



**Metropolitan Homelessness Commission  
9:30 am, November 8, 2013  
Sonny West Conference Center  
Howard Office Building (Fulton Complex)  
700 Second Avenue South**

Present: Diane Kuhn, Phil Duke, Charles Strobel, Norman Deep (for Glenn Cranfield), Megan Barry, Emily Evans, Jason Holleman, Burkley Allen, Dayna Lovelady, Wendell Segroves, Phil Duke, Howard Gentry, J.C. Smith (Karri Simpson), Tom Turner, Erik Cole, Marvin Cox, Renee Pratt, Angie Hubbard, Angie Thompson, Lt. Warren McConkey

**Welcome and Roll Call**

Diane Kuhn welcomed every one and took roll call.

**Minutes of September 6, 2013**

Diane Kuhn asked for discussion. No discussion. The minutes were approved by voice vote.

**Financials**

Pam McEwen reported that the financials are pretty much on target through September 21. Salaries and fringe benefits are very close on target. However, that will change because of a current vacant position.

As far as contracts are concerned, Ms. McEwen said so far one payment was made to the Guest House, but the invoices for payments from July through October just came in. "So by the time we meet next time, we'll be caught up." All bills for Eckman/Freeman are paid. Centerstone was paid for two months, and Park Center has three months' worth of payments. Ms. McEwen said the bottom line was that the contracts were paid up.

Ms. McEwen said she projected that all of the operating budget will be spent at the end of the year. All that would be left over would be in salaries and fringe benefits.

Will Connelly said La Toya Carter resigned about two weeks earlier and the position that's open is for a housing and outreach specialist. The person would also do some administrative functions.

Pam McEwen continued the finance report saying that currently almost \$14,400 were in the Project Homeless Connect fund.

In her report on the How's Nashville fund, Ms. McEwen said the Commission spent \$24,900 through the end of October on utilities and housing. This fiscal year \$42,300 was collected. At the end of October, \$73,300 was recorded in this fund. She said she projects that about \$87,000 will be spend and a total of \$76,000 collected this fiscal year.

Dayna Lovelady asked how bus tickets were dispensed.

Will Connelly said that usually an outreach worker requests assistance. The tickets are then matched up with the persons who receive the assistance so we can record that. The NES requests are handled by the Homelessness Commission office.

### **Budgets**

Diane Kuhn said the Homelessness Commission Budget has to be included in the Metro Social Services budget. However, the Commission's term ends in May of 2015, prior to the end of Fiscal year 2014/15. That's why the executive committee asked Josh Lee, our Metro attorney, to draft a new ordinance to extend the term of the Commission. "the way we're looking to do this is to keep the same structure," she said, adding that the goal was not to tie the Commission to a 10 Year Plan and not to have a sunset clause. The overall purpose of the Commission will remain the same:

- a) To implement a coordinated and focused approach to ending homelessness and to develop measurable, time-framed objectives;
- b) To assure participation of all stakeholders including homeless persons;
- c) To maintain accurate, current data on homeless populations; and
- d) To educate the public, service providers and other interested parties on issues related to homelessness.

Ms. Kuhn said the Commission was looking at continuing the work that it has been doing, especially with the How's Nashville campaign.

The dates to move the ordinance through Council are as follows:

Nov 22 – filing deadline;

Dec. 3 – first Council reading;

Dec. 17 – second Council reading;

Jan. 7 – third and last council reading.

### **Director's Report**

Will Connelly reported that 264 people have been housed since June all of whom are considered chronically homeless or vulnerable. He said it was a true collaborative effort, and each month the Commission was collecting data from the community. Usually by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month the numbers from the prior month are finalized.

Goal setting, he said, was also done in a collaborative way. "We have a planning team," Mr. Connelly said, adding that team consisted of the VA, Open Table Nashville, Park Center, MDHA, and the Commission. "We all talk through it and look at what housing resources we think we might have and then come up with a number that we're fairly comfortable with. We set goals for the next two months."

Charles Strobel asked whether all residents have a guaranteed income.

Will Connelly said no. However, they should have a plan for an income if they don't have one. A lot of folks have social security income (SSI/SSDI) or sell the Contributor.

But for people without an income, that's usually one of the first things that case managers try to address.

Charles Strobel said there was not pool of money that we have when people do not have enough money to meet the rent.

Will Connelly said the money that was raised was mostly for move-in costs, which usually includes first month's rent. People can request emergency assistance through Centerstone and also tap into the funding available through other agencies.

Charles Strobel said there were still obstacles to when someone is housed. "There is a good chance that if it does not pan out, there is a risk they have to leave?"

Will Connelly said yes and that people have to meet the lease agreement like everybody else. Erik Cole said conversations were happening right now around all the financial assistance programs and it would be useful information to include in that conversation. Tom Turner asked how many of the people who qualify for services do not have an income? And whether there was a percentage of that. Will Connelly said he did not have that number yet.

Further discussion focused on linking people with employment. Will Connelly deferred to Ashley Blum of Park Center to explain the SOAR program. Commissioners stated the goal was to help keep people housed. Will Connelly talked about the role of case management.

### **Landlord Meeting**

Will Connelly reported that MDHA allowed How's Nashville partners to present at a landlord meeting in an attempt to recruit more landlords. The meeting was well attended with more than 50 landlords present, and we had a recent resident who came to speak to the landlords. MDHA's Holly McCall did a PR blitz and the Commission was able to generate some coverage of the event.

He said there was a significant increase in utilization of Section 8 housing vouchers. The lease up rate increased from 23% in September to currently 56%.

The Commission has currently a volunteer, Tiffany Meehan, who comes in every week to scout out landlord leads online and follow up per phone.

### **Cold Weather Plan**

Doug Hausken reported that the Commission's main role is to generate a conference call with the main service providers – Nashville Rescue Mission, Room In The Inn, and Open Table Nashville – when temperatures fall to 32 degrees Fahrenheit or below for 2 consecutive days in a row. We will try to coordinate communication to identify gaps and help find resources to find those gaps.

The Commission has met with OEM and is getting involved in the disaster recovery efforts by participating in quarterly events and training.

The Commission will also draft a letter to police officers offering information where people can go during cold weather and phone numbers how to contact these locations.

Norman Deep of the Nashville Rescue Mission reported on the Mission's Cold Patrol.

When temperatures get dangerously low, usually around 32 degrees and lower, the Mission uses vans to patrol the city. The vans start scanning the area from 4 p.m. to midnight. When people do not want to go to the Mission, the Mission provides blankets as a last resort. "We really don't want them to stay out in the cold." The Mission keeps its

doors open during any time when temperatures fall to 37 degrees or lower. The Mission is able to house an additional 110-150 people in the newly renovated chapel if it becomes necessary.

Charles Strobel said Room In The Inn, similar to the Mission, can increase its nightly capacity from 200-250 to 300-350. However, he said this depends on the night and the pressure that congregations feel because they are volunteer-driven efforts.

Ingrid McIntyre reported that when the temperatures are 25 degrees or lower during the night, Open Table Nashville sets up emergency shelters at local congregations that do not participate already in Room In The Inn. The capacity varies, but can be 150-175 people.

Ms. McIntyre said it would be helpful to have an open space. She said Open Table Nashville would be more than happy to staff that, but she called for more space.

Judy Tackett reported on the communications outreach and coordination that the Homelessness Commission can offer to community partners.

### **Case management report from Centerstone**

Diane Kuhn introduced Megan Bird, who is the program coordinator of the Centerstone team that provides case management services to the How's Nashville effort under a contract with the Metropolitan Homelessness Commission.

Megan Bird reported that Centerstone vamped up its work in October and will provide case management services. She said Centerstone will be using a model called Critical Time Intervention (CTI), which is time-limited and focused. The main goal is to help people sustain their housing. CTI goes along with the Housing First model that the Commission follows. She explained the three phases of the CTI model and said that landlords will have a phone number to call if there are any issues that may occur. As of Monday, Centerstone has 51 referrals. Almost all have come through the How's Nashville campaign. The goal is to serve 150 people in the first year and 200 people per year after that.

Centerstone will try to stay within a case load of 20-25 clients. There are three full-time case managers, one housing/landlord liaison person, and one supervisor/outreach coordinator. All five staff members are trained on the CTI model and the supervisor, which is Megan Bird, and housing liaison staff member can also take on some case management clients if necessary.

Will Connelly said he wanted to mention Park Center's SOAR program and give Ashley Blum credit for it. Since January 2013, 62 people have been approved (there were no denials) for SSI/SSDI under the contract with the Metropolitan Homelessness Commission. The decision time is 38 days, which is on top of the list (only after Philadelphia) in the country.

### **Data & Cost Savings Workgroup**

Doug Hausken said that this workgroup will hopefully help with outcome measures for the Critical Time Intervention case management. He reported that the group started meeting in early October and talked about what they will work on. Mr. Hausken said that the group would serve as a brain trust to improve data collection in the community. He also reported that the group got awarded a mini-grant from the Meharry/Vanderbilt

research partnership that will help get started on doing research. He said the group will also work on policy briefs.

### **Moment of Silence**

The Commission held a moment of silence for people who passed away since the September meeting.

### **Announcements**

Angie Thompson announced that the Metro Health Department was selected to participate in the inaugural class of the Mayor's Ideas to Reality Program. The team, which also includes Will Connelly, will explore SOAR Program improvement within the Davidson County Sheriff's Office inmate population and develop a coordinated data collection system

Will Connelly announced that the *How's Nashville* campaign received a volunteer of the year award from the Nashville Downtown Partnership. He thanked Tom Turner and the Downtown Partnership for the honor.

Diane Kuhn said it was not sure yet when the 60 Minutes piece would air. She said once the Commission knew, we would send out notification.

### **Public Hearing**

**Richard Aberdeen** said it came to his attention that the city of Nashville is consistently arresting people and fining them \$50-\$250. That will create a police record for someone who is homeless. He said he did not blame the police. "I don't believe the police are doing that on their own." Mr. Aberdeen said that the city was spending hundreds of thousands of dollars a year on arresting people who are homeless. He said the city was prioritizing a transit system down West End. He pointed out that he was a taxpaying citizen who pays his property taxes and sales taxes. He said he was not mad at anybody at the meeting. "I think everybody here cares about the homeless or you wouldn't be here." But he said the city deliberately removed benches that the homeless have been sitting on. He said he called the city and got the runaround. The reason he was angry, he said, was because for nine years he's pushed a plan that could easily house every homeless person in Tennessee without costing a dime of taxpayer money, and it would help the homeless all over the United States and all over the world. He urged commissioners to look at his proposal. "I'm tired of pushing something for nine years that no one will be looking at."

**Steve Reiter** introduced Bill from St. Louis who came to visit Nashville to see what we are doing here with the How's Nashville campaign. Mr. Reiter also pointed out that one of the items the Commission discussed together with the budget was a Metro Council ordinance. He said it was not on the agenda. "I wish stuff would be on the agenda when we talk about it. He also talked about the cold weather plan and said he was not enthusiastic about OEM. He would like to see something coordinated with the Parks Department. Also, he said the Mission's Cold Patrol stayed within 5 miles of Downtown. He said it would be good to have something for people who stay further out of the city. "If you're on the border of Cheatham County, you're out of luck." Mr. Reiter also mentioned an article in the Contributor on benches. He said there was mention about

buildings. “Metro has surplus property. If we really went out there and say we need a building.” He said OEM was not there for cold weather. “They’re there for emergencies.” He also mentioned that some cities up north do not even have a cold weather plan because they cannot afford it.

**Barry Keith Hobbes** said that we live in a beautiful city, county, state, region, and nation. “It looks beautiful, even on its own TV show, except when it comes to the poor, homeless, and middle class.” Mr. Hobbes said that the AMP needed to be on Charlotte Avenue. He also said that at the end of the day, no child should be homeless, no elderly person should be homeless, no disabled person should be homeless. He said it was not Christian, it was not human.

He challenged the Commission to raise \$10 million a year by 2020. “I want \$10 million between 2014 and 2019 to solve this problem, not only for the homeless but also for the poor.”

No more public comments were made and the meeting was adjourned.