co-chair and will be replaced by Ed Sunday-Winters.

The group thanked Jeff for his leadership and welcomed Ed as our new co-chair.

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Next Meeting: November 9