

Meeting Minutes
Emergency Response to COVID-19
May 1 @ 3pm

We will be focused on emergency needs that we have on hand:

- Especially product and supply
- Do we need to aggregate buying power to get more?

Pam Kuecheler (PACE):

- Were able to get a large deliver from Greater Boston Food Bank (GBFB)
 - o Lg amount of frozen foods, and have secured temporary storage space on King street
- Starting next week, they should have enough stock to create bags to support their own food bank and ramp up mobile operations
 - o Youth Build will be working on this
- This is similar to the state-wide predicament of managing scale of need

Liz Wiley (Marion Institute):

- If we were to aggregate buying power, how would this roll out?
- How does this line up with a Food Hub?
 - o We need to define what a food hub is...

Michelle Hantman (United Way of Greater New Bedford):

- UW serves many of the Food Pantries through the hunger commission
 - o Has operated since 1995, food rescue and delivery, working with Sharing the Harvest, Sid Wainer, GB Food Bank, etc.
- We don't want to replicate or create anything that isn't needed
 - o What can we create that is efficient?
- Currently not many dollars are spent on food
 - o For those who do, can we create buying power together?
- The United Way could serve to help establish this if it were needed
 - o They could provide ordering support; they could deliver to pantries, etc.
- How do we proactively prepare for the continuation of needs after this initial reaction to COVID starts to settle?

Holly Fowler (Northbound Ventures – Food System Consultant):

- Spoke to the Greater Boston Food Bank
 - o They are specifically looking for additional farmer or distribution partners
 - o Are there farmers to give confidence to, to put seeds in the ground, and GBFB for purchase and distribution?
 - They specifically mentioned NB and FR as areas of need
- There are a number of stakeholder survey's that we will be sending out
 - o What's the gap in available product and in demand?
 - o What's the gap in capacity to meet that demand?
 - Food hub stakeholders

- Producers and buyers
- National School Lunch program
- Advocacy and others in food system

Liz W:

- A need lies in large orders that need to be repackaged

Carl Alves (PAACA):

- Taking a look at our staple items, can we look at what is available to our region
 - Difficult items, such as tuna fish, pasta, etc.
- Has grant funds that he can reallocate towards food, but needs a system to support

Pam Lima:

- To those who work on food in the area, are they concerned with a meat shortage in the area?
 - Do we have the ability (freezers) to stockpile items in preparation of future hard economic and supply times?

Liz W:

- I don't think that we can source enough local product,
 - We can source some from the local Meatworks facility
 - Can we meet the price points in order to source these foods?

Desa (Round the Bend Farm- RTB):

- Currently providing 26 free CSA shares
 - Currently buying cheese and meat to replace low vegetable times
 - Currently buying cheese from Shy Brothers
 - Would be willing to repackage for a lot more people
 - Residents receiving cheese are enjoying it
 - Has been bombarded with requests with meat requests
 - If people and farmers knew that there was buying power (i.e. meat birds – quick growing in humane ways) there would be interest
 - But farmers need the guarantee
 - Would be interested in aggregate buying power
 - Has to stay in area of local, sustainably grown food

Holly Fowler

- The more specific we can be, the more efficient we can be
- Meat processing has been ramped up across the state
- There is funding from the GBFB to be channeling to buy from local farmers

Desa:

- Carl Santos (Shy Brothers Farm) is willing to do some processing into 1 to 2 lbs packages of cheese if there was a guaranteed buying power behind that

Liz W:

- Similar situation at Meatworks for ground beef
 - o Need a guarantee of price

David Perry (Fall River Food Pantry):

- Runs a food pantry in Fall River
- When we are looking at product, we are trying to make a whole meal
 - o Often pasta
- GBFB is setting us up with 10-12 lbs of product from a local farmer in Rhode Island
 - o No meat
- There are several ways to purchase through the food pantries
 - o Co-op, MEFAP, etc.
- Is the food product paying him?
 - o David is not sure

Holly F:

- There is MEFAP? Funding
 - o This is hard for small local farmers
- Or they are finding other funds to fund local farmers

Karen Schwalbe (SEMAP):

- The buying price is the kicker, because most of the farmers are able to sell at a good price right now
 - o This is a hard conversation with unknown budgets

Carl A:

- We might want to target farmers that may not be selling their products, or products that aren't selling fast

Karen S:

- There is no Massachusetts product being offered on the FINE page, except frozen products, most is coming from Vermont and Maine
- A farmer will grow at a better price than retail if they are guaranteed a price, and can deliver it all at once
 - o There is not a lot of places where people cannot move product
- There are a lot of unknown variables in the summer due to farmers markets opening or not, etc.
 - o There is a potential for a growing match making
 - A budget needs to be understood

Holly F:

- Is there a gap for a specific need, or product, and capacity to purchase more efficiently with others?
- The Kendall Foundation is deeply engaged in building the New England Food Vision

- New England Food Vision Prize to put into institutions to increase their buying power to regionally grown food
 - With COVID, they shifted funds of some these programs
- The focus has moved to building support for food system assists
 - Many funds have gone toward Merck Foundation funds for grants of organizations needed in the food system in this time*Info Available on Kendall and Merck Foundation Website

Carol (Damien's Pantry, Wareham):

- There has been an offer of pallets of produce (large quantities)
 - They started with getting 4 pallets of produce
- PACE is looking to pick up pallets of vegetables
- Food bank is short on pasta, rice
 - It should be coming in, but going out fast

Liz W:

- If there was aggregated ordering of these needs, would you be interested?

Carol:

- It's hard to tell, we are committed to the food bank order
- But they will be looking for more food to meet their client commitments, but it's hard to tell now
 - There is a lot of frozen product at the pantry

Michelle H:

- There may be some questions on the survey for the immediate need and inquiry
 - There needs to be deliberate and specific questions
 - Who has the concern and need?
 - Who has space, and lacks space?
 - Who is willing to purchase food?
- We were using space at a fish plant, and there may be freezer space available
 - Who's using what and who has relationships to grow
 - I don't see a new space needed currently with partners
- The United Way wants to know where the need is specifically

Liz W:

- We have a survey to put together
 - Space for repackaging?
 - Who has the desire to spend local?
 - Who wants to spend no money?
- Those who are on the call, please send out the survey to your networks to assess the needs now, and in the future!
 - We also want to make sure that we are laying the groundwork for a future

Holly F:

- We will make the survey easy for you to complete
 - Anyone who is doing supplemental food distribution at this time

Carl A:

- It's good to know that we have the freezer space
 - o Where would we bring the items

Michelle:

- We need 24 hours' notice, and then need to make sure there is room
- We also need back up space from other people's relationships
- Currently only use it twice per year, but I believe there may be more space, especially right now

Carl:

- There has been missed opportunity because of space
- Can we give a family chicken, who has been eating spaghetti for weeks?
- If I don't know of these resources, then people who are not involved will not know

Pam:

- The idea of bulk purchasing, the idea of getting a more economical price is something we need to look at
 - o We have started look at this but not able to execute

Wendy:

- We have an emergency food cover, but not food pantry
- Often, I am given an offer to take a tractor trailer of food, but need to take it that day
 - o Happens at least twice per year

Michelle:

- The hunger commission could take order like this in the future
 - o We have been able to fill the gap with the distribution timing

Dave:

- The timing of offers of large amounts of food is an issue
 - o They often need immediate offers
- They help an average of 240 (960) people per week
 - o 25,000lbs of food feeds around 500 families

Liz:

- What is typically the origin of the food where these food offers are coming from

Wendy:

- Sometimes its super markets
- Sometimes it's from the truck company

Carol:

- Might be after an accident or a rejected delivery

Liz:

- We need to get the data so that we can follow the right path to improve the systems
 - o Please fill out the survey!

Desa:

- We are lucky to be in the food system in the Southcoast
- If this pandemic continues, we will face different seasons..
 - o What could this look like in the winter if it continues?
 - o How could we think about this and invest in the local system now?

Scott Stubbs (Dartmouth United Outreach):

- Will have a freezer truck, fridge and freezer next week
 - o There is room if needed for emergency holding or deliveries

Bill N:

- Will put survey up on the SRPPD website
- Is there freezer space available at the local universities?

David Perry:

- Look into the State Pier in Fall River for storage space

ADDENDUM: WEEKLY MEETING LOG-IN INFORMATION

Topic: Southcoast Food Policy Council COVID - Response Effort

Time: Apr 3, 2020 03:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Every week on Fri, until May 29, 2020, 9 occurrence(s)

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