



**Metropolitan Homelessness Commission**  
**9:30 am, May 3, 2013**  
**Sonny West Conference Center**  
**Howard Office Building (Fulton Complex)**  
**700 Second Avenue South**

Commissioners present: Diane Kuhn, chair; Megan Barry, Emily Evans, Jason Holleman, Dayna Lovelady, Steven Samra, Glenn Cranfield, Phil Duke, J.C. Smith, Charles Strobel, Tom Turner, Erik Cole, Marvin Cox, Ellen Zinkiewicz, Renee Pratt, Angie Hubbard, Angie Thompson

Staff present: Will Connelly, director; Judith Tackett;

Legal rep: Josh Lee

**Welcome & Roll Call**

Diane Kuhn welcomed all commissioners and did a roll call.

**Minutes of March 1 and Jan. 18, 2013**

Commissioners approved minutes of the March 1 meeting and the amended minutes of the Jan. 18 meeting.

**Financials**

Pam McEwen reported that to date, it looks like the Commission will be about \$112,000 under budget. The majority, \$83,500 of that projection is due to open positions (salaries and fringe benefits). The bulk of the remaining under-budget projection stems from the Eckman/Freeman Contract, which is likely going to be \$29,000 under budget. These projections are made as of March 1, 2013.

The money that is under budget due to salaries and fringe benefits cannot be touched. The remaining dollars, Will Connelly and Pam McEwen are in conversation as to spend down that money.

Ms. McEwen said the budget currently also includes \$23,000 from The Key Alliance.

That money is going to be moved to a special revenue fund and will be available for the Commission to spend. It is considered a grant from The Key Alliance.

The Commission also has left-over money from Project Homeless Connect, about \$14,000. That money will be available to be spent on future PHC related expenses. These

particular funds will not go away at the end of the Fiscal Year because they were donated for a specific purpose and have to be spent accordingly.

### **Bylaws**

Diane Kuhn said the bylaws were rewritten and reflected more of what the Commission is doing now. She said the executive committee added some language addressing conflict of interest and nondiscrimination issues. Bylaws were sent out to commissioners ahead of time and the drafts were posted on the Commission's Website.

Megan Barry made a motion to approve the bylaws; Steven Samra seconded the motion; all approved.

### **Housing Campaign Update**

Will Connelly gave his director's report:

- The 100,000 Homes Campaign returned a community assessment report to Nashville. Overall and to no one's surprise, Nashville, as a community, did not well when it comes to ending chronic homelessness. But the 100,000 Homes Campaign is offering technical assistance.
- Our first step is to organize a Registry Week during which volunteers will go out during the early morning hours on three consecutive days and survey people. Based on that survey, we will create a Vulnerability Index, a priority list for housing. Registry week is scheduled from May 28-June 4. May 28 is volunteer training. The surveying is done on May 29-31, and a public briefing will be held at the Downtown Library on June 4.
- VAT Training has been conducted. The VAT, which stands for Vulnerability Assessment Tool, is a questionnaire that the Commission will be using in addition to the Vulnerability Index for people who will be considered for MDHA Section 8 vouchers. While the Vulnerability Index survey looks at medical vulnerability, the VAT includes mental health issues.

Commissioner Tom Turner gave a brief report on the Downtown Partnership Program. He said the Downtown Partnership has been working with the 50 people who have been arrested most frequently. They hired an outreach specialist, Adam Ries, who started in June 2011. Mr. Turner reported that since the program started, the Partnership calculated that working with this population saved the community \$1.37 million in cost for an investment of about \$150,000 (from the Downtown Partnership).

### **Moment of Silence**

A moment of silence was held for people who passed away since the last Commission meeting. No names were submitted this month.

### **Announcements**

Diane Kuhn pointed out Tojuana Jordan at the back of the room. She thanked her and John Hite for their past work.

## **Public Hearing**

**Steve Reiter** referenced Tom Turner's report and said he wanted to point out that the biggest housing project we have is the Davidson County jail. He said that Metro Social Services issued another report and once again the poverty rate is up again. He said the poverty rate for Davidson County was over 19%, which is higher than the national and state rates. He said this was unacceptable. He said report after report was getting shelved and collected dust while the Music City report for the new convention shelter did not get shelved. Over half a billion dollars were spend on that project. "This is our community's message, the homeless people really don't count," he said. "I've been coming here since 2005 and there has been a lot of talk." He said he wanted to see less talk and more action. "There is no excuse for having 17 arrests in one year because you have no place to go," Mr. Reiter said pointing to the Downtown Partnership's program. "Because being homeless in this town is essentially to be a criminal."

**Barry Hobbes** informed the Commission and people present that library branches are supposed to re-open on Mondays. He also suggested to Charles Strobel to consider making Room In The Inn's shelter a year-round program. He said all the pieces were present to end homelessness. "At the end of the day, all we need is money." He also pointed out that there were 25,000 empty housing in Nashville and urged commissioners to do the math. We have 3,000-4,000 homeless people and 25,000 empty housing units. "Let's do something about this problem because the problem can be solved."

**Jim Johnston** said, "We've been asking for community involvement. We don't have community involvement, but we have a lot of conflict of interest on the Commission." He said he could name some people on the Commission who benefit from it, community people and politicians. He voiced his disagreement in how specific programs treat homeless people. "The leadership here says we can solve the chronic homeless problem by 2017. But by 2017 I and others in here are dead," he said. "We want to participate in the community like everybody else." He said commissioners have the ability to participate in free enterprise, homeless people don't.

**Lindsey Krinks** said this was the first Commission meeting that she's been to in a long time, in years, where she is not leaving "super-frustrated." She said the last time she was here; she was part of a procession where 70 homeless people marched with a coffin to the Commission to demonstrate that enough was enough. "We drew attention to the amount of vacant units that Davidson County has," she said, adding that if those vacant units were utilized, homelessness could be tackled. She said the Housing [Workgroup] has come up with creative ways to increase housing options. She said that was awesome and she was now participating on the Outreach Workgroup. "But it still doesn't get us where we need to be," Ms. Krinks said. "The model to get landlords to donate units depends on the charity of the few on the top. While this is a big part of the solution, I want to keep working on it."

**Denis Huey** asked whether the new job positions will be filled with people who hold a master's or a PhD. "To be honest with you, most of the folks that hold a master's, they're

never going to be frontline. They're usually in their office a lot. I hope you're going to be able to open that up a little bit." Will Connelly responded that he'd rather focus on personality and work ethics when considering filling the open positions. Mr. Huey said in regard to veterans, he said he was seeing a lot of meetings that everybody was having, but he was not seeing any veterans. "The meetings that you've having with these folks, I would appreciate it if veteran representation is there."

Mr. Huey praised Will Connelly for doing a great job and said that the "folks who are doing most of the bitching, they have an opportunity" to participate in the process now.

**Tracy** ??? with the SEIU, said she was representing two of the employees of the Metropolitan Homelessness Commission. Her question was whether these two employees will be given priority when the hiring process starts for the new positions. Will Connelly said he had not seen whether they have applied yet. Tracy said the SEIU would love for them to be hired for the positions. Will Connelly said the Commission was definitely going to interview them if they are qualified.

Meeting was adjourned.