



## Metropolitan Homelessness Executive Committee Meeting Sept. 21, 2011

### MINUTES

**Commissioners present:** Diane Kuhn, Renee Pratt, Hershell Warren, Howard Gentry

**Staff present:** Clifton Harris, Judith Tackett

**Visitors:** Steve Reiter, Jim Johnston

#### Welcome

Renee Pratt lead the meeting, filling in for Erik Cole (chair) who had excused himself.

#### Minutes

Diane Kuhn made the motion to approve the minutes, Hershell Warren seconded, all approved.

#### Administrative:

#### Financial Report

Clifton Harris went through the financial report (see handout).

For the month of August \$51,833.33 were budgeted in salaries, of which \$41,903.52 were actually spent.

The fringe benefits budgeted for August were \$18,116.67, of which \$5,741.88 were spent.

Mr. Harris explained that for the first six months of the year, staff does not receive pension, but it has to be budgeted for the entire year. He said new staff members have to be employed for six months before the pension gets in. This will free up some money that was budgeted originally.

For the programs and other expenses for the month of August, \$155,725.00 was budgeted and \$35,587.76 was actually spent. Clifton Harris said the variance has to do with the pension being over budgeted due to the policy that new employee's do not get pension contributions for the first six months of employment.

Diane Kuhn said she liked the new format of the budget and asked whether Mr. Harris could go over the expenses of the three programs that were supported by the Commission. Mr. Harris said the Guest House and the Day Center, both of which are located at Room In The Inn, are budgeted for \$350,000 per year. This is pass-through money from Metro. The Commission is responsible for ensuring compliance and monitoring of the invoices.

For case management, \$357,300 was budgeted. Mr. Harris explained that MSS' finance director will have to go back to make an adjustment in the projection within the presented budget because she assumed that at the invoice that came in for August reflects a set monthly amount. However, invoices are billed per services delivered and are not to exceed \$357,300 a year.

Ms. Kuhn asked whether case management cost comes to about \$9,000 per client per year on average, which was confirmed by Mr. Harris.

For the SOAR program \$173,000 are budgeted annually.

Mr. Harris pointed out that the budget also reflects a one-time insurance expense for COBRA to cover staff when the Commission moved to MSS from MDHA. That amount was \$2,118.46.

Hershell Warren asked whether the \$10,000 for the HMIS software payment was the only payment. Clifton Harris responded that the \$10,000 was the amount budgeted for any enhancement that is necessary and is part of the match that MDHA had to have for the amount they receive from HUD for their HMIS staff person.

He further explained that MDHA just shut down the old HMIS system and was going live with the new system. They still have a lot of people to train. The next step would also involve dumping the old data into the new HMIS software.

Mr. Warren asked whether the Commission will have access to all the data, which Mr. Harris confirmed as being part of the agreement with MDHA.

### **Appointment of new Commissioners**

Clifton Harris reported that Hershell Warren has received the letters for the Mayor to appoint the new commissioners. Mr. Warren said he still has to have a meeting with Vice Mayor Diane Neighbors to talk about Council appointments. Mr. Harris said he talked to Vice Mayor Neighbors today and would schedule a meeting to finalize the appointments this week.

### **Municipal Auditorium**

Judith Tackett reported that she followed up with the Police Department to see whether there was a continuing issue with people sleeping in the triangle, grassy area at 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue North and James Robertson Parkway (across from the Municipal Auditorium). However, Lt. Temple reported that he reached out to the night shift supervisors and no one reported any further incidences of people sleeping on the benches and in the grassy area at that location.

Mr. Harris said when this issue was brought to the Commission's attention at the last full Commission meeting; it came as a surprise to him because no one had reported it to staff. Usually if there is an issue like that occurring, staff coordinates outreach to determine what is going on and recommend a plan of action.

### **Commission Meeting Format**

Mr. Harris said there has been some discussion about beefing up full Commission meetings. Diane Kuhn, as the chair of the Communications Committee, will take the lead to revisit the format of the meetings. Ms. Kuhn said she suggested it because the meetings are not well attended by commissioners as well as the public. She said she felt it was something that could be worked on.

### **Issue Briefs (Update)**

Judith Tackett delivered a PowerPoint presentation highlighting main points of the issue briefs, which have been completed on veterans, female veterans, incarcerated veterans, women and children, domestic violence, downtown homelessness, and medical respites.

She was interrupted by the visitors, Jim Johnston and Steve Reiter, who strongly opposed to being exposed to yet another presentation. Steve Reiter respectfully requested that the executive committee move this item on the agenda to the bottom because he had to attend another meeting and was present to hear about the program updates (PHC, WAS, SOAR and Go Teach).

### **November Meeting Place**

Clifton Harris said he talked to Metro Legal and was informed that the Commission could not meet on non-Metro property. The plan initially was to hold the November meeting at Room In The Inn. He said he was exploring the possibility to meet at the old Howard School on Second Avenue North.

Hershell Warren requested an update on the old truck stop location. Clifton Harris said that he was informed that Commander Reinbold went out there and moved people on because the Public Health Department shut down the camp because it was a bird sanctuary and the bird feces contributed to it being a health risk.

### **Programs:**

#### **Project Homeless Connect**

Staff is looking at setting a new date for Project Homeless Connect, potentially in March.

#### **WAS** (see handout prepared for by Eckman/Freeman)

Clifton Harris said that 50 consumers were served during the past Fiscal Year. They all had completed a Vulnerability Index, which indicated that they were among the sickest people. This program is trying to reach out to the most vulnerable individuals and get them off the street first.

Diane Kuhn asked about the retention rate, which Mr. Harris said was at 93%. The retention rate is calculated by looking at who retains his/her housing while in the program and/or at the point of discharge. Ms. Kuhn asked whether there was a waiting list. Mr. Harris said there was no waiting list since when an opening occurs within the program, we take the next person from the Vulnerability Index and offer him/her housing. He said that while the program is tremendously successful; however, what continues to be the weakest link is income/employment opportunities.

#### **SOAR** (see handout prepared for by Park Center)

96 individuals were served last year in that program. The average age was 39 years. 65.6% of the people served were male. The average time for approval on the initial application was 48.8 days. Mr. Harris said this program helps people secure housing as well as connect them with Medicare/Medicaid (if eligible).

#### **Go Teach**

Clifton Harris reported that Carolyn Cooper was ready to train some churches and give an additional presentation. She received a phone call from Mt. Nebo who showed interest and also has received a request to speak to Operation Andrew. "So we're making some headway with that program," he said.

#### **Next meeting**

**Full Commission: Friday, Nov. 4 9:30 Location TBA**

**Executive Committee: Wednesday, Oct. 19 @ 1 p.m. at 800 Second Ave North**

Further discussion ensued with follow-up questions about when PHC was being scheduled. Clifton Harris said staff was looking at a spring date, before Easter. In addition, staff was working on putting together a

coat drive. “We’re looking at the distribution for the coats to be in different areas where people have easy access like community centers, etc.”

Mr. Harris also reported and he and Judith Tackett are working with Metro planning on putting together a map that shows all the schools that reported having homeless children, all service providers listed in our Where to Find Help resource directory, and all congregations and shows where they fall in each Council District and Precinct. The goal is to being able to pull communities and neighborhoods together and examine existing resources within their area and what they can do to help make a difference.

Diane Kuhn asked whether there were any plans for winter services. Mr. Harris said Metro has a weather policy. She said from a PR stand point, it would be a good idea to have the coat drive and weather plan promoted together.

Hershell Warren suggested that the Commission starts to keep cataloguing the things and issues that arise (for example, the library is always an issue).

Further discussion occurred about changing the meeting format to feature one topic and have public comments on that topic. Howard Gentry warned to limit public comments, but encouraged to try the approach to focus the meeting around a specific topic.

Meeting was adjourned.