**Knoxville-Knox County Food Policy Council Meeting Minutes**

Date & Location: February 18, 2021 via Zoom

Type of Meeting: Virtual

Recorder: Elizabeth Wunschel

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Attending Appointed (Voting) Members | Kimberly Pettigrew  Adam Caraco  Vivian Williams  Victoria Raschke  Willa Essie  Jennifer Russomanno  Daniel Nelson  Kristen Faerber  Rhea Kinney  Elizabeth Wunschel  Brett Foster |
| Attending Associated (Non-voting) Members | Fiona McAnally  Amber Ford  Ed Carter  Alex Carmack  Marsha Spence  Judith Pelot  Ashlyn Anderson  Cheryl Ball  Bailey Foster  Courtney Liles |
| Other Attendees | Mikayla Prince  Matt Ryerson  Sarah Griswold |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. | **Review November Minutes:**  Victoria Raschke moved to accept November minutes, Willa Essie second. Minutes approved. |
| 2. | **State and Federal Legislative Updates:**   * State Level: The state legislature had a special session on education and went into session last week. This past week the weather in middle Tennessee canceled everything. There is one agriculture bill that redoes sections of the food code. We just want to make sure that there is not anything inadvertently putting up barriers for small food producers and growers. We will be watching all of the bills as they come through. There are several related to food security and agriculture. There is really no advocacy group in Nashville that is focused on local food or small growers. We will be monitoring that as they go back into session next week. * Federal Level: There has not been a lot of implementation for some of the funding that has come down for SNAP Doubling and some other agriculture topics. One thing that has gotten attention recently is part of the Gusnip Legislation. This is where the conflict lies for SNAP Doubling. They have released their applications for the next 3 years. The RFA has not changed but the language has changed for produce requirements. With Gusnip funding for produce, if someone came to the market and used SNAP we could only could only give them double SNAP for fruit and vegetable purchases and not for milk or eggs, which makes it difficult for farmers’ markets to implement. There are groups who are working on this from the Fair Food Network. We are not funded that way locally at this time, so it would not affect us now but it would if we were to apply for that funding in the future. * P-EBT: We had an original deadline of February 10 to upload data for P-EBT round three which would cover October-December. The portal was not ready and there were unanswered questions so the deadline was extended to today. There is talk about another extension since a lot of West and Middle TN schools have been out. There was an original deadline for distribution of P-EBT was on February 20. We do have a deadline for the benefits to be issued. Tentatively the benefits will be distributed on the 20th of each month. School districts will have to start submitting data on the 10th of each month beginning in April. That will go on through the rest of the school year and the qualifying things for that are students had to miss 5 consecutive days of school prior to being eligible for benefits. For Knox County, they have allowed us to count the 5 days missed at the beginning of the school year for this round of P-EBT. They also have to be eligible for free/reduced lunch or attend a CEP school. If you fall into those categories you would be eligible for P-EBT. Last round, KCS had to provide the number of days students were out but this round they just had to say if students were virtual (virtual the entire month) or hybrid (virtual due to quarantine or isolation). They are using a simplified rounding technique to determine how many days of benefits hybrid students receive. This is ongoing and may change depending on data TDOE gets. KCS has been using a portal to upload data. There will also be a parent portal that parents can access when cards are distributed. When parents received the cards this time, all additional benefits will be added to this card. Parents can change address and other information in parent portal. The distribution timeline is up to DHS. P-EBT stands for Pandemic EBT and is a relief mechanism for students to receive EBT benefits while participating in virtual learning during the pandemic. Students are not screened in the same way as normal SNAP recipients, so it has provided assistance for some who may not receive benefits from other programs such as SNAP |
| 3. | **Committee Discussion/Formation:**  The Food Policy Council is required to have 3 committees every year. One is the executive committee, which we voted on in the November meeting. We are also required to have a Bylaws Committee and a Nominations Committee. The Bylaws Committee reviews the bylaws to make any changes. The Nominations Committee looks for gaps in appointed members and makes recommendations to the mayors and they also look at our associate members list and invite people who are involved in the food system to participate as associate members. These committees usually meet once or twice before the November meeting. The other ad-hoc committees we have are the Data Committee and the Structural Committee, which we set in November. The Data Committee will be chaired by Jenn Russomanno and other members include Kristen Faerber, Amber Ford, Kimberly Pettigrew, Rhea Kinney, and Shep Sterns. The Data Committee will be working with the FPC intern to update data and focus on equity and diversity to tell a better story beyond the metrics used in the past few years. The Structural Committee has taken a deep dive into our structure and regulations related to open meeting laws. That committee has been looking at other organizations to see how they are structured. Current members are Bailey Foster, Kristen Faerber, Fiona McAnally, Adam Caraco, and Willa Essie. The commitment for these committees is one year.   1. *Bylaws Committee:* It works best to have 3 members with the chair being someone who has served on that committee before. Brett Foster, Vivian Williams, Elizabeth Wunschel, and Captain Nelson volunteered to be on the Bylaws Committee. Elizabeth Wunschel will be the committee chair. 2. *Nominations Committee:* Adam Caraco, Kimberly Pettigrew, and Rhea Kinney volunteered to be on the Nominations Committee. Kimberly will be the committee chair. 3. *Data Committee:* This is a formed committee with Dr. Russomanno as committee chair. Dr. Marsha Spence and Victoria Raschke volunteered to join the committee. 4. *Structural Committee:* No new additions.   Willa Essie made a motion to accept the members of the Bylaws Committee. Victoria Raschke second. Motion approved.  Brett Foster made a motion to accept the members of the Nominations Committee. Adam Caraco second. Motion approved. |
| 4. | **Organizational Updates and Announcements:**   * Food Policy Council: Our next speaker series will be next month. Tatia Harris and Darris Upton will be speaking. Tatia Harris is a Diversity and Inclusion officer from the City of Knoxville and Darris Upton is the Diversity Development Manager for Knox County. We will be focusing on equity and diversity in the food system as well as in the city and county as a whole. If you have questions please send to Kimberly ahead of time. * Vivian Williams: National Women in Agriculture is hosting a virtual conference next Wednesday, Feb 24th at 11:00 am. They have several speakers about different topics. Kimberly will send out the information about this conference with the minutes. * WUOT: WUOT has a special feature airing tomorrow on college food insecurity. The feature will air at 5:45 am, 7:45 am, and 5:44 pm. The feature will be online after it airs, if you want to catch it there. * Victoria: TN Association of Farmers’ Markets is having its virtual annual meeting next week. There will be three lunch and learn topics over Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday on engaging board members, taking better market photos using your phone, and fundraising for farmers markets during COVID. The meeting is free for TAFM members but you can still attend if you are not a member. TAFM Vitural conference - link tnfarmersmarkets.org - under the events tab in the menu. * Dr. Spence: The Promoting Healthy Weight Colloquium will take place on Friday, March 26 from 12:30-5:00 pm and have great speakers looking at food access responses during COVID. There will be two speakers from USDA. One speaker will be giving an overview of FNS response and projections, the other speaker is the Food Service Director from Georgia and she will be talking about their response with children during the pandemic. There will also be a presentation about black parent voices and their struggles during the pandemic. Registration opens next week. Dr. Spence will send the registration information to Kimberly to share with the group. * CAC: Commodities March 6 Ross Building 9-1 and O'Connor 8:30-11:30, South Community Center 11:00-1:00. Mobile meals is going well and is getting ready for March for Meals. Will have city and county officials doing a Mobile Meals route. Recently hired a coordinator for the Caring Plate program that serves families with members that are in active cancer treatment and have difficulty preparing meals. Working on getting volunteers vaccinated. * American Heart Association: AHA is exploring purchasing and distributing freezers/refrigerators to food pantries. They are still looking at guidelines for determining who would get these, and looking at mid-summer as the time when they would give these out. * Beardsley Farm: Getting seeds to give out next week. You can sign up for seeds online via Beardsley website or CAC website. There will be three Saturdays for seed distribution. Beardsley will be doing two emergency food distributions this year. If anyone needs assistance with starting a community garden Beardsley can help. * Second Harvest Food Bank: Because Second Harvest is part of Feeding America, they are not allowed to provide food that is distributed via blessing boxes. Blessing boxes do not meet IRS 173E recommendations, FDA Food Code regulations, or Feeding America contract, so blessing boxes can not be provided by Second Harvest. If blessing boxes are solely supplied by an organization and there are cameras to monitor food going in and out of box, that is safer than a blessing box where the community can put food into the box and take food out of the box, where the food is not monitored for safety. If you provide food in a blessing box, you are not protected under the Good Samaritan Act. * Nourish Knoxville: Working on the local food guide. If you have not updated your listing, let Kimberly know. The purpose is for the guide to be used as a social services tool, including information about P-EBT, 211/311, and Double Up Food Bucks. The guides are delivered to senior towers, schools, and other places. If you have something that you would like to include, let Kimberly know. |
| 5. | **2021 Final Report and Letter of Introduction:**  Kimberly and Mikayla are finishing the introductory letter. Once the letter is finished, Kimberly will send out for a final review (hopefully next week) and then send the final report to the city graphic designer. Then, the report will go to the mayors and will be delivered through the mayor’s report for City Council and will go through the County Commission Chair for the county. |
| 6. | **Review of 2021 Meeting Structure and 2021:**  Our next meeting will be a non-voting meeting and will be held via Zoom on March 18 at 8:30 am. |
| 7 | Meeting adjourned. |