

Metro Social Services Board of Commissioners
Meeting Summary
of
August 24, 2011

Board Members Present: Howard Gentry, Mary Rolando, Bill Sinclair, Frank Boehm, George Price, Marlen Santana Perez,

Board Members Absent:

Metro Legal Advisor: Corey Harkey and Mary Johnston

Mayor Liaison: Hershell Warren

Commissioner Gentry called the meeting to order by welcoming the community and the Metro Social Services (MSS) staff. Commissioner Gentry then suggested that everyone introduce themselves since there were new commissioners and a new legal advisor.

Commissioner Gentry requested a motion to approve the June meeting summary. Motion was properly made, seconded and accepted unanimously.

Director's Report

Ms. Pratt reported that over the last few weeks she has had the opportunity to visit with approximately 25 policy makers, funders, community leaders and other Metro departments about MSS. Ms. Pratt provided the partners with information on the Community Needs Evaluation and also provided them with an assigned case worker if our services were ever needed by their customers or employees.

Ms. Pratt stated that she has also met with Tony Majors, Assistant Superintendent of the Metro Nashville Public School (MNPS) to discuss the partnership we will be starting with the Davidson County Schools. Mr. Majors supervises the social workers for MNPS and Ms. Pratt provided him with copies of our Community Needs Evaluation to have a better understanding as to what MSS has to offer the Davidson County community.

Metro Action Commission (MAC) is moving in the office space adjacent to MSS and they will officially open on Monday, August 29.

On June 24 MSS had a Health and Wellness Fair at the Howard School Building for all staff. Health screenings with facilitators were provided and this event was sponsored by the Vanderbilt Dayani Center for Health and Wellness. Yuri Hancock, Human Resource Manager, will keep this program going throughout the year by keeping staff updated on health and wellness issues.

The back to school event was held in which MSS assisted 190 children with school supplies. Without the partnerships with our vendors, this would not have been possible.

MSS also participated in the Mayor's First Day of school event and handed out school supplies.

Ms. Pratt spoke on the succession planning and how there may be several baby boomers who would be leaving MSS over the next 1 to 3 years. Ms. Pratt stated that the agency should start preparing for this transition by training our current employees to move into some of these positions and to recruit the best external employees.

Lastly, Renee thanked Commissioner Gentry for the contributions he has made to Metro Social Services and noted that he has been a great asset to the agency.

Commissioner Rolando commented on the relationships that MSS staff has with our partners and how important it is to let the partners know how much their contributions benefit the community.

Financial Report

Ms. McEwen began her report by stating the full budget for the fiscal year 2012 is \$7,750,600. The projection is that we will be approximately \$20,600 under budget.

The Special Donation/Camilla Caldwell fund has a balance of \$25,755. Ms. McEwen also provided the final closing dollar amount for the fiscal year 2011 with a total of \$181,922 under budget.

Homelessness Commission

Clifton Harris, Executive Director Homelessness Commission began his report by thanking the board and MSS staff for welcoming him back to Metro Social Services. Ms. Harris then introduced his staff, Holly McIndoe, Judy Tackett, Caroline Cooper and Mary Beth Ritchie.

Mr. Harris reported on the following items.

- Metro Legal and Finance has approved the continuation of services for clients
- Homelessness Commission is in the process of appointing and/or re-appointing six commissioners
- The SOAR program (SSI/SSDI) is receiving positive media coverage for serving over 300 homeless and formerly homeless individuals
- Working on MHC webpage as part of the MSS
- Creating a Housing First informational DVD to feature this program that has a 92% housing retention rate.
- Working on manual for Go Teach program
- Collaborating with Metro Planning Organization (MPO) on a grant proposal
- Next Homelessness Commission meeting is scheduled for September 9th at 9:30 in the Downtown Library.

Mr. Harris stated that the primary focus for the Homelessness Commission is to get the homeless off the street. It was then agreed that the MSS Board of Commissioners will receive a monthly report from the Homelessness Commission.

New Business

➤ *By-Laws Committee*

Commissioner Gentry stated that he has been appointed by the Council to serve as Criminal Court Clerk and the Oath of Office is scheduled for Tuesday, August 30 at 3:00 in Court Room 1 of the Birch Building.

Commissioner Gentry read his resignation letter to the MSS Board of Commissioners. Metro Legal commented that if a vacancy occurs among Board Officers, it should be filled as soon as possible by vote of the Commission. The actual vote will take place next month in order to give public notice of the upcoming board Chair and Vice Chair election.

The By-Laws Committee made a motion to recommend Commissioner Boehm as Chair and Commissioner Sinclair as Vice Chair of the MSS Board of Commissioners. A motion was properly moved, seconded and accepted unanimously.

The election of the Chair and Vice Chair will take place at the September 28 meeting.

➤ *Poverty Council*

Commissioner Boehm began his report by showing a short video on poverty in America. Commissioner Boehm stated that the word poverty means more than the lack of money but human poverty includes poverty of the soul, chronic poverty that leads to homelessness, hunger and can take away the spirit of human dignity. The current poverty percentages in Davidson County are somewhere around 16% of our population. Commissioner Boehm would like to see us work harder to try and change this percentage.

Commissioner Boehm commented that he realizes that the vast majority of the work that MSS does is direct service. However, Commissioner Boehm sees Planning and Coordination feeding the direct services in a way that provides different opportunities for the Davidson County area. Planning and Coordination and Direct Services fit together to benefit the community.

Commissioner Boehm provided the board with a copy of a document describing the structure of the Nashville Poverty Council. The Poverty Council meets quarterly and Nashville may be ahead of some other cities working to reduce poverty.

The Poverty Council is now in the process of creating an Executive Committee to be introduced at the October Poverty Council meeting. Commissioner Boehm further stated that if anyone had questions concerning the document to contact him or Dinah Gregory.

Commissioner Gentry called for the meeting to be adjourned.