

**Metro Social Services Board of Commissioners  
Meeting Summary  
of  
March 26, 2014**

**Board Members Present:** Mary Rolando, Frank Boehm, Betty Johnson, and William Harris  
**Board Members Absent:** Renard François, Bill Sinclair and Chrissy Kirkwood  
**Metro Legal Advisor:** Jason Bobo

**Mayor Liaison:**

Commissioner Rolando called the March 26, Metro Social Services (MSS) Board of Commissioners meeting to order. Commissioner Rolando then made mention of Jason Bobo, who is replacing Josh Lee, our MSS Legal Advisor.

***Commissioner Rolando made a motion to approve the February meeting summary. The motion was seconded and accepted unanimously.***

Finance

Pam McEwen stated that we are approximately \$315,000 under budget. There are still a couple programs over budget.

Regarding budget projections, Ms. McEwen projected that MSS will be \$363,600 under budget, with the variance in all other line items of \$16,200. MSS will still be under budget at the end of the year even with the \$11,300 shortage in revenue.

Social Services Donation funds balances were Camilla Caldwell with \$19,622.44 and Meals on Wheels with \$13,253.58. The Homeless Donation Fund, for Project Homeless Connect had \$14,455.69 and "How's Nashville" had \$81,208.02 at the end of February. MSS will also receive \$200,000 grant from MDHA to support How's Nashville and the Homelessness Commission. To date \$5,424.23 has been spent out of MDHA CDBG fund. Revenue for this program is received on a monthly basis in which we will be reimbursed. Contracts are close to where they need to be.

Lastly, Ms. McEwen commented on the budget hearing coming and that Mayor Dean will make his proposal on May 1, 2014.

Program Reports

*Homeless* - Commissioner Boehm began his report by stating as of the end of February Metro Homeless Commission has opened 110 cases, closed 30 cases, maintained housing for 32 clients, obtained housing for 4 people.

Year to date housing has been obtained for 45 people/families, 49 chronic on case load, 51 children and homeless families, 80% are women and 83% are African American.

Commissioner Boehm then commented on his visit to Safe Haven and Salvation Army along with Will Connelly. Commissioner Boehm also stated that he was the guest speaker at the Kiwanis Clubs monthly luncheon in which Mr. Connelly also attended on March 7. Mr. Connelly had the opportunity to several contacts at the luncheon in which he made a plea to be considered for grant monies for the Metro Homelessness Commission.

Mr. Connelly stated that he was able to make some connections, and both he and Commissioner Boehm felt that MHC should apply for a grant through the Kiwanis foundation. Commissioner Boehm made a recommendation to the Homelessness Commission that they make contact with Kiwanis Club and find out what the application for grants consist of.

Commissioner Boehm further commented that he and Mr. Connelly were invited to go to the Salvation Army on April 17<sup>th</sup> by Mike Servos, Director of Human Relations. This could also be another connection for the Homelessness Commission. Commissioner Boehm stated that the project he is most interested in would be getting the children housed.

- *What went well:* Giovanni Achoe stated that individuals coming in for homeless intervention
- *what would you improve:* Affordable housing

*Nutrition* - Commissioner Johnson began her report by stating there was a total of 14,201 meals served to 967 seniors. Year to date that equates to a total of 116,594 meals served to almost 7500 seniors.

The cut off for the Pilot Program for the 50-59 age groups is February. The program currently has a total of 26 participants and these 26 came off the referral list. There were a total of 28 referrals in the month of February and 4 were able to be moved from the referral list to the active list.

Commissioner Boehm asked what percentage of individuals and or meals Metro Social Services contributes to the hunger in Nashville. Commissioner Boehm had received a document entitled "Meals Provided Davidson County". Within this document was a list of Metro offices along with non-profits that provide meals for the hungry in Davidson County. From this list MSS served an average of 650 seniors, yet Metro Health Department Commodities Food distributed 3,400 boxes. Commissioner Boehm want to know the part MSS play in feeding the hungry of Nashville, is the contribution large or small. Commissioner Boehm stated that this could be used as a bargaining tool and he was unable to gather this information from the document.

Dinah Gregory stated in terms of strictly providing services to those over 60, MSS is the largest provider by far. However, it is hard to determine this with the other providers

due to it not being broken down by age. Others could be broken down by geographic area, condition and it is hard to find out where the seniors are, nor is schools included.

Commissioner Boehm stated that this all came up again after he received the Draft Strategic Goals. Commissioner Boehm suggested MSS could put all the various groups together to know what everyone else is doing to monitor the hungry in Nashville. However, currently we do not have a way to monitor the homeless. There is no way to monitor how things are going, the gaps, where are people falling through the cracks. So, Commissioner Boehm suggested all the partners, vendors and non-profits be pulled together to talk about where we and what everyone is doing.

Renee Pratt stated that the Nutrition Program is having a work session around feeding the most needy; here in the city. Ms. Pratt has also spoken with Dinah Gregory regarding the children in Davidson County and how MSS could expand our services. Dinah Gregory stated that Metro Council created a Food Policy Council that is part of the Health Department. Julius Witherspoon with Planning and Coordination is on this committee, however Ms. Gregory stated that she is not sure what they are currently working on but she would check with Mr. Witherspoon to see what the committee is currently working on.

Commissioner Rolando stated that the next steps would be to determine what the Health Department is doing with the Food Policy Council and possibly convene the groups listed on the Draft Strategic Goals and begin asking general questions to determine what everyone is doing.

*Planning and Coordination* - Dinah Gregory reported on P&C in the absence of Commissioner Kirkwood. Mrs. Gregory began her report by stating that each Commissioner should have a copy of the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual 2013 "Community Needs Evaluation". Planning and Coordination will be holding an event entitled "Magnitude and Patterning of Poverty" on Wednesday, April 9<sup>th</sup> from 8:30 to 11:00 a.m. at the Martin Professional Development Center to introduce the Community Needs Evaluation. We currently have 225 people registered to attend.

*Indigent Burial* - Commissioner Harris reported for the month of February that year to date 17 burials were requested and 7 were provided; 7 cremations were requested with 4 being provided. Year to date there were 65 burials and 22 cremations. Compared to last year the numbers are down this year, however numbers are slowly picking up. Commissioner Rolando asked if the comparisons from year to year could be provided for each month. Pam McEwen stated that she is currently tracking that information and Ms. Pratt and Ms. McEwen will follow up with Carol Wilson on this request.

It was suggested that maybe the numbers are down due to eligibility guidelines in which were revised by the board. Currently, this is the only agency in Davidson County that provides this type of burial assistance.

*Homemaker* - Patricia Wingfield gave the report on Homemakers in the absence of Commissioner Renard François. Ms. Wingfield reported that as of February services

were provided to 265 customers. In mid-January to the present, cases were pulled from the waiting list to fill some of the open slots. With this being done the waiting list has been reduced by 10%. Ms. Wingfield further stated that there have been 2 resignations which will keep 28 slots from being filled because each homemaker can only provide service for up to 14 customers each. Ms. Wingfield stated that 3 Med Waive cases were closed due to death with 11 cases being opened during the month of February and 9 cases were closed due to death and customers having to go to high rise care.

Trends that are being seen are for the disabled customers that are younger and have mental health issues. Customers are requesting more time for services and this adversely reflects the ability to service more customers. Also, a larger request for case management with referral received from Adult Protective Services.

Currently preparing for two monitor visits during the month of April, one for the Med Waiver Choices Program and the other visit will be from GNRC. Along with the fiscal part being SSBG will be coming to go over the fiscal information with Pam McEwen. Ms. Wingfield stated that we had no findings with the direct services part. Lastly, as of today 127 customers are on the waiting list.

*Family Support* - Lonnie Wade will give the report on Family Support in the absence of Commissioner Sinclair. Mr. Wade noted that in the month of February there was a total of total of 21 new open cases with 28 cases closed. However, in between that time 150 cases were actively opened. For February gender information, 52% were females, 48% were male, 52% African American, 10% Caucasian, 48% other, 14% age range 20-29, 24% 30-39 age range, 19% 40-49 age range, 38% 50 - 59 age range and 5% 60 - 70.

Mr. Wade further stated that for the month of February there was a total of 1,425 contacts, with 493 being housing with financial assistance, 149 housing assistance, 22% health care, 11% transportation, 137 of the contacts were food or some type of food box/where to get food stamps, 35 of the contacts were for employment and 578 were miscellaneous contacts.

### Homelessness Commission

Will Connelly stated that the commission is trying to guide the community in improving the way they respond to homeless and to help non-profits be more effective in the work the commission does. The Homelessness Commission has two basic goals concerning housing 1) increasing housing by increasing access to housing units and 2) decrease the time it takes to lease out the units.

Mr. Connelly and MHC, during the last couple of months have introduced a new system to help with these goals called Coordinated Entry. Mr. Connelly stated that they are using the assessment tool with the landlords and to date over 400 families/individuals have been assessed. As families sign up using the tool, the individuals or families are matched with a unit using the tool. Approximately 20 of 30 units have been matched and these are units that take section IV vouchers or just discounted the units. The landlords are giving

approximately 2 weeks to have the units filled. We have 2 individuals that have gone through the process and now have housing.

Mr. Connelly stated that he has two new staff team members Deon Trotter which will assist on the Administrative side and Tiffany Dale a Vista employee.

### Director's Report

Renee Pratt began her report by stating the Budgets Hearings before the Mayor are scheduled for April 3, at 11:00 and if you would like to attend please arrive 15 minutes early and the hearings will be held in the Mayor's Media room.

Ms. Pratt stated that we have yet to receive a meeting date with the Metro Council and once we receive that date we will inform the board. The meeting held between Metro Council, Health, Hospital and Social Services Committee and other Council Members with Planning and Coordination went very well. This meeting was to introduce the Community Needs Evaluation.

Ms. Pratt also made mention of the various partnerships MSS is working with in the community such as MDHA, Public Defenders Office, Urban Housing Solutions and the Metro School System in which we are working with the 12 clusters also.

Lastly, Renee made mention of the Strategic Goal in which each Commissioner should have received a draft copy in their board packets. If anyone has questions please notify Renee, if not the next step will be to move forward with implementing a work plan and a timeline in which staff will be involved with this process.

Ms. Pratt also commented on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Ride 2 Thrive event scheduled for Saturday April 19 at Hartman Park and all the Commissioners are welcome to come out.

Commissioner Rolando closed the meeting by stating that Ms. Pratt is a very good leader for Metro Social Services with her professionalism and quality of the staff.

Commissioner Rolando further noted the passing of Gail Kerr, Commissioner Rolando stated that her death is a real loss to the community and she has been such a friend to all of Nashville and a voice to the people of Nashville that may not have had one.

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