

**Metro Social Services Board of Commissioners**  
**Meeting Summary**  
**of**  
**February 23, 2011**

**Board Members Present:** Howard Gentry, Gwen Harris, George Price and Bill Sinclair

**Board Members Absent:** Frank Boehm, Mary Kate Mouser and Mary Rolando

**Legal Advisor:** Christy Feldman

**Mayor Liaison:** Hershell Warren

Commissioner Gentry called the meeting to order by welcoming everyone along with Kim Harold who was sitting in for Commissioner Mouser in her absence. Commissioner Gentry then offered a special thank you to Dinah Gregory along with Clifton Harris for coming to the Chamber Public Benefit Foundation Board Meeting. Dinah presented the Poverty Initiative and also provided information on Metro Social Services.

Commissioner Gentry then asked for the Director's report.

**Director's Report**

Ms. Pratt began by stating that the board had not met since November. During November, Metro Social Services, along with other key players, gave out over 900 Thanksgiving Baskets. Ms. Pratt once again thanked Commissioner Gentry for participating in this event.

The move to the Clifford Allen Building is scheduled for the 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> of March. Since this was the time of our regularly scheduled board meeting it was suggested that we cancel the March meeting. The board then decided to cancel the March MSS Board of Commissioner meeting.

***Commissioner Harris made a motion to cancel the March meeting planned due to the relocation of Metro Social Services. Motion was properly made, seconded and accepted unanimously.***

Ms. Pratt stated that she had spoken with Rich Reibling in Metro Finance regarding the land for burials. Mr. Reibling stated that he would speak with the Board of Hospitals and have this subject placed on the agenda. The Board of Hospitals must approve this request before it can move forward. We hope to receive an answer by the end of the month.

The 2010 Community Needs Evaluation has been released and it was covered by the media, and some of the media stories were provided to the board. Commissioner Sinclair commented on the significant amount of demographic information located within this document. Ms. Pratt further commented on the positive feedback she has received on the Community Needs Evaluation.

Lastly, the proposal for the Targeted Financial Assistance that was voted on by the board last month has been presented to the Mayor's Office. The Mayor's office is in the process of reviewing the document. The proposal will not be placed in the budget until we hear back from the Mayor's office.

### **Financial Report**

Ms. McEwen stated that this report is through January 31. It begins with the operating budget through the end of January and we are substantially under budget around \$300k. All programs are under budget with the exception of the burial program and it is over budget due to the economy and the number of people that need assistance.

Ms. McEwen stated that Personal Services is projected to be considerably under budget at the end of the year based on expenditures. We are in the process of using some of this money to better benefit our customers and to our operations.

***Commissioner Gentry then requested a motion to approve the October meeting summary since there was now a quorum. Motion was properly made, seconded and accepted unanimously.***

### **Planning and Coordination**

Ms. Gregory began her report by discussing the Policy Recommendation document provided to the Board. The Board had previously suggested that policy recommendations be developed for Metro Government based on the findings of the Community Needs Evaluations and consisted with the Poverty Plan. The policy provides recommendations in terms of how Metropolitan Government could adjust the allocation of resources toward specific targets in the Davidson County area to improve the lives of persons who are in need.

Ms. Gregory stated that there are some policies throughout the plan that emphasize the basic priorities in terms of the findings in the needs evaluation. If the board approves the policy it will then be submitted to the Mayor for his consideration.

Commissioner Gentry stated that a draft of the policy has been shared with Mayor Dean and Greg Hinote and we hope to have an opinion on it soon.

***Commissioner Sinclair made a motion that the Metro Social Services Board of Commissioners submits these recommendations to the Mayor. Motion was properly made, seconded and accepted unanimously.***

Commissioner Gentry commended Planning and Coordination and the entire Metro Social Services agency.

### **Budget**

Ms. Pratt began by thanking Commissioner Sinclair for meeting and explaining the current budget and helping to determine where Metro Social Services stands with the proposal for FY2012.

Ms. McEwen began by discussing the projection as to the financial status at the end of the fiscal year. Ms. McEwen stated that we must look at where we have vacant positions. These are the items recommended for the reduction and this is how to reduce the budget in salary and fringe benefits. Later during the budget process, a true up takes place and this is when we go through and move funds around within the programs.

Ms. McEwen stated the important thing is to determine what positions we have that would impact our services the least and would impact our existing staff the least. We currently have three vacant positions that are frozen and these are the three positions that have been selected for the 3% reduction. We are fortunate that these three positions make up all the 3% except for \$5,000 and we will make this up from the financial position budget.

Metro Social Services is proposing the three vacant positions and the \$5,000 from the financial position budget to make up the \$141,200, 3% budget reduction. Ms. McEwen also stated that we are proposing some improvements. We have several things that have increased regardless of the reduction and below are the improvements we are requesting.

1. meal preparation contract with a 3% increase next year;
2. bus service passes which use to cost \$2.50 and now it cost \$3.20 and we also had an increase in the number of riders; and
3. Funeral services, we are going to be \$65,000 over budget this year and we are asking for the money to pay for this next year.

Commissioner Sinclair had asked what happens next in the budget process meeting today. Ms. McEwen described the following process.

1. enter all the information on line via WEBudget; along with financial info, impact on reduction and improvements;
2. finance department will review the input;
3. we have an opportunity to discuss the submitted budget with the Mayor;
4. the Mayor presents a budget to the Council;
5. then we discuss the submission with Council; and
6. before June 30, the Council will put a budget together

Commissioner Sinclair suggested that we make it clear when the budget is presented that it does hurt the department to lose these three positions, since these are much needed positions.

***Commissioner Sinclair made a motion to approve the proposed budget for next fiscal year. Motion was properly made, seconded and accepted unanimously.***

### **Homelessness Commission**

Commissioner Gentry stated that prior to his appointment to the MSS Board, Homelessness Commission was under the umbrella of Metro Social Services. Then in 2007, the Homelessness Commission was moved to MDHA. Commissioner Gentry stated that it was never the intent for the Homelessness Commission to remain at MDHA

and there has been some preliminary discussion about Homelessness Commission moving back to Metro Social Services, which would be subject to the Mayor's approval. Additional information will be shared with the Board when it is available.

### **Poverty Council**

Commissioner Gentry stated that Tam Gordon has been hired by the Mayor's office to handle special projects. One of the special projects is the Poverty Council in which Ms. Gordon will work with the council on determining priorities. Commissioner Gentry further stated that Ms. Gordon is also to ensure the implementation process move forward.

***Commissioner Gentry called for the meeting to be adjourned.***