



Meeting Minutes
September 16, 2021 @ 9am

Attendance: 23

Audio Link: <https://soundcloud.com/user-8563948/southcoast-food-policy-council-resource-meeting-9162021>

Note: This document is primarily paraphrased. Please see the audio for direct quotes. Chat Box comments are included as needed.

Present: Victoria Grasela (United Way Greater New Bedford), Gioia Persuitte (New Bedford Dept. of Health), Marcia Picard (Fall River Public Schools/Groundworks Southcoast), Jackie Millar (Terra Cura), Laura Smith (Oakdale Farms), Lauren Utschig (Girls and Boys Club Metro South), David Perry (Greater Fall River Community Food Pantry), Adele Sands (Bristol County Agricultural High School), Allison Hague (Fall River Family Resource Center), Christine Sullivan (Coastline Elderly), Tim Lynch (Girls and Boys Club Metro South Freight Farm), Stephanie Taylor (Martha's Vineyard Vegan Society), Colleen Hart (Fall River Housing Authority), Kelley Peterson (New Bedford Parks, Recreation and Beaches) Jeanne Darc (Boys and Girls Club Metro South intern), Sarah Labossiere (Mass in Motion Fall River), Karen Schwable (SEMAP), Shannon Hickey (SEMAP), Pauline Macedo (City New Bedford), Ivan Brito (M.O. L.I.F.E.), Jowaun Gamble (Community Youth Empowerment Wareham), Christine Smith (SFPC, Marion Institute), Liz Wiley (Marion Institute).

Updates

- Legislator and Dignitaries Day at Fall River Farmers Market, Sept 15, 2-5 pm. Guests included Rep. Schmid, Rep. Silvia, and Mayor Paul Coogan, people representing Sen. Rodrigues and Rep. Fiola, speakers talking about HIP (Shannon Hickey SEMAP), and SNAP, and Winton Pitcoff (MA Food System Collaborative). Sarah spoke to Tim Barrow at Fall River Housing Authority and might work with them on some issues on HIP/SNAP. Lots of Kudos to Shannon. Sarah was pleased the word got out and surprised more people did not know about HIP, but glad people were starting to talk about HIP.
- Food System Assessment report will be launched at the Virtual Food Summit on October 13, 6:30 pm -8:00 PM, in partnership with UMass Dartmouth and Sen. Montigny's office, and the Food Finder will be officially be launched. A legislative panel board will respond to the data. An invitation will be sent out next week.
- SFPC Community Advisory Board's first meeting is September 30, 3-4:30 pm. Please let us know if you cannot attend. We will look to recruit more people to join us in Working Groups once the CAB establishes the priorities that arise from the Food System Assessment.
- SFPC will also offer CAB training, but we will open the training to the public and SFPC members to provide Food Equity training from the YWCA and Advocacy/Lobbying training from MA Food System Collaborative.

- Disruption in the Food System in Schools right now:
 - 1.) New Bedford School System reporting that they are struggling to get food from vendors, and access to food is like last year with disruptions in the food chain supply system.
 - 2.) New Bedford Agricultural School Adele Sands, reporting: “Our campus, like many other districts locally and at the national level, is beginning to experience food commodity delays; specifically, we’ve had our orders pushed out two days with late communications from vendors. As in other industries, we are racing not only delays but interruptions to the supply chain through the main vendors we have. The issues are concerning product availability, unavailable substitutions, and their warehouses are having major distribution issues due to employee turnover due to management departures and COVID clusters. Our plan is to source products from other and, most likely, multiple vendors, particularly at the Department of Education. School Nutrition is allowing districts to purchase from vendors not on the State contract with a limit up to \$10,000.” They have to do substitutions daily, which is cooking with no plan.
 - 3.) Coastline Elderly also reported shortages, no shows on products, and a lack of food substitutions.
 - 4.) Oakdale Farms, Laura said: Farmers throughout the country are having problems with the weather. Transportation is a big problem; finding employees and boxes is a problem, especially finding smaller boxes. Food is arriving late to customers, and this is happening throughout the country.

David Perry (Greater Fall River Community Food Pantry)

- He has had no problem with food coming out of Boston Food Bank.
- Last week, they served 390 households, 1, 012 individuals, most between 18-64, 328 of those under age 18.
- September is National Hunger Month, starting today.

Karen Schwable (SEMAP)

- **Food Insecurity Infrastructure Grant Program (FSIG)** Next round of funding available to complete **grant due October 31** <https://www.mass.gov/doc/fy22-food-security-infrastructure-grant-program-rfr/download>. “Eligible grantees include applicants that are part of the Massachusetts local food system including production, processing and distribution, the emergency food distribution network, community and food organizations, school meal programming (including summer meal sponsors), urban farms and community gardens, non-profits, and organizations that provide business planning, technical assistance, and information technology services. Applicants may be those representing farms, small retailers (under 50 full-and part-time employees), food banks, fisheries, seafood dealers & processors, and other food system businesses or organizations who are focused on addressing food access and/or improving and strengthening the resiliency of the Commonwealth’s food system by increasing distribution of locally grown and sourced food. Applicants may also include those experiencing difficulty sourcing food for those facing food insecurity. This call for grant application proposals does not apply to the purchase of food for consumption.”



- There is \$27M for food pantries in the Governor's budget. Karen will check this out and report this to the Food Alert along with the grant information.

Allison Hague (Fall River Family Resource Center)

- Thanks to Allison for bringing Housing info into the group. Neigh Works central application is not set up everywhere, but where it is set up, it is easy to complete and take 2-3 week from the point of contact to receiving the money.
- The Y in Fall River is struggling for volunteers since school is back to normal.

Victoria Grasela (United Way of Greater New Bedford)

- Mobile markets are going well. Wareham now has high numbers, similar to New Bedford.
- Many people still do not know about HIP.
- The new driver is still getting food recovery, and there is an increase in receiving food to deliver elsewhere.
- Tori has not yet heard about the two Global United Way interns.
- Egg connection- Liz has eggs to give to UW Wareham mobile market from Susan at Flying Carrot

Stephanie Taylor (Martha's Vineyard Vegan Society)

- They continue to work with Island Grow for delivering vegan food to customers.
- Patrece is working on a senior center workshop called "Veganism and its effects on diabetes."
- Patrece is also working on Black Men's Health Initiative.

Gioia Pursuitte (New Bedford Health Department)

- COVID- New Bedford 388 deaths; 16,720 positive cases COVID in New Bedford; New Bedford 46% fully vaccinated; Fall River 51% fully vaccinated
- If you are having an event, she can arrange vaccines at your event gioia.pursuitte@newbedford-ma.gov

Ivan Brito (M.O.L.I.F.E.)

- They are receiving food from the food bank and United Way with no problems.
- They do need volunteers.
- It was suggested to register to get volunteers at <https://www.volunteersouthcoast.org/>

Tim Lynch (Girls and Boys Club Metro South, Freight Farm)

- We grow greens and other vegetables and serve food to the Camp Riverside Girls and Boys Club, partners in Taunton, and shelters like My Brothers' Keeper. The Freight Farm is on-site at Taunton, but they will put another at the Brockton site.

Jeanne Darc- Boys and Girls Club Metro South- intern at the Freight Farm

Kelley Peterson (New Bedford Parks and Recreation Beaches)

- She runs the youth program and wants to find ways to improve the youth program.
- Action: Kelly, it was suggested to contact Grace Gerling at gracegerling@gfrec.org to talk with the person in Fall River who does something similar.



- kelly.peterson@newbedford-ma.gov

Please use southcoastfoodalert@marioninstitute.org to keep connecting.