

**Metro Social Services Board of Commissioners
Meeting Summary
of
March 28, 2012**

Board Members Present: Frank Boehm, Mary Rolando, George Price, Marlen Santana Perez, Kristine LaLonde and Renard François

Board Members Absent: Bill Sinclair

Metro Legal Advisor: Keri Kozlowski

Mayor Liaison:

Commissioner Boehm began the meeting by welcoming Keri Kozlowski, representative from Metro Legal in the absence of Corey Harkey, MSS Legal Advisor.

Commissioner Boehm called the meeting to order by welcoming everyone to the March Metro Social Services (MSS) Board of Commissioners Meeting.

Commissioner Boehm made a motion to approve the February meeting summary. Motion was properly made, seconded and accepted unanimously.

Finance

Pam McEwen stated that MSS is currently \$404,862 under budget at the end of February. Ms. McEwen projects that MSS will be \$353,100 under budget at the end of the fiscal year 2012, primarily due to 10 vacant positions.

She also reported that the 4% reserve fund for the case management project should be somewhere around the November or December of 2012. The Special Donations fund is up to \$28,937.

Ms. McEwen gave a brief update on the Metro Social Services Budget Hearing and stated that it went well and the Mayor was very complimentary of the services provided to community. Additional budget information will be available in June.

Homelessness Commission

Commissioner Boehm reported on the Homelessness Commission in the absence of Clifton Harris, Director of the Metro Homelessness Commission. Commissioner Boehm stated that today was the fourth year for Project Homeless Connect, which was being held at the Fairgrounds. This year there were 900 volunteers and services such as dental, medical; food stamp, license, jobs, etc. were offered to homeless persons, each of whom were escorted by one of the volunteers to each of the stations.

Program Reports

- *Adult & Family* – Commissioner Perez stated the trend for needs for the month of February involves housing, utilities and rental assistance. Commissioner Boehm suggested that we find ways in which the board could possibly assist with improving services to better meet the needs.
- *Homeless* – Commissioner Sinclair provided a written report, since he was unable to attend the Board meeting. Commissioner Sinclair's reported detailed the goals, staff, budget, services challenges and what the board can do to help.
- *Nutrition* – Commissioner Francois gave three points of discussion:
 1. Marketing program is needed to make clients more aware of the services MSS provide.
 2. The age population for customers currently being services is over 60. However, more people between the ages of 50 and 59 are in need of services. It is important to identify how to fill gaps in services.
 3. Lunch meal service is provided for week days. However the concern is about breakfast and weekend meals. Many seniors benefiting from the program during the week may not have the food they need on weekends.
- *Homemaker* – Commissioner Rolando stated that she received a review of the budget and customer service, and she has a site visit scheduled for next week. She explained that homemaker services/personal care services last approximately 2 to 2 ½ hours per week. To date; there is a total of 255 in the adult program and 118 children with services designed to avoid children coming into state custody. Each homemaker has approximately 12 customers.
- *Planning & Coordination* – Commissioner LaLonde stated the main focus has been the poverty reduction initiative. Commissioner LaLonde stated that she had a meeting with the Planning and Coordination staff to discuss ways to move forward with the poverty council and that a shared vision with more clarity is needed.

Commissioner LaLonde stated that moving forward with the approval of the Mayor's office, the role of MSS is more about providing research and staff support. Commissioner LaLonde described the Executive Committee draft the board received.

It was decided that the chair of the Executive Committee will be Commissioner LaLonde. Renee Pratt will be a member of the Executive Committee and the Planning and Coordination will continue to staff the implementation teams. Commissioner Boehm stated that the membership of the poverty council will be a group of people really invested. The Poverty Council along with its Executive Committee is a public-private partnership and MSS is integrally involved with this process.

Commissioner Boehm had a question regarding the statement in the Poverty Council Executive Committee DRAFT, Article 2, last paragraph, will now read as follows: "MSS provides staff support to the initiative at the request of the approval of its Board of Commissioners".

Commissioner Boehm mentioned a recent article in the Tennessean which stated that few cities are prepared to meet the needs of the aging Baby Boom population. He discussed the importance of MSS identifying ways to more effectively meet the needs of the aging population. He asked MSS to prepare a list of possible members of an Ad Hoc Committee that will be appointed to address preparing for the aging population and to submit that to him by the next Board meeting. Potential participants were discussed and the committee will focus on the various issues related to an aging population.

The next Poverty Council meeting is scheduled for Friday morning. The Ad Hoc Committee will look for a new name for the Poverty Council. Commissioner LaLonde closed by inviting everyone to visit the MSS website and view all the maps listed by council district.

New Business

MSS Use of the Community Needs Evaluation

Dinah Gregory began her report by stating the Community Needs Evaluation is prepared once a year, but that additional data is gathered, analyzed and distributed throughout the year. Ms. Gregory stated that we have received comments from council regarding the data and maps now available, resulting in additional demographic data for Metro Council. Additional information is also being compiled regarding housing and foreclosure in Davidson County.

Commissioner Boehm thanked Dinah Gregory and Planning and Coordination for the work they have done to gather and report on the material. |

Old Business

Social Services Presentations

Carol Wilson – Program Manager, Indigent Burial

The Indigent burial program consists of 6 staff members: 3 Social Worker II, 1 Program Coordinator, 1 Program Supervisor and 1 Program Manager. All staff has been cross-trained and can cover for each other as needed.

MSS coordinates and funds the burial of deceased persons who have died or live in Davidson County and who did not have sufficient resources to cover the cost of their burial expenses. The program ensures that those receiving services have a respectful burial or cremation.

The original Indigent Burial cemetery began in the 1950's and is located on 18th Avenue North and Cass Street, with about 3,00 people buried there. The cemetery was filled to its capacity and then the city purchased land behind Bordeaux Hospital on County Hospital Road, now also filled to capacity with a total of 1002 burials. Plots are being purchased from the Hills of Calvary Cemetery on Ashland

city Highway. Metro is now in the process of looking for land for the Metro Cemetery.

Basic Eligibility Criteria is as follows:

- Resident of Davidson county or who died in Davidson County without means to provide for burial
- Meet the Poverty Income Guidelines, does not exceed the monthly allowable income as stated in Health and Human Services – 100% Poverty Level
- Did not leave sufficient assets, or a life insurance policy; and
- Did not die in a state of federal institution or in state or federal custody

Three vendors are used to provide these services, Lewis & Wright, Terrell Broady and Crawford Mortuary.

Program Benefits are as follows:

- Preparation of the body
- Casket (closed casket)
- Transportation of the deceased
- Gravesite in cemetery and concrete marker with the deceased name, year of birth and death
- Cremation Services, contingent on the applicant providing proof of relationship to decedent

MSS Indigent Burial Program currently average 12 burials per month, 5 cremations and year to date 89 burials has been performed and 25 cremations.

Commissioner Price stated MSS work with burials because MSS has been mandated by the Metro Government. Commissioner Price recommended that the board review the guidelines for burials in Davidson County. Commissioner Price stated that he would like to see the current government burial grounds fenced in and more secured. It was also suggested that MSS find out if there is flexibility in the minimum requirement for 10 acres which is difficult in Davidson County.

It was stated that appropriate land is being sought. Ms. Pratt is currently working with Real Properties and Ms. Pratt will provide a report at the next meeting.

It has been requested by the Legal Liaison that the Commissioners receive a copy of any references to the MSS Burial Program in either the Charter or Code of Laws, so it can be reviewed. Commissioner Boehm stated that after the Commissioners review the documentation, they could possible come up with some recommendations.

Community needs Evaluation – Vote on Policy Recommendations

A motion was moved and seconded to accept the Policy Recommendation (based on the findings of the 2011 Community Needs Evaluation). It will be sent to the Mayor and the Council with a cover letter stating the policies has been carefully developed and are designed to improve how the Metro Government provides services to help those in need.

Commissioner LaLonde stated that she does not have an issue with the substance, but asked who will receive the document?

Ms. Gregory stated that last year it was sent to the Mayor, but not the Metro Council and this year it will be sent to the Mayor and the Council.

Commissioner Boehm called for the meeting to be adjourned.