



Metropolitan Homelessness Commission

Friday, July 18, 2014

at the Downtown Nashville Library

615 Church Street, Conference Room 1A

Present: Renee Pratt, Emily Evans, Burkley Allen, Dayna Lovelady, Wendell Segroves, Glenn Cranfield, Phil Duke, Denis Huey (for J.C. Smith), Charles Strobel, Tom Turner, Erik Cole, Marvin Cox, Ellen Zinkiewicz, Angie Hubbard, Angie Thompson, Lt. Melzoni (for Captain Reinbold), Corey Harkey (for Josh Lee)

Staff: Will Connelly, Judith Tackett, Deon Trotter, Karri Simpson, Satrice Allen (MSS Finance Rep)

The meeting began at 9:30 a.m.

Minutes

The minutes of the March 7, 2014 meeting were approved.

Financial Report and Budget

Satrice Allen stated that year to date the Metropolitan Homelessness Commission (MHC) budget is under by \$76,000; this report was preliminary because the June budget had not closed as of July 18. In regard to this budget, Ellen Zinkiewicz asked why the Centerstone contract budget was underspent. Will Connelly addressed, stating that it took until October 2013 to finish the hiring process.

An RFP for Project Homeless Connect was put out, through the Metro Purchasing Department, for \$14,473.11 but received no bidders. While there were interested parties, none felt the cumbersome metro application process was worth the total sum offered. According to Will Connelly, things are still moving forward though with a plan to use the Project Homeless Connect funds to sponsor a similar type event being coordinated by Room in the Inn, the Nashville Rescue Mission, the Downtown Clinic, and Vanderbilt Nursing School, held this October.

At the last full Commission meeting, held on March 7, 2014, the Commissioners ask that the "other" category of How's Nashville expenditures be broken out, detailing specifics; a spreadsheet was given to each Commissioner that included this information. To date \$73,677.86 of the How's Nashville total budget, with the total expenditures for the year projected at \$83,000. Nearly \$63,000 is projected to carry over to next year's budget.

Phil Duke inquired if we do not spend the entire How's Nashville budget, will it be harder to get this funding approved next year? Will Connelly informed the Commission that these funds are garnered through donations and do not get returned to Metro government if they are not spent. In fact, How's Nashville just received a check for \$50,000.00 from the Gail Kerr House the Homeless Fund, which spurred another donor to contribute \$20,000.

Commissioners previously requested that How's Nashville financial activity be illustrated from meeting to meeting. A financial spreadsheet, detailing information from March 2014 through June 2014 was presented showing an increase in spending.

The CDBG grant, administered by the Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency, is a total budget of \$75,000. To date, \$7,127 has been spent and this money is then reimbursed by MDHA. At this time the MHC has not been paid for April and May 2014 expenditures due to lag of payment process.

Contract Reports

- **Park Center:** Ashley Blum, Supervisor of Homeless Outreach, announced that today is her last day at Park Center as she has accepted a position with the Metro Sheriff's office to start the SOAR program within the jail system. Cayla Wilson, who previously served as the Facility Liaison, will be taking on the role of Supervisor beginning Monday and provide future reports at the Commission meetings. Ashley and Cayla will share the role of SOAR Coordinator for the Nashville network.

In the month of June, Park Center screened 17 individuals, applying 10 through the SOAR program, and had 10 approvals. Total this year, 184 individuals were screened, 120 applied, and 117 were approved. Through the SOAR program, 56 individuals have been placed in permanent supportive housing and 32 in a transitional housing program. Since inception in 2006, they have received 504 decisions and only 11 were denials.

Glenn Cranfield as how long it takes to be approved? According to Ashley, since the inception of the program the average wait is 51 days; in June 2014, the average wait was 33 days. Dayna Lovelady then inquired about the reasons behind a denial. Ashley stated that the main reason is substance use and that when applying through SOAR, it is imperative that you show that substance use is not the reason you experience mental health systems. Other reasons included an individual may be found to have mental illness but do have the functionality to work.

Charles Strobel first thanked Ashley for all her hard work and then asked about the effort to speak with local attorneys to improve their approval ratings for those who help individuals apply for SOAR. Ashley informed the Commission that she spoke to SOAR networks in other cities who stated that they help with the appeals process for those who have been denied, but did not speak to the Nashville Bar Association. Will Connelly stated that while interested, a subcommittee for that focus has not yet been convened and he would like to look at this in a discussion slated later regarding the role of the Commission and possibly forming subcommittees within.

At this time Erik Cole joined the meeting.

Glenn Cranfield inquired about the difference between the myth that an individual must be denied once and the success of the SOAR program at Park Center. Ashley stated, that based on her observation, a lawyer may draw out a disability claim, having an individual denied initially, so that they can receive more money from them. When you initially apply, the key to being approved is providing the examiner and doctor with the information they need to make the decision; attorneys do not provide this information.

When an attorney starts the SOAR process with an individual, they charge them a fee to become their representative, do not provide all the necessary documents, and when the individual is denied they must through an appeals process, that can take up to two years, and the attorney then collects a percentage of their back-pay.

Charles Strobel thinks that this type of system is why the conversation must be taken outside this room and would like Erik Cole's thoughts on this. Erik states that there are pro-bono lawyers who do go through this process correctly, but that the system is set-up where it can easily be taken advantage of. A discussion around educating the bar association ensued. Burkley Allen stated she has a contact at the Tennessee Bar Association and would reach out to them to facilitate a conversation and training. Erik Cole stated that the Department of Human Services (DHS) and state of Tennessee have a financial incentive to help individuals become efficiently enrolled in the SOAR program; DHS also has a large tie-in with the Tennessee Bar Association, so the conversation should begin with DHS. Angie Hubbard felt that maybe the conversation should begin with the Board of Professional Responsibilities.

- **Centerstone:** Megan Bird, Program Manager, presented a timeline of activities over the past year at Centerstone. They began on September 1, 2013 but the transition from Eckmann Freeman didn't official happen until October 1, 2013; at that time they had three staff members. By November their team was fully staffed and remained fully staffed, hiring one additional case manager last month. The team consists of a Program Director, Program Manager, Housing Specialist with a ten person caseload, and four Case Managers who work with 25 individuals each. The program utilizes the Critical Time Intervention model (CTI) which is a 9 month case management model that is broken up into 3 phases, starting off intense and tapering off as time goes by. In the first year 110 total individuals were assisted, with 12 graduating successfully from the program, 16 exiting the program, 2 are currently incarcerated, and 2 who have not moved into housing and are currently unreachable.

Ellen Zinkiewicz inquired what it means to "graduate." Megan explained that they use the term graduate so that a client feels like they have accomplished something while going through the program. An in-person exit interview is done and then a client graduates.

Phil Duke asked in an ideal situation, what is the total number of clients a case manager would like on their caseload? Megan responded that in an ideal situation 20 clients would be the max. Phil then inquired how Centerstone's case management aligns with the needs of the community. Megan explained that they are only a small piece of the puzzle and that other case management services are available in Nashville. Other organizations have very specific qualifications and if an individual is eligible they often refer them to that organization, allowing Centerstone case managers to work with those who do not qualify for any other program throughout Nashville.

Update from the Director:

- **How's Nashville:** The How's Nashville leadership team and front line staff continue to meet regularly, discussing barriers and solutions, every two weeks. These meetings have been regularly for the last year now, which is something to celebrate because we are communicating more than ever before. How's Nashville is currently tracking housing placements and reporting on the housing retention of those individuals who moved in one year ago. Will Connely presented a chart that shows housing placements from January 1, 2013 through June 1, 2014.

Since How's Nashville launched in June 2013, 557 people experiencing chronic/vulnerable homelessness have been housed, averaging to 46 people per month; of those, 26% are veterans. The chart also displayed the original goal, set in February 2013, to house 2.5% of our total chronic homeless population, established by the 2012 Point in Time (PIT) count. Based on this original goal, How's Nashville would average 27 placements per month with a total of 278 people housed to date. How's Nashville has housed 557 people to date, with 44 individuals housed in May 2014 including 16 children and 9 veterans.

The second handout Will Connelly presented focused on housing retention of those placed in June 2013. Of the 44 people who moved into housing in June 2013, one year later 75% have retained that housing; 2 are unhoused; 7 are unknown (no contact at time of report); and 1 has moved into temporary housing while 1 other has passed away. Will is currently working on the housing retention report for individuals placed into housing in July 2013.

Angie Thompson noted that Will Connelly stated there were 16 children placed in housing in May 2014 and inquired whether any children were placed into housing in any other months as well? Will stated that How's Nashville has housed at least one family with at least one child almost every month for the past several months. While the focus was on the chronic definition of homelessness, which often excludes families, How's Nashville has been housing families and broadened the chronic homeless focus to include families back in February 2014.

Dayna Lovelady asked what type of feedback has been received by landlords and are new landlords joining How's Nashville? Will informed the Commission that there are landlords that communicate with us regularly and all the organizations that are involved really communicate with the landlords when there is any kind of issue. Unfortunately, sometimes you don't hear about a problem until it's close to an eviction, but even after the landlord still wants to help by allowing a different tenant to move-in. According to Will, other feedback that has been received is that it is becoming increasingly more difficult to find landlords that will take vouchers or other subsidies because the market is getting tighter and tighter and more people, without as many barriers, are moving to Nashville who can pay higher rents. Ingrid McIntyre, with Open Table Nashville, interjected that the more an organization/housing navigator/case manager builds a relationship on the front end, when a tenant is moving in, the better the working relationship is and more likely they are to reach out prior to a problem nearing eviction.

Denis Huey, present on behalf of J.C. Smith, asked what is the wait time for those applying for Section 8 with MDHA through How's Nashville? According to Will, it can really vary from a few months to much longer depending on many factors including their criminal background. Some [people] have gotten a voucher in just two months. Denis then inquired about the percentage of people lost because of this long process? Will stated that was a good question but one he didn't have the information to at that time. Currently, Deon Trotter and Marshal Friskics-Warren, a VISTA member, are analyzing that information so that the process can be better streamlined. The focus includes how many [people] fall out of this process because they are denied, didn't complete the process, or when they finally are approved they cannot be found, are in jail, passed away, etc.

Ellen Zinkiewicz stated that it appears the addition of case management to the housing process provides a significant response toward any type of needed intervention and the exit of this terrifies her. She thinks that the Commission is poised to do a more longitudinal study focused on the second year of housing retention, once the case management has exited, to see if individuals are still as successful. Will clarified that Ellen was referencing a case management model that was exclusive to those that enrolled in the program at Centerstone and others may

qualify for other forms of case management; but now that the Homelessness Commission is at full staff capacity, this may be possible. A conversation then ensued around the importance of case management. Will Connelly, Judy Tackett, and Megan Bird all informed the Commission that dialogue surrounding continued case management, support circles and researching methods is currently happening in the community.

Will was then asked, that while How's Nashville is currently doing extremely well at housing individuals, are we at or close to the tipping point where finding affordable housing units will be the biggest challenge. Will responded that if we are not there already, than we are really close. Will continued that over the last year, the Homelessness Commission has been working hard to get things in order and better communicate with community organizations, not duplicate services, etc. Now, however, it is time for the conversation to change and he would appreciate if the Commissioners would complete the online survey that was sent out. At the time, only 8 out of 20 Commissioners had completed it. A report out on the finding of this survey will be given prior to the next full Commission meeting. Will stated that if there was in this meeting today he would like to discuss with the Commissioners how they think the time in these meetings should be spent, as well as the possibility of bringing back subcommittees within the board.

- Glenn Cranfield stated he thought subcommittee work would be great and thanked Will Connelly for his leadership.
 - Burkley Allen thought that every Commission meeting should end with a few action items, as well as he and Charles Strobel both think that a few people need to follow-up on SOAR. Burkley then volunteered to do so.
 - Charles Strobel stated that the Commission needs to continue to meet and that meeting should not be canceled so that if an issue discussion has to go beyond this meeting, this work can be done. He then stated he would be happy to facilitate conversation with lawyers in the community regarding SOAR prior to the next Commission meeting.
 - Phil Duke would like more detailed information each meeting regarding the work being done and specifically wants to hear from a case manager to learn more about what they do.
 - Ellen Zinkiewicz left at 10:37 a.m.
 - Erik Cole wants to flip the question and have the focus be on how Commission members can be more supportive to help continue the work that is currently happening. Whatever structure is created should support the work and not just a meeting to meet.
- **Staffing:** The Homelessness Commission is now fully staffed. Will Connelly introduced Karri Simpson and Deon Trotter have recently joined the team. He also introduced the new VISTA members, Tiffany Dale, Marshall Friskics-Warren, and Molly Martin. The Commission also has one current intern, working during the summer semester, and one starting this fall.
 - **Central Intake:** As time was short, no specific discussion ensued around Central Intake.

Moment of Silence

Announcements: None

Public Hearing:

- David "Cowboy" Luttrell: He recently made himself homeless again because he is sick and not going to get any better, so he wants to be out. He stated that social security is very flawed, but for some it is a golden ticket. He felt so good the day Section 8 came out to inspect [his home] and

he could tell them to get out. He stated that Ronald Regan was right- we are turning into a socialistic society and he doesn't like it. He looks forward to dying in the back of his truck.

- Andrew Krinks: Announced the "Ban the Box" drive to eliminate questions on application for employment for metro and metro contracted jobs regarding criminal background. This ban does not eliminate the employers ability to eventually run a background check but does remove this focus from the initial application, creating an equal opportunity for everyone applying. Signatures are needed by August 15, 2014 to have this initiative put on the November ballot. You must be a registered voter within Davidson county. If you would like to sign the petition or distribute it to others, please see him after this meeting.
- Steve Reiter: At the last meeting in May there was a discussion on the Coordinated Entry System (CES). He has a real problem with the CES because with HMIS there is open data. He thinks that when a person goes to a service provider there is an expectation of client confidentiality and that the information given is going to stay at that program. The CES breaches this confidentiality. If you go to a program and screw up and then try another program, it shouldn't be anyone business that you screwed up. He thinks that if you [the Commissioners] go and see your doctor and thought that your information was going out to third parties that you wouldn't want that done to you; so you shouldn't do that to others. He is very passionate about this because he just thinks this is wrong. Other agencies in the country don't go out and let data be out there. The Sherriff's office won't do that. If you wanted to go to HMIS and get data you would have to get a subpoena. He stated he was sorry for being late to today's meeting. He worked with a guy who hurt his leg, so he called someone he knew on Sunday morning and they didn't have to look into anything, they just helped. If you work for an organization and someone comes in for help, you aren't going to tell them to go to coordinated entry. Business is done by who you know. At this point he was told by Renee Pratt that he had exceeded the three minute time limit. He got very upset, stating the meeting in May was canceled and he should be allowed to speak longer.
- Howard Allen: He knew someone, "John someone," who helped the homeless and passed away. Addressing Dayna Lovelady and Wendell Segroves, he stated that they can't let them not meet for four months. Nashville is getting ready to become a big money city and compete with Atlanta. He met with someone from there who said they are housing people faster [than Nashville]. He made a mistake and is about to be on television and homeless again. A lady at MDHA was smoothing cigarettes and a pip busted; she got a letter saying she has to be gone by August 26. This is a 100-billion dollar city. If people who have vouchers make mistakes, where are they supposed to go? Like Cowboy said, we are almost socialistic. Like he said, he made a mistake which is good for the judicial system but not MDHA. He then talked about Jesus. He stated he was once shot in the head and also met the Vice President. At this point he was told by Renee Pratt that he had exceeded the three minute time limit. He got very upset, stating that the Commission hasn't met in four months and informed Dayna Lovelady and Wendell Segroves, who are formerly homeless, that they don't know what is going on. The homeless in the room are the most important and need to be heard. Will [Connelly] is passionate but he is the one who brought HMIS.
- David "Cowboy" Luttrell: He made no mistakes and has no criminal history. He lived in a warehouse with no windows and god bless Suzie's [Tolmie] husband. But he is a free spirit and is going to die on the street. But since being back out the police have messed with him three times because he looks like a criminal but has no criminal background.

- Richard Aberdeen: He is a tax-paying citizen who doesn't represent any organization. Philip Mangano, the homeless czar, stated it cost \$35,000 annually to leave a person on the street, while it costs between \$13,000 and \$25,000 to put that same person in a house. Los Angeles, Florida, Denver, Las Vegas, Salt Lake City, and over 80 cities have done private research and every single time they have figured out it is not a little cheaper, it is a lot cheaper to house homeless people. In 2012, according to the Contributor, there were 12,000 arrests of homeless people that cost \$3,000 an some estimate over \$5,000 with the addition of cost of services once back on the street. This is a nightmare and for no good reason whatsoever. I don't blame anyone on this panel or the police, who are caught in between a rock and hard place, but everyone on this council who has a connection to the mayor needs to press that we need to house homeless people and not arrest them. Also we need public restrooms downtown and it is a shame that the mayor's office won't out in these restrooms.
- Ingrid McIntyre: Thanked those community partners that have collaborated throughout this effort. Asked in regards to the NEXT meeting focused on affordable housing and featuring Dr. James Fraser, if there has been any conversation since regarding inclusionary zoning, changes in tax laws, and having more policies regarding the creation of affordable housing. This board of commissioners are the people who could affectively advocate for this and get it done.
- Barry Keith Hobbs: He is moving-in to his own place and will be living in Hadley Park Towers. He is bowing out of this mess and here is why: 12 meetings yearly, 5 minutes to speak, service center 6-6, mission 24/7 year round, IDs, etc., find and also get gift cards and find and get empty units and make them into affordable housing. This year will be between 1000 and 1200. This will quiet your critics finally, at least he hopes. He thinks church street parking should be raised and replaced by the library parking lot. He also thinks all benches should be moved. Bad bums are dealt with by police, good bums need to fight back or lie down and get boinked.
- Denis Huey: Since it has been brought up on numerous occasions, he thought it should be a matter of record as to why the Commission did not meet in May?
 - o Will Connelly stated that he takes responsibility for canceling the meeting in May. There was a lot happening with the 100 day campaign push to start the CES in May, as well as many other meetings and he felt that another meeting to report out what had been being reported out wasn't the best use of time. It was a mistake, he said.

The next full Commission meeting is on Friday, September 5th at the Sonny West Conference room. The last full Commission meeting for this year will be on Friday, November 7th.

The next Executive Committee meeting is on Tuesday, August 19th at Metro Social Services.

With no other comments, Renee Pratt adjourned the meeting.