



**Alberta Rural Coalition on Housing and Homelessness (ARCH²)
Quarterly General Meeting
Monday, June 15, 2020**

Chair: Cassandra Rasko

Attendees: Olimphyia Mermosillo de Elizondo, Diahann Polege–Aulotte, Jayde Roche, Dee Ann Benard, Steve Madden, Cindy Easton, Kathleen Turner, Julia Juco, Sydney Stenekes, Kelly Petraschuk, Kayla Eykelboom, Melissa Masse, Deena Fuller

Regrets: Lisa Brown, Lynne Bossmann, Jessica Hutton, Cheryl Findley, Linda Bernicki, Angie O'Connor, Diahann Potrebenko, Kristie Gomuwka

1. Meeting was called to order by **Cassandra Rasko** at 1:03 pm with introductions to follow.
2. **Additions/Approval of Agenda as presented** – No changes or additions were made to the Agenda. **Cindy Easton** motioned to approve, all in favour, motion carried.
3. **Previous Meeting Minutes** – review of February 12/20 and April 14/20 minutes – no questions or concerns as presented. **Cindy Easton** motioned to approve, all in favour, motion carried.
4. **Reports/Updates** –
 - **Cindy Easton – Mountain Rose Women Shelter, Rocky Mountain House** – They have set up a temporary homeless shelter locally and have noted a positive turn of events. Still finding it difficult to view potential housing options with clients due to COVID, but are being creative and working around that issue.
 - **Olimphyia Mermosillo de Elizondo – Chestermere** - They have submitted an EOI for the fall estimation and have presented to their council on the importance of the date – hopeful the increase of data will improve accuracy issues.
 - **Diahann Polege–Aulotte – Bonnyville** – They have received some of the emergency COVID funding through ARDN which has been predominantly used for housing of individuals for self isolation in hotels along with technology support. Working with the local friendship centre. Started training for the next homelessness count to begin soon.
 - **Deena Fuller – Hinton Adult Learning** - They also received some of the emergency COVID funding through ARDN and are using it to temporarily house 5 individuals, along with providing needed laundry and shower facilities to those in need. Their office will partially re-open on July 2/20 with full reopening planned for August. Were successful in a grant application with the food bank and have been helping to provide food hampers to those in need in the area.
 - **Kayla Eykelboom – Canmore** – They are looking to expand using some of the emergency funds, preparing for data collection to prevent housing loss in the fall.

- **Kathleen Turner – County of Grande Prairie FCSS** - Have received the emergency funding for COVID and using to house individuals for the time being, submitting the EOI for the homelessness estimation this fall. Working on a COVID preparedness plan for future flare ups. The SERB has affected them and they are waiting to see when that benefit will stop. Libraries and playschools remain closed and won't open until the fall – need to find ways to do it safely.
- **Steve Madden – Grande Spirit Foundation –** (entered the meeting late) – They continue to help with housing concerns in the area – struggling since March. Their current biggest concern is the mental health of the seniors along with the physical deterioration due to lack of interaction and the lockdown. Hoping that some restrictions will soon be lifted. Have been encouraging families to connect with seniors by using FaceTime or similar apps.

5. Old Business –

- Reaching Home COVID funds Update – Sydney** – ARDN received 57 applications for the emergency funds which added up to \$2.8 million. As we were only given just under \$800k to distribute, this made the selection process very difficult. 27 proposals are being funded. Most requests that were funded were for emergency housing, PPE and cleaning materials, staffing and transportation. ARDN has held back approx. ½ of the allocated amount to deal with future issues which may arise. We will be launching a new CFP that will allocate the remaining funds. This new call will be drawn up with more condensed terms for funds to be used as needs are continuously changing. Cautious spending is needed as many communities are concerned what will happen once the funds are gone. ARDN has also applied for more emergency funding but we do not believe we will be successful in that bid. Sydney asked the group whether their needs have changed – should we allow for other funding priorities for the next intake? Some comments included:
 - Cleaning protocols have changed so everything takes more time and effort and additional staff are required for this
 - Rent arrears
 - Income support is still available through AB Supports
 - Concern on donations being accepted at the shelter – ongoing. Many establishments rely on donations (food/clothing/furniture) and there is concern how to deal with things being dropped off – what protocol needs to be followed
- Alberta's Relaunch – how do you feel about the next steps due to happen in early July** –
 - Cautiously optimistic
 - Some summer programs are set to re-open
 - Not excited – possibly too soon

6. New Business –

- Understanding newcomer experiences of inclusion – Jayde** – ARDN continues to work with ActionDignity on the delivery of webinars on the topic of anti-discrimination. Another project in the works that has come to ARDN's attention is a 2 year community based research project. They are working across the province conducting a study to understand better newcomer experiences of inclusion. We are forwarding the information to the ARCH2 as a courtesy as data

will be shared with us once the project is completed. For now, they are looking for smaller focus groups to connect with. Attached to the email is a document with more information.

- b. Immigrant Youth Mental Health Project – Jayde** - Another project in the works that we want to share with the ARCH2 is a research project that is looking at identifying unanswered questions on mental health in immigrant youth from rural communities. The information collected will help to develop a framework for future projects. The project information is attached to the email.
- c. [Expression of Interest for large scale estimations](#) – Julia** – ARDN will be doing another homelessness estimation count in the fall of 2020. Most or all of the ARCH2 members have already submitted applications to participate. We are currently looking at developing an online version for this count. The group was asked for feedback and opinions on proceeding with a digital version only. The following comments were noted:
 - Rural locations & internet connectivity doesn't always get along! Paper version should always be made available as a backup plan
 - During these COVID times, it's easier to disinfect a laptop/keyboard rather than a whole area where paper surveys would be filled in
 - This would really depend on who is administering the survey
 - Is technology an issue for most? Some have very limited budgets for technology and paper is necessary. Others don't have an issue with availability or access – case by case issue
- d. Potential to have a rep from the GofA attend network meetings – Sydney** – Representatives from Community and Social Services are interested in attending partial/specified meetings of the ARCH2 in the future. Looking for concerns/comments from the group:
 - Yes, a good idea for them to attend a portion of the meetings – hope they have thick skins!
 - It seems there is continued interest from the GofA to listen to smaller groups like ours, so would be in favour of them attending
 - GofA acknowledge the need to work on relationship building with rural communities so this is a good opportunity to nurture new relationships
 - Always good to have the GofA at the table

Sydney asked if anyone opposed the option to have a rep attend a portion of each meeting. No objections. Sydney will pass along the information and believes they will be very please to join our meetings.

- 7. Membership Renewals and Membership Drive – Cassandra** – New invoices for membership dues will be going out in July. Some communities did not pay for this past year so their invoices will reflect two years. We will also have a 'Due by' date noted to ensure timely payments. Please confirm contact information on your invoices as well so we can keep updated records.
- 8. Next Meeting and Adjournment** – It was proposed that the next meeting occur in September, 2020 unless the need arises to meet during the summer. No objections. If, as a member of the ARCH2, you feel a meeting is required, please connect with Cassandra directly. **The meeting was adjourned by the chair at 2:15pm.**