

Meeting Minutes
Emergency Response to COVID-19
June 18 @ 9am

Chat Box notes in Italics

Liz W (Marion Institute):

- We had a meeting with stakeholders from Plymouth County for the update of the Food System Assessment report
 - o The 2014 assessment included Plymouth and Norfolk Counties

Holly Fowler (Northbound Ventures – Food System Consultant):

- Even though it was a small group (average turnout for a virtual meeting)
 - o Great showing from Wampanoag county
 - o People from planning, design, school garden programs
- There was a lot of new information shared between parties about the region that they did not yet know

Liz W (Marion Institute):

- We are hoping to do another one of these in the Greater Fall River area
 - o We would need somebody that would be willing to work with us and identify the key stakeholders
 - o It would be great to have someone from BCC, from food pantries, government, etc.
 - o If there is someone that would be helpful setting this up in Fall River please connect us!

00:12:36 Holly Fowler: I think we can cast a broad net and circulate an announcement. Maybe we can engage the city.

Wendy Garf-Lipp:

- Many of us on this meeting are tangentially associated with the Food system
- Happy to help but not take the lead
- I will send you the pre-pandemic resource guide of food pantries and soup kitchens

Marcia Picard:

- Bob Cutting runs the food program – might be worth connecting to.

Holly Fowler:

- Does anyone know anyone from Farm and Community Collaborative?

00:15:10 Holly Fowler: <https://www.farmcommunitycollaborative.org/about>

Stephanie Perks (Coastal Foodshed):

- They were a vendor at a market, I can connect you

Liz Wiley:

- At next week's meeting we will be hosting The MA Food System Collaborative led by Winton Pitcoff. The Collaborative focuses on advocacy at the state level
 - o They are doing a series of virtual round table discussions across the state for to see where food systems are at in each region
- This meeting will be held at our regular meeting time next week (Thursday 6/25), but will take about 1.5 hours – please plan accordingly
- As we begin to focus on longer term goals, we need to understand the impact that current initiatives may be having on existing food pantries, HIP benefits for the region, impact on farmers due to the produce boxes, etc.
- Let's start exploring this in a little more depth. Have heard some pantries are seeing a reduction in numbers and concern that this may affect their purchasing allotment from GBFB.
- SFPC beginning to work on post pandemic priority areas. Need to form a steering committee and sub-committees focused on policy, emergency food relief, local producers. Info gathered from the food system assessment and our work with Winton will help guide our focus.
- It's feeling like there are some things for us to be aware of: what are going to be the long term affects with some of these supplemental food programs
 - o What happens long term after these food boxes are no longer?...
 - o Will there be negative consequences to the food pantries or HIP funding, etc.?

00:16:06 Holly Fowler: <https://www.mafoodsystem.org>

00:16:57 Holly Fowler: Good related resources for urban ag:

00:16:58 Holly Fowler: <https://www.mafoodsystem.org/projects/urban-ag/>

Wendy Garff-Lipp:

- With people saying there is a decrease, with \$800 PEBT, and unemployment decreasing, it's not smart to base trends on what's happening in the last two weeks (decrease in numbers)
- It would be important to let the extra benefits run out, and then we can assess trends for the food pantries

Dave Perry:

- Last week I did 17 families, I usually do 90-200. I know it's from the extra benefits

Liz Wiley:

- If there is a decrease in numbers from Food Pantries because of these extra benefits, is there a negative affect from GBFB, etc.?

Dave Perry:

- Yes there is, because GBFB takes an average over a number of weeks, so I will have to plead for a larger poundage from them
- I have to be reporting to GBFB unlike the pop-ups (which GBFB does not need to report)

Liz Wiley:

- Are other pantries seeing a decrease or level?

vabced@gmail.com (Veterans Association):

- Veterans association after 1.5 months of increase, we have leveled off

Kimberly Hoy:

- We were level

Carol (Damien's Pantry):

- We have been seeing a slight decrease, but I think our levels will go up
- We are currently open Thursday and Saturdays
- We seem to be getting mixed messages from the food bank (as we are still supporting Marion COA numbers, etc.

Michael Jung (Salvation Army):

- We saw an increase as we advertised more
 - o Almost double

Pam:

- Even with our pop-ups we are still taking data

00:23:53 *Liz Wiley: How does this decrease in numbers affect food pantries ability to buy from GBFB? Does it?*

00:25:12 *Holly Fowler: Doesn't this make the case for combined buying?*

00:26:20 *Peter Muise: Also makes the case for larger local food storage for longer opportunities.*

00:29:21 *Peter Muise: Question: Are the Pop-up pantries allowing for leveling off at the traditional pantries?*

00:29:50 *Pam Kuechler: we attributed some of leveling to the pop ups*

00:30:21 *Peter Muise: The more newer programs the greater opportunities for families and individuals to access food.*

Liz Wiley:

- The other question is about HIP, could the extra benefits affect (negatively) HIP benefits into the future?
- HIP stands for Healthy Incentives Program – when SNAP benefits are used at a farmer's market on fresh fruits and vegetables money is reloaded back onto their card (double up bucks type of program)

Holly Fowler:

- What we saw in the first round of HIP, was a doubling of sales at the Farmers markets
 - o If folks have more available funding, they will spend it!
- We've seen some disruption in the HIP program and people have lost confidence
- The MA Food Collaborative has done a study on the impacts of HIP – maybe we ask him this question next week?

Karen Schwalbe (SEMAP):

- HIP is definitely down, seemingly from the grab and go programs that you don't have to use SNAP benefits
- Our reps understand and will hopefully keep this into consideration
- There is a DTA information session tomorrow for farmers that want to get into HIP
- I will send/post information about this

Stephanie Perks:

- Could we have an overview of the boxes, how many, where are they going, etc?... so we can plan ahead with the markets?

*Liz will gather information on this

- They are 20lbs trying to serve families of 3 or more
- Weekly boxes
- Trying to serve the same families each week

Liz Wiley:

- We are at 45 responses from supplemental food survey
- We are gotten 42 responses from farmers
 - o Could we promote this through The Livestock Institute (TLI)?

*Liz will follow up to make sure that TLI farmers are connected

- The consumer survey is the next one, that we can all play a part in!
 - o The survey is ready after being edited

Holly Fowler:

- o I have to think about a downloadable, printed version, because transcription will be tough
 - This is a factor that we have to consider – will they be scanned?
 - We want to be inclusive of gaps in use of technology

Kimberly Hoy:

- Maybe the printed versions could be specifically target to populations such as older community

Liz Wiley:

- Please join next week's meeting with Winton Pitcoff, we need a diverse perspective
- Would love to have representatives join

Rob Shaheen (New Bedford Food Service):

- Food box update
 - o We will have one site for distribution on Wednesdays
 - o And we will have a direct delivery to PAACA
- We've weaned down to 19,000 to 12,000 meals per week
 - o It will be interesting to see how the shift to the summer program goes



Pam Kuechler (PACE):

- GBFB is giving us prepared boxes
- We will stand up one more pop-up this week
- We have been level; we are interested to see what happens as the extra \$600 of unemployment comes back
- We also work with the Farm and Community Collaborative

Liz Wiley:

- Anybody that is on this call, please send me an email update of where you are doing pop-ups or distribution so that we can have a good sense of where all distribution is happening
 - o We can assess where any gaps and potential for collaborations are

Victoria Grasela:

- We have a spreadsheet started that we can work off of

Marcia Picard:

- The new farmers market at Cardinal Medeiros will be happening at the new location starting next week