Metropolitan Homelessness Commission

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
March 21, 2017, 8:30am
at Metro Social Services, 800 2nd Ave. N

Attendance:

Executive Committee members: Liz Allen Fey, Renee Pratt, Wendell Segroves, Mina Johnson

Governance committee members: Freddie O'Connell, Jim Harbison

Staff: Judith Tackett, Deon Trotter

Public: Matt Preston

Minutes:

Liz Allen Fey called the meeting to order. The two items for today are the director search and the governance discussion.

Due to an initial lack of a quorum the approval of the minutes was moved to a later point in the meeting.

Director Search

Ms. Fey said the decision of what organization will serve as the collaborative applicant of the Continuum of Care will be decided by the community. She said since it was not in the control of the Commission it would make sense to move ahead with the director search and assume that the Metropolitan Homelessness Commission staff will play a role in leading the Continuum of Care.

Renee Pratt agreed with the decision to move ahead with the director search. Ms. Pratt went over the Metro hiring process and said a committee will be put together for the director position. The goal was to look at the job description based on what the position needs to be in 2017.

Discussion ensued during which the staff of the Commission was asked to leave the room.

The director position will likely be posted by May. Interview times to be announced and the job likely to be filled in June.

Governance Discussion

The group discussed the main points that need to happen from the Metropolitan Homelessness Commission side.

Freddie O'Connell said fiscal autonomy was important, even if the Commission was still within Metro Social Services. He said a new ordinance needed to have maximum buy-in from all involved – the Homelessness Commission, MSS, MDHA board, and the CoC.

Liz Allen Fey said whoever takes this on will have to make it a core of their mission.

Jim Harbison said the MDHA (Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency) was happy to assist and lead the CoC. He said Cloudburst had set up a call between MDHA and Frescno's CoC lead, which was the only high-performing CoC in the country led by a PHA (Public Housing Authority). He said he had not spoken to his board yet. However, he could see Fresno's model working here and whatever happened, he was on board. Freddie O'Connell stated that he was comfortable with MDHA being the collaborative applicant and HMIS lead, which would be model 3 (as outlined by Cloudburst). Liz Allen Fey repeated that being the CoC's collaborative applicant meant taking on the larger goal of leading the community on ending homelessness. She said the goal of ending homelessness needed to be at the core of an organization that wants to do this work, not just a part of it. She stated that she has not heard a commitment from top level leadership yet.

Matt Preston was asked for input and he stated that so far no one has stepped up to be the lead except for the Metropolitan Homelessness Commission, but the community had not heard a clear commitment from MDHA or MSS yet. Mr. Preston stated that he believes if people had to vote now, most people would want the Homelessness Commission to be a standalone entity and serve as the CoC lead.
In further discussion, Mr. Preston also stated that the CoC functions were broader than just the HUD functions outlined as the collaborative applicant for federal funding.

Judith Tackett was asked for her opinion. She stated that she believes the discussion was still too stuck on the three models presented by HUD TA. She said in her opinion it was clear there needed to be a unified board and a unified staffing model wherever the staff is being housed as the collaborative applicant/backbone organization. She said with that she saw two decision-making steps: 1. What does the governance board need to look like – either a governance board that is entirely appointed by the CoC membership or a combined governance model where Metro retains the ordinance under which the Homelessness Commission functions and the Mayor appoints some of the members and the community appoints others. 2. The collaborative applicant should be viewed in a broader sense as the backbone organization of the CoC. The staff would be under one organization, but working on behalf of the CoC governance board. This then would require a decision of where the staff is being housed (MSS, MDHA or nonprofit).

Further discussion focused on a timeline. All agreed that the first step is that the CoC charter needs to be voted on, which has been scheduled for May.
The proposal was made that at that meeting the organizations interested to serve as the collaborative applicants and HMIS lead would voice their interests and show how they would proceed if they were selected. The executive committee made a recommendation to ask for a vote in June for the collaborative applicant. Judith Tackett said urgency was important. HUD

was requiring all communities to have a coordinated entry system (CES) in place by January 2018. It was urgent to do that work under one umbrella with HMIS and the CES effort lead within the same organization.
Jim Harbison said that MDHA currently only has the current staff funding and would need a commitment for additional local funds for an effective staffing model. Renee said that Erik made a statement that the Mayor is willing to make a commitment as long as it is going toward ending homelessness, and she said she was not worried about it.
Further discussion focused once again on how to move the timeline forward. Most agreed that dragging out the conversation beyond June will mean that 2017 is not the year of change that we all want and that the community needs.

Liz Allen Fey asked Renee Pratt and Judith Tackett to prepare what the options would be if the CoC would move over to the Homelessness Commission – from a board structure and staff level. Judith Tackett asked a clarifying question whether she and Renee Pratt could move forward with reaching out to the Mayor's Office and Metro Legal to discuss potential board models, which the executive committee approved.

Approval of Minutes

Liz Allen Fey announced that Steven Samra resigned from the executive committee. He continues to serve on the full Commission. The executive committee reached a quorum with Mina Johnson. Wendell Segroves made a motion to approve the executive committee minutes from March 3, 2017, Mina Johnson seconded the motion. All approved.

Agenda for next Commission meeting

Liz Allen Fey said she believes it was also time to determine whether we are a "Housing First" city or not. She suggested at the next meeting to hear from provider agencies how their services are Housing First. Judith Tackett cautioned that at this time she observed still a lot of misunderstanding of what the difference between a Housing First program and a Housing First community approach/philosophy is. She said the CoC is preparing a presentation on this topic for their next meeting, which is what Liz Allen Fey said would be appropriate for the Commission as well. Wendell Segroves asked how we could do Housing First when there was no housing, and how do we get housing? Ms. Fey said there needed to be a focus with funders, providers, leadership, and the city to have that discussion.

Judith Tackett pointed out that the next meeting was scheduled on April 7, which conflicts with a big community meeting hosted by the Metro Social Services to reveal its Annual Needs Assessment Evaluation.

Judith Tackett was tasked to see if there would be a quorum if the Commission would move its meeting to April 13 instead.

Meeting was adjourned.