**Lake County Food Policy Council Meeting Minutes**

**Monday, October 19, 2015 3:30 – 5:00 p.m. St. Ann’s Church Baldwin, MI**

**Minutes by Kendra Wills, MSU Extension**

Participants:

Freddie Rosado, Circle R Farms Owner and Council Chairperson

Jane Hart, Food Safety Educator with MSU Extension

Nancy Przedwojewski, Pantry Director in Irons

Larry Lewis, Big Rapids Farmers Market Manager and area farmer

Kathy Merchant, LCACC Bread of Life Pantry Director

Leo Heska, St. Ann’s Parishioner

Sue Brown-Havens, LCACC Bread of Life Pantry Volunteer

Daniel Miller, Pastor and Director of the food pantry serving the Luther area

Tom Ellis, Lake County Community Foundation

Kendra Gibson, MSU Extension Nutrition Program Coordinator

Kendra Wills, MSU Extension Community Food Systems Educator

1. After round-robin introductions, Kendra Gibson gave a brief report on the turnout for her nutrition education class, which is apart of the Voices for Food grant process. The first class had 24 participants. Four out of 16 food pantry staff members attended. At the Cooking fro Crowds class there were 16 participants and two chefs. We believe Community Mental Health referrals were successful.

2. Reports on plans for spending Voices for Food grant funds ($5,600 total)

Baldwin Pantry – no report

Baldwin School High Tunnel – There is concern that the Superintendent’s office would like the high tunnel removed due to continued vandalism. Kendra Wills, Leo and Freddie will contact the school and meet with officials to address this concern.

Measurements are taken and supplies are being ordered by Freddie and Kendra Wills. Fischer is close to donating propane to heat the greenhouse. Working to make signs to post outside the greenhouse to thank donors and to explain what is grown in the greenhouse. We are working to contact the Middle School Science teacher. We are asking Leo to help us get some more students to work on cleaning up the greenhouse. We want it to be a place for everyone at the school. Our goal is to have the plastic repaired and a new door on by November 1.

Field Trip to Pantries – Kendra Gibson has planned field trips to True North in Newaygo, Love Inc. in Newaygo and Bread of Life in Hart, MI on Monday, November 30. Love Inc. 9-10 AM and True North 10:30 – 11:30 AM then lunch then Bread of Life from 2-3 PM. Goals of field trips: observe choice pantry in operation, learn about sustainable funding for pantries. Attending:Lynne Mills, Kathy, Sue, Fred, others?

Driving: Kendra Wills (6), Sue, Kendra Gibson, some people may meet us there.

An email invitation and RVSP request will be sent out.

1. Reports from area food pantries:

Freddie gave a report on the LCACC Meeting. He said he asked the LCACC if they needed help fundraising/marketing. The Board said they would consider it.

Nancy reported that the grant writing class (January/February) that is offered by Lake County Community Foundation is excellent. They will help people complete grant proposals. Her pantry just got another grant from Great Lakes Energy ($2,000) to provide non-food items. Participants are asked to purchase Mason jars to receive homemade laundry detergent. Her pantry is also doing a lot of on-farm gleaning and canning.

Nancy is also a treasurer for a Marilla pantry. She received a $2,500 grant from the Cherryland Co-Op for that pantry. They provide a lot of non-food items. The Irons pantry coordinates a food drive around this time of year with door-to-door pick up and assistance from Boy Scouts.

Pastor Miller reported that the Luther Pantry is not a choice pantry. They work with Feeding America for food. The pantry is funded through church parishioner donations. 36 households are supported. He is worried about how funding will continue. The pantry is not an emergency pantry. If users say they need it, they will be served. They are trying to serve people who have fallen through the cracks. There is no limit to service. Several disabled single men and senior citizens participate.

After some discussion the group determined that a class on fundraising may be of value for all three pantries. Freddie reported that Fisher Propane will do a food drive and will share donations with all three pantries that are here today. Some custom butchers will also work with hunters to seek donations for food pantries (Sportsmen Against Hunger project).

4. Photovoice Update and Set November meeting date.

Photovoice is a 4-H project. Students took photos of where food comes from in Lake County. The will present on the existing food system and how they would like things to change. They believe this project will be completed in November. We are hoping these students help draw the parents in and make this project a broader-community effort.

The group noted that school gardens and school growing projects are powerful tools for learning and community engagement. Leo noted that he believes there is a market for high-end organic produce in this community as well as Ludington, Big Rapids, Reed City. We need fresh herbs, greens, spinach. We need to attract the seasonal residents to shop here.

Larry stated that he feels farm-to-school projects do work. The school food service can purchase from the school greenhouse, which will help make the project financially sustainable. In addition, Larry reported that he believes that Lake County is prime for food processing. The community is surrounded by a large amount of food production. We should be looking at building a food hub here to process produce from high tunnels. The Newaygo ISD is opening an ag-innovation center. We should be creating enough energy here to pursue these kids of economic development projects.

5.Update from Leo and committee working on Charter for the Food Policy Council.

Leo reported that he put together a draft of a charter. (An edited version of what he distributed at the last meeting.) The group hasn’t had a chance to meet yet. The goals are still to make it short and sweet. He feels more favorable about the Eaton County document than he did last time. He and the subcommittee will work to have a report and draft for review at the next meeting.

The goal of the document is to explain the purpose, mission, vision of the Council. Sue suggested that the charter could be four pages with an abridged one-page version. Many people agreed that in order to receive funding, having a charter and possibly by-laws may be needed and would help get this group down the path of 501c3 if that would be desired in the future. Fred reminded the group that the Voices for Food grant project ends in three years.

1. Other items:
   1. Freddie asked MSUE to find out when we can apply for additional funds for other pantries in Lake County in 2016. Freddie noted that he would like to see the three pantries in Lake County working together to help each other source food, coordinate food drives, coordinate fundraising, and nutrition education.
   2. Nancy reported that she connected with Goodwill in Traverse City and they contact her when they have extra foods. Perhaps other pantries can benefit from this connection.
   3. There are significant barriers to Internet access in Lake County. Phone conference calls work very well.
   4. Tom Ellis is from the Lake County Community Foundation and joined the group at the end of the meeting. He is very supportive of pantries working together to build a more healthy local food system.

The official meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

**Next meeting:**

Baldwin Schools for Photovoice Presentation

Tuesday, November 17, 2015 3:30 p.m.

Exact location to be confirmed.