Worcester Together Response Team
3.19.20
8:30am
Boys & Girls Club

**Attendance**
Councilor Sarai Rivera
Erin Williams
Isabel Gonzalez-Webster
Councilor Candy Mero-Carlson
Jessica Reyes
Dan Racicot
Mayor Joseph Petty
Father Jonathan Slavinskas
Gordon Hargrove
Alex Corrales
Chris O Keefe
Barbara Fields
Liz Hamilton
Kim Salmon
Tim Garvin
Ed Madaus
Anh Vu Sawyer
Alex Guardiola
Courtney Pelley
Gina Platanino
Nicole Bell
Ann Bureau
Maura Mahoney
Che Anderson

**Working Groups**
Housing – Anh V.S., Isabelle G., Sarai R., Alex C., Jim B., Mattie C., Liz A., Maggie C.
Senior – Anh V.S., Isabelle G., Kim S., Sarai R., Alex C, Jessica R., Gina P., Mattie C. Rachel, Moses D.
Youth – Liz H., Ed M. + Linda C.
Volunteer coordination – Jessica R., Kim S., Alex G., Tim G., Mattie C.

**Abridged Minutes**
Introductions from Tim Garvin, Councilor Rivera, Mayor Petty
Subcommittee Updates

Small Business: Chamber of Commerce opened all chamber availability and services to any business (member or nonmember) in an effort to offer guidance, information on loan options and relief opportunity, and governmental assistance; City working on other relief efforts for small business community; Chamber will host information on their site

Food Security: DTA offices are closed for in person meetings; SNAP benefits can be applied for online (fastest) or through a call to Project Red hotline; Cash benefits can also be applied for through local offices; Friendly house also delivering food at various sites; Boys & Girls Club has 3 sites (180 Constitution Avenue, 16 Laurel Street, 65 Boys & Girls Club Way) for families to pick up food starting March 23rd (12:30 pm at 180 Constitution & 16 Laurel/ 1:30 pm at 65 B&GC Way); Worcester Islamic Center is delivering food to those who are quarantined; Food security group is creating a network to connect the community with food pantries

- Action items: Can robocall be sent out re: where pantries are and how food bank can be accessed to continue to help families; Can bus routes be used to deliver meals at the stop sites? **Maura Mahoney can be contacted with questions re: food and Worcester Public Schools**; Can food trucks be used to facilitate food delivery; How else can we get food to those that are quarantined; How do we assist all food insecure people (both acute and chronic)

Housing: Guidance has been issued re: contractors, property managers, real estate professionals, evictions and housing courts; Additional priority is doubled up population; Group is working with HHS to facilitate 2-3 sites for temporary health shelters;

- Action items: Language needed for guidance on assisting landlords as well as tenants; Need FAQs on how to address being positive and causative; Temporary health shelters housing sites will need volunteers, staff, resources to pay staff, food and supplies (sheets, clothes, blankets, PPEs, etc...); How do we bring in health community for those that are in temporary health shelters?

Health & Mental Health: Group meets today at noon; Minutes to follow

Youth: Boys & Girls club planning to apply as emergency site to serve critical needs and first responders; also teaming with UMass Memorial to ensure their staff has child care; Guild of St. Agnes and YWCA applying as emergency care sites as well; Conversation with Governor’s office re: criteria and how it can be amended to best support local non-profits; Belmont AME Zion willing to be a childcare site

- Action items: Can other childcare orgs. reopen with new charge during these times to assist?

Seniors: Committee working on FAQ today; senior center is working remotely; elder services are doing phone calls check-ins with seniors;
• Action items: Volunteers are needed to assist seniors (How can they be identified?); PPEs are needed; People have been attempting to scam seniors by pretending to have a vaccine or to be health aides; how do we assist grandparents raising grandchildren; seniors need grocery runs and prescriptions runs/deliveries?

Other Updates
New working group was formed: Volunteer coordination – Jessica R., Kim S., Alex G., Tim G., Mattie C.

Clergy will conference every Wednesday at 7pm; clergy willing to volunteer (FAQ on volunteerism being developed); United Way collecting list of volunteers on website; Clergy developed video for trauma during a pandemic; small churches are also in need of assistance

Culture: Worcester Cultural Coalition is encouraging people to send videos and photos that can uplift, encourage and foster creativity to culture@worcesterma.gov. Some examples could be reading books to children, hosting virtual tours, and past performances that have been recorded to be redistributed. The Cultural Coalition will then host and circulate this creative outpour in an effort to keep spirits high and sustain our community spirit.

All organizations are asked to utilize The City’s website (WorcesterMA.gov/coronavirus) as central repository of resources; we should all ‘cut and paste’ from that website so that we are all using the same information

Wrap Up: We need to plan for now and long term; Funding/ Relief funds need to be coordinated between all non-profits; We should commit to utilize ‘Physical distancing’ instead of ‘Social distancing’ as we want people to stay connected; United Way will setup zoom account for further communication (Next call: March 23 @ 8:30am);

Reminder: The Worcester Together Group is for all; and so the distribution of minutes is important and the availability of questions and concerns raised will be channeled to work groups.