

Metropolitan Homelessness Commission
Executive Committee Meeting
October 17, 2017 – 8:30 – 9:30 am
At offices of Metro Social Services (MSS)

Present: Wendell Segroves, Paula Foster, Liz Allen Fey, Renee Pratt,
Staff: Judith Tackett, Abigail Dowell
Legal: Josh Lee via phone

Called meeting to order at 8:33 am

Minutes:

Wendell Segroves made a motion to approve the minutes from September 12, Paula Foster seconded.
All approved

Governance:

The executive committee took time to discuss the commission retreat held on October 6, 2017. Overall the committee felt it went well. Wendell Segroves shared that some in the audience were upset because there was no opportunity to speak. Prior to the retreat it had been publicized that there would be no public comment period.

Liz Allen Fey thanked Wendell Segroves for calling this to the committee's attention and stressed the importance of him continuing to bring that feedback to the committee because many individuals feel more comfortable sharing their concerns with him than the other members of the committee/commission.

Liz Allen Fey, Sean Muldoon and Judith Tackett put together a power point for next week's MHC/CoC Governance Workgroup Meeting. Great questions for the task force to focus on. Ms. Fey stated that she will be a few minutes late, so Sean will present the power point and Judith will have it loaded on her computer.

Judith Tackett shared that the meeting is currently scheduled for MDHA's office because the Metro Social Services conference room was not available. The committee discussed that it would be preferable to have the meeting at Metro Social Services because people are used to it being at this location. Ms. Tackett will check again to see if this room has become available.

Liz Allen Fey requested feedback/comments: Wendell Segroves shared that he has questions but not able to voice them at this point. Everyone was encouraged to verbalize their feedback and comments regarding the governance workgroup prior to next week's meeting, so they can be adequately addressed. Committee members were asked to send comments and questions to Liz Allen Fey or Judith Tackett prior to the meeting for them to be able to prepare to ensure all questions are addressed.

Questions regarding the timeline were helpful and should be revisited

Cold Weather update (re: Ordinance 2017-912):

Judith Tackett provided copies of Ordinance 2017-912 in the meeting packets. At yesterday's Metro Council Budget/Finance Committee meeting, Councilman Jim Shulman deferred the ordinance for 2 weeks to have more discussions with relevant groups, including the current cold weather workgroup. The ordinance will also be discussed with the Health, Hospitals, and Social Services Committee meeting today.

The committee discussed the identified issues with this ordinance as written. This ordinance would undermine the current plan by not working with the Cold Weather Workgroup which is made up of provider agencies and city departments. There is concern by some of the Cold Weather Workgroup partners that an alternative shelter of 150 beds at 32 degrees will cause the current shelter organizations to lose participation and volunteers. Additional concerns were that with a larger bed count and an increase of days opened, MSS will no longer be able to keep the shelter as a very low barrier shelter. A larger facility will create liability. Concerned Metro Parks could pull out as a potential location due to having to stay closed until at least noon for so many days.

Minimum cost of providing these shelters is \$7,000 per night. Concern this is shifting the focus on investing in shelters instead of solutions and creating sustainable systems that will have a greater long-term impact.

Wendell Segroves expressed concern that this is about human lives and 150 beds will still not touch the amount of people who need it. All were in agreement. It was clarified that other churches do overflow shelters. Judith Tackett shared that Sacred Sparks and City Road Chapel regularly open overflow shelters.

Liz Allen Fey wanted to clarify why the current policy is 25 degrees. Judith Tackett provided history. Open Table Nashville began by opening overflow shelters at 25. Later when Metro got involved to help support it stayed at 25 because Open Table Nashville couldn't support a warmer temperature threshold based on available space and man power.

Moving to 32 degrees would mean having to plan for 50-60 days vs. 15 to 20 days seen over the past two years.

Judith Tackett pointed out that the canvassing is the life saving measure because it's reaching people actually on the streets as opposed to in encampments. It was agreed that the individuals on the streets are the most vulnerable and in need of this type of shelter.

Liz Allen Fey brought focus to "how are we helping people in these circumstances?" No one easy answer. If we start making these shelters more permanent, what happens? Will the most vulnerable still be left out?

Liz Allen Fey pointed out that this is a Metro Council decision. If passed, we need to consider how we can learn from this to share back to the community.

Renee Pratt expressed concern that MSS isn't staffed adequately and doesn't have the budget to support this ordinance which raises liability concerns this year. If passed, there will need to be conversations about funding, locations, and staff. The impact of this is not just MSS. Also, the sheriff's department and the Office of Emergency Management. The budget is already set for this year. Will the other Metro departments have the capacity to take it on in their budget?

Judy Tackett's concern of the impact on collaboration. She said that she has already received feedback from current partners who feel that there is no point to try working together if other partners can go to Council members to get what they want instead of trying to work on a problem together.

There was conversation about the possibility of fundraising, creating new partnerships with programs like Shower Up Nashville, and tapping into other Metro owned spaces to provide the shelter.

Judith Tackett sent a letter to Metro council members regarding the need to collaborate and the barriers this process creates. This brought up the question to other commissioners of what the role of the director vs. the role of the commission is and should she have checked with the Commission before sending the letter. Judith Tackett shared that she checked with Metro attorneys to ensure it was in her purview to send the letter without approval from the Commission and clarified that she did write in the letter that it was from her and not the entire Commission.

It was decided that the cold weather group needs to get together and discuss this ordinance and weigh in before it's reviewed with the Commission. The cold weather group (not an official committee) needs to meet before the Nov. 3rd meeting of the Commission.

Director's Report:

Commission stipend for persons with lived experience:

A commissioner stipend has been paid to Wendell Segroves for the past few years. Josh Lee, Metro attorney, has confirmed this is legal. The original ordinance stated that any member of the Commission may receive bus passes and/or compensation as determined by the Commission. This statement has been taken out of the new ordinance. Will Connelly had asked the Commission for a travel stipend for Wendell in 2014 (per the meeting minutes). This year's budget has \$2,800 dollars for a board stipend.

Judith Tackett presented two options for the board stipend. She requested that if another option was needed, that it be decided, so she can make arrangements in the budget for next year.

Options:

1. Divide among 3 people with lived experience
2. Decide if travel costs should be reimbursed and what documentation should be required.

Paula Foster clarified that Wendell Segroves has been given \$200 per month (each month there is a meeting). Currently 3 people with lived experience are on the Commission, so it should be \$600 per

month. Can more money be added to the line item? She also pointed out that the money was not only for travel costs but also for the time taken away from their work.

Through discussion it was agreed that each person on the Commission with lived experience should receive a stipend for their travel costs and time spent away from work. Because one person with lived experience is required on the Executive Committee, it was decided that this person should receive a larger stipend for their extra time and travel.

The Executive Committee will take the following plan to the Commission on November 3rd: The regular Commission representatives with lived experience will receive \$100 per month, and the Executive Committee representative will receive \$200 per month. Attendance of meetings is required to receive the stipend.

MTA bus pass program:

Judith Tackett provided the policy to the Executive Committee for approval. Some discussion was had and it was decided that the wording needs to be changed to “experiencing chronic homelessness or at risk of chronic homelessness”.

Motion to approve from Paula Foster, second by Wendell Segroves to take to the Commission.

Bi-Laws:

Judith Tackett provided handout to executive committee about portion intended for the Executive Committee. It states there should be a yearly evaluation of the Homelessness Commission Director by the Executive Committee

Renee Pratt shared the process that MSS has to evaluate employees and what has been done in the past with this position’s evaluation. The committee discussed the timing needed for the evaluation and how best to coordinate their evaluation with the MSS. Renee Pratt will check on the timing required for the MSS evaluation and it was decided that the evaluation would need to be brought to the Commission after completed.

Renee Pratt will also bring the MSS evaluation forms as well as the evaluation forms used by the MSS board to review the MSS Director. The Executive Committee will then review both evaluations to decide what their process will be.

Announcements:

Wendell Segroves shared that Pastor Bob, co-founder of the Bridge Bunch, changed the name to the Sanctuary Homeless Refuge. Pastor Bob wants to start a homeless hotline for individuals to use to have someone to talk to. Judith Tackett reached out to a contact at 211 to provide information and assistance to Wendell Segroves and Pastor Bob and is waiting to hear back. Pastor Bob has experience in this work previously.

World Homeless Action Day – went well and was moved to the library common area due to weather.
Had good turn-out.

Paula Foster will not be at the next full Commission meeting

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 am