



Weather Response Ad Hoc Committee

March 21, 8:30-9:30 am

At Metro Social Services, 800 2nd Ave. North, 37201

In attendance: Bob Freeman(chair), Renee Pratt, Wendell Segroves, Erik Cole, Charles Strobel

Staff: Judith Tackett, Joseph Parker

Visitors: Jim Shulman, Anna Lea Cothron, Steve Reiter

Minutes

Meeting started at 8:40 am

Bob Freeman welcomed the group and asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Charles Strobel made a motion to approve the minutes, Bob Freeman seconded, all approved.

Bob Freeman asked for a data update from Judith Tackett who presented handouts from the HUD Housing Inventory Report, provided an update of the voucher utilization and that the number of landlords accepting Section 8 vouchers has gotten smaller. She also provided a needs assessment report out of the Housing Report released by the Mayor's Office in 2017.

During the discussion of data, Jim Shulman asked whether there could be a group started to provide up to date data through an overall list. Judith Tackett said the data was currently not in one place and much of the information could likely be looked at by investing in the existing HMIS when it comes to housing placements and needs of people experiencing an immediate housing crisis.

Bob Freeman said there were simultaneous paths to this problem. "Is time and money better spent addressing affordable housing or cold weather?" He stated that the group needed to make sure we have an emergency response plan addressing the need. Mr. Freeman said that one question was whether Metro should enter the shelter business or what exactly the role of Metro was in the extreme weather response. "Do we open for tornado warnings and hail? What happens at that point?"

Erik Cole, who brought along a hard copy of the Office of Emergency (OEM) CEMP, and explained what happened during the tornado warnings on the Monday prior to this meeting. He said Metro was partially activated. He said the last time Metro fully activated was during a flooding and that the Red Cross opened a shelter in the Whites Creek area.

Further discussion ensued about when the Red Cross gets involved in emergency sheltering, and the limits to activate and involved them in the cold weather response. The request was made to go back to the Red Cross and investigate what their involvement could/should be.

Jim Shulman said that his question was who does what in case of emergency?

Further discussion focused on the need to revisit MOUs and put them in place where needed. The question was raised who should be invited to the next meeting.

The goal is to map out who all the players are and what their roles are. Funding needs to be tied to departments' roles. If there is not sufficient funding, then we need to be honest about that. We've got 6 months until it's cold again, so we can plan out the need, the roles, who is doing what, and make necessary changes with MOUs.

Erik Cole said he doesn't think MSS should be doing shelters. Bob Freeman added that how can we as a Commission own it if we don't know our role? He said he believes this group should sit down and write the plan. "Let's have the meeting with all these committees and figure out how to fund it." Further discussion focused on the Metro shelter having become a shelter of choice. The question was raised how the plan was created the first time.

Judith Tackett cautioned to distinguish between what Metro's plan is and what the community does, or bring the community partners in. At least, she said she felt there was a need to keep them posted on the ad hoc committee discussions and she was willing to do that.

Charles Strobel said he always felt if we take money from the community, we should do what the community wants. He added that it sounds like OEM and the Red Cross are only interested in small projects. He said they needed to be brought to the table to discuss their role in homelessness.

Charles: We use to be more opened. If we take money from the community, we should do what the community wants. Sounds like OEM and red cross are only interested in small projects. They need to be brought to the table to discuss their role in homelessness.

Bob Freeman said he would like for this committee to get people together. Is there a support role Metro could play? It doesn't have to be a Metro-funded shelter. He said he believes it's this committee's responsibility to address the need and roles. All barriers should be addressed. At 32 degrees we need to execute an emergency plan. Mr. Freeman said the plan should address the need, the funding then would be addressed after.

Charles Strobel said OEM and the Salvation Army should be invited to the next meeting. Judy Tackett will invite OEM and Erik Cole said he'd reach out to the Salvation Army.

In addition, Bob Freeman and Judith Tackett will work on the type of information/material that should be available at every meeting (example dates that Metro emergency shelters were open, occupancy levels, needs data, etc.)

Wendell Segroves said we need to know barriers to shelters like pets and other barriers. Anna Lea Cothron asked whether education was a barrier.

Bob Freeman said his goal was to submit an expanded plan approved by the community and find out how to execute it. A plan where everyone knows their role and we do it.

The next meeting was set for April 11.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:45.