

**Metro Social Services Board of Commissioners
Meeting Summary
of
September 19, 2012**

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

Board Members Absent: Mary Rolando and Bill Sinclair

Metro Legal Advisor: Josh Lee

Mayor Liaison: Hershell Warren

Commissioner Boehm called the October Metro Social Services (MSS) Board of Commissioners Meeting to order.

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

Finance

Pam McEwen began her report by stating that during the month of August MSS had a three payroll month where the department normally budget for a two payroll month. MSS currently looks it shows the department as being overdrawn but we are not.

The burial assistance program through the month of August is already over budget. This particular program fluctuates from month to month. Ms. McEwen is forecasting that the programs with the exception of the Burial Program will be within budget of about \$180,000.

Ms. McEwen added a section called Salary Savings to her report which is money that MSS has actually saved for vacant positions through the end of August. So, through the end of August, MSS has actually saved a total of \$34,400.

MSS has a balance of \$67,595 in the 4% Reserve Fund and the Special Donation Fund (Camilla Caldwell, Meals on Wheel) there is a total of \$29,100.

Commissioner Boehm suggested that discussion about the \$185,000 be tabled until the board is able to assist with the decision as to how it should be used. Commissioner Boehm asked for the MSS Administration to put together 2 or 3 options on how the funds should be used to help the agency. Ms. Pratt stated that the Administration will have this information ready for the October MSS Board Retreat.

Commissioner Price asked for the criteria for how the funeral homes are selected to provide services for the MSS Indigent Burial Program. Ms. McEwen stated that contracts are gathered from funeral homes through the Davidson County area that are interested providing services to the Indigent Burial Program by submitting a proposal, which is done every 5 years. The funeral home must carry \$1,000,000 liability coverage and Josh Lee of Metro Legal stated that this is a Metro standard. Mr. Lee stated that it would be up to MSS to question the liability coverage on the front end prior to the RFP being sent out. Ms. McEwen stated the next contract is not scheduled to be reevaluated for two more years.

Program Reports

- *Homeless* – Renee Pratt gave Commissioner Sinclair's report in his absence. Ms. Pratt stated that there have been no staffing changes in the past month. There are two vacant positions in which interviews were conducted on yesterday for the social worker II positions. The case load is still rather high for the five social workers. There are currently 129 active cases with 14 individuals who have maintained housing. The additional concerns are making everyone aware of the services that are being provided and how this program is greatly needed.

Commissioner Perez had a question regarding the Rooftop Program and whether we have placed anyone in the Rooftop Program. Ms. Norman stated that Rooftop is a prevention program and it is used to keep people in their homes. However, it was stated that many of MSS customers are served by this program.

Commissioner Boehm commented on the success stories located on the back of the Family Support Program Report and he stated that these are the stories he would like to see in the media and Commissioner Boehm suggested us with Judy Tackett about getting this information out to the news media.

- *Indigent Burial* – Commissioner Price stated that he previously had an issue regarding cremations. He noted that where there is no next of kin and there is no one responsible for the deceased that the MSS Board can make the initial decision for the cremation policy. Commissioner Price stated that this is a cost factor and with no relatives to make the decision, the Commission could make that decision based on cost. Commissioner Price then asked for input from the board.

Josh Lee of Metro Legal commented regarding the legal aspects. Mr. Lee's legal opinion is that MSS does not have that option. The Tennessee statute states that if there is nobody to make the decision, one must be buried as required by law. Mr. Lee suggested that the board could go through the

cost analysis and present it to the Mayor's office, which would consider for recommending to the State Legislature.

Commissioner Boehm further stated that it is more than a cost analysis because the department wants to be sensitive to the individuals who pass away and prefer to be buried. Commissioner Boehm felt that if we look at the big picture and look at the cost and the land we need to look at the long-term vision of caring for Davidson County.

Commissioner LaLonde asked if we had any percentage of our indigent burials that did not have a next of kin. Ms. Pratt stated that we will look back through the records and locate this information.

Mr. Lee stated that there is a state fund for indigent burial in other counties with the responsibility to establish rules and regulations. Mr. Lee stated that it is defined in state law as a legible instrument signed by the decedent and acknowledged by a notary or witnessed by two persons who are qualified adults. This may be provided in a written instrument such as a letter of instructions, a will, or a trust document.

Commissioner Boehm stated on the Indigent Burial Program Procedure under the Overview section, Next of kin—a. In lieu of next of kin should be added.

Commissioner François suggested the TCA citation be noted in this document describing the written instrument.

Ms. Pratt stated that a final copy of the Indigent Burial Procedure will be available at the MSS Board of Commissioners Retreat.

Adult and Family – Commissioner Perez stated that the report is very similar to the June report. MSS is having a large amount of homeless families coming in for services. Approximately 95% of the clients that came for services during the month of October were looking housing. Four families have been placed in housing.

Renee Pratt stated that MSS met with MDHA to identify issues and gaps regarding MDHA's five year consolidated plan. They are meeting with several providers and partners to determine what the gaps are. Ms. Pratt stated that hopefully we will see something from this meeting.

Commissioner Perez stated that the hospital will be having a free medical mission on Saturday, providing medical care, dental care, etc. It will be held at the Holy Name Catholic Church on Woodland Street.

Planning and Coordination – Commissioner LaLonde stated that the Poverty Council will continue to work on poverty and work with the liaisons to offer

leadership on the various teams. Commissioner LaLonde also spoke on the proposal to the Bloomberg Foundation to fund financial empowerment centers in which Nashville is one of the five cities that applied for in round two and with notification expected soon. Commissioner LaLonde stated that they are looking for more ways in which government and non-profit agencies/community based agencies can leverage the collaborations to generate funds.

Commissioner Boehm asked about the shovel ready programs to carry to the Mayor's office for support and where are we with this. Commissioner LaLonde commented that they have streamlined the programs and she will be ready to discuss at the Poverty Council Meeting.

Commissioner LaLonde stated that there may be some changes in terms of memberships and leadership on some of the teams as generated by the teams themselves

Executive Directors Report

Renee Pratt began by distributing information on the Interfaith Poverty Workshop that is co-sponsored by MSS and Catholic Charities on October 10 with some excellent guest speakers such as Father Strobel, Rev. Bill Barnes, Bill Coke and Rev. Nellie Williams. They will be talking about community needs and encourage faith-inspired collaborations to provide services.

The Homelessness Commission Director's vacant position has posted and a copy of the job announcement is located in your board packet. The position closes at the end of September.

Ms. Pratt stated that she spoke with Rich Reibling regarding the Indigent Burial Program and he will be meeting with Councilman Garrett regarding the land and how to move forward in this process.

The MSS Board of Commissioners Retreat is scheduled for October 26 at the East Nashville Police Precinct. The MSS Managers and Planning and Coordination will also be in attendance on that day. During the morning there will be provided with an informational update on services, and presentations by programs. During the afternoon we will have Consultant Brad Gray from the Center Non Profit Management to discuss strategic planning and facilitate a SWOT analysis. The retreat will last from 8:30 until 4:00, and the agenda will be sent out soon along with directions.

The regular scheduled MSS Board of Commission Meeting has been canceled for October and will be included in the MSS Board of Commissioners Retreat on October 26.

The MSS Open House is scheduled for Friday, September 21 in conjunction with Metro Action starting at 2:00 p.m. and the Board was invited to attend.

Commissioner Boehm called for the meeting to be adjourned.