

**Metro Social Services Board of Commissioners  
Meeting Summary  
of  
June 25, 2014**

**Board Members Present:** Mary Rolando, Frank Boehm, Betty Johnson, William Harris and Chrissy Kirkwood

**Board Members Absent:** Renard François and Bill Sinclair

**Metro Legal Advisor:** Josh Lee

**Mayor Liaison:**

Commissioner Rolando called the June 25, Metro Social Services (MSS) Board of Commissioners meeting to order.

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

Finance

Pam McEwen began her report by stating that through the end of May MSS is currently \$418,176.72 under budget. Ms. McEwen projected that MSS would be \$375,000 under budget, personal service \$361,000 and \$13,000 in all other. Ms. McEwen anticipated that the revenue projections will be met and slightly over \$21,400.

The Donation Fund is currently at \$33,089.91, split between Camilla Caldwell with \$19,635.57 and Meals on Wheels, \$13,422. The Homelessness Commission has \$78,765.96 with Project Homeless Connect having \$14,465.29 and How's Nashville with \$78,148.54.

Regarding the Fiscal Year 2015 proposed budget, Ms. McEwen stated that after meeting with council, they graciously returned \$25,000 from the reduction in Nutrition and \$10,000 for the reduction in bus tickets. Now the total reduction to the budget is \$110,200.00.

Program Reports

*Homeless* - Commissioner Boehm began his report by stating as of the end of May, Metro Homeless Services has 145 open cases and 29 cases were closed. Year to date, a total of 65 customers were able to maintain housing. There were a total of 19 homeless families with 49 children. Rooftop was able to help 14 families with a total 48 children, 75% were female and 80% were African American.

Commissioner Boehm stated in the Nashville Housing report, 550 chronic homeless was placed in housing within one year.

Commissioner Boehm further commented on his interest in helping homeless children. Currently there are a total of 700 to 800 homeless children in the city, with only 4 locations that accept families. They are Safe Haven, Salvation Army, the Family Life Center and Sophia's Heart. Commissioner Boehm is now interested in working with Will Connelly, Director of the Homelessness Commission, to come up with a plan to elevate the families with children to the level currently set for chronic homeless.

Giovanni Achoe gave the remainder of the Rooftop report stating that 23 households avoided eviction and that customers referred to MSS for Rooftop assistance needed a total of \$66,950 with Rooftop providing \$8,000. However, approximately \$58,900 was needed to complete the customer's request with some of the challenges being rental assistance and customers having no income.

Commissioner Johnson stated that clients who indicate they do not have any income could be referred to agencies that provide job training and placement. Commissioner Rolando suggested that maybe she, Commissioner Johnson and Commissioner Boehm could come up with some way to address these challenges.

Commissioner Rolando felt the board should identify a way to make an appeal to say this is manageable and who should be targeted to help with the monetary assistance for rental assistance. Commissioner Johnson stated that this is what people owe and a way to meet the need should be established.

*Nutrition* - Commissioner Johnson stated that during May, 1,034 customers received meals for both the congregate and home delivered meals programs and a total of 103 cases of nutritional supplement were sold.

Commissioner Johnson also stated that Carol Wilson, Program Manager, provided a presentation to Metro Social Services Seniors Program in which over 90 elderly and disabled attended. The event was held at the Annual Senior Expo at McGruder Family Resource Center on May 29. Ms. Wilson was also involved with the Annual Volunteer Banquet which was held at the Nashville Night Life Dinner Theatre on May 23. A total of 95 volunteers participated who were honored for their service. The volunteers expressed their gratitude and appreciation for the opportunity to have an evening out.

The choice meals revenue is at \$37,038 for 24 customers receiving home delivered meals. Donations have been received from United Way Campaign, Meals on Wheels Program and various private sector businesses. Each of the donors received a personalized thank you note from Metro Social Services.

*Planning and Coordination* - Commissioner Kirkwood asked if Dinah Gregory, Director of Planning and Coordination program could give the report. Ms. Gregory indicated that at the April 9 event she asked the attendees if they were interested in pursuing one or more of the issue areas further, and asked those interested to sign up in the back. A total of 40 people signed up to pursue one or more of the issue areas.

Meetings were scheduled for the participants that signed up, but, attendance has been low. The small groups that have attended meetings connecting and finding out about other groups; are already doing things. Through meetings, ready-made venues were identified to involve these persons who are interested.

In addition, since the Community Needs Evaluation is continuing to show that one of the greatest needs is housing related assistance; P&C invited the financial assistance providers from Davidson County. After putting the steering committees in place, data is now available. Ms. Gregory stated that a data base has been developed for Metro Action Commission, Need Link, Rooftop, Ladies of Charity and Saint Luke's. The trial period is March through June, however some powerful information has been provided from this database. For instance, 70 % of clients are denied financial assistance due to the agency funds being depleted. This database is going to provide a different way to demonstrate the needs in comparison to available resources.

Commissioner Boehm asked if Ms. Gregory could give an update on the Poverty Council. Ms. Gregory stated that she had no recent information on the Poverty Council. Commissioner Johnson stated that the economic and workforce are still in place. Commissioner Boehm asked if Ms. Gregory could summarize "A Voice".

Ms. Gregory stated that about 2 years ago, P&C had an Interfaith Poverty meeting in which they had attendance from various organizations. Some who attended the event began to discuss the absence of grassroots information and advocacy group regarding the disadvantaged persons in Nashville. The purpose of "A Voice" is to educate and to facilitate advocacy, in addition to being a central point for information.

Commissioner Boehm asked if there is anything the MSS board can do in response to this work. Commissioner Boehm further asked with the two groups left, economic and workforce; is there a relationship that might be beneficial to these two groups in which MSS could play a part. Commissioner Rolando suggested we speak with Tracy Dill to update the board on what is going on with the Economic Council. It was stated by Commissioner Rolando and Commissioner Boehm that it would be nice for the board to be updated on what is currently going on with the Economic and Workforce Councils.

*Indigent Burial* - Commissioner Harris reported for the month of June that year to date 18 burials were requested and 11 were provided; 11 cremations were requested with 5 being provided. Year to date, 101 burials have been provided and 34 cremations.

*Homemaker* - In the absence of Commissioner Francois, Pat Wingfield gave the report. Homemaker services were provided to 273 customers and year to date 28,538.50 hours of service. During the month of May, 5 cases were closed, 3 being APS and 2 Metro.

Ms. Wingfield stated that they are working on closing out the APS customers and transferring the information on to the provider that will be taking over the 69 HMO cases as of Tuesday, July 1. An additional 10 customers will be transferred by the end of September.

*Family Support* -In the absence of Commissioner Sinclair, Lonnie Wade provided the report. Mr. Wade began his report by commenting on identifying gaps, including the shortage of shelters that accommodate people with disabilities.

Mr. Wade noted 25 new open cases with 20 female, 5 male 68% were African American, 28% Caucasian and 4% other.

Family Support has had a total of 1,105 services provided. Of those contacts, 375 were housing related and 211 actual housing was provided. There were a total of 676 contacts for the month and of these contacts the majority was telephone calls with fewer walk-ins than calls.

Mr. Wade stated that available/affordable housing is another identified gap. Housing may be available; however, it is often unaffordable.

Commissioner Johnson asked Mr. Wade if he knew Debbie Grant at Goodwill and that she would be a person to meet and discuss the identifying gap dealing with disabilities.

#### Homelessness Commission

Will Connelly stated that the commission is continuing to track housing placements and averaging about 47 people a month. These are housing placements the entire community is working on. Of this 47 a month, it includes individuals and families that are experiencing chronic and vulnerable homelessness.

One of the bigger problems with servicing families is finding units that are large enough and that are affordable. The average cost for family housing is around \$900 and currently what is needed are policies and programs to help bring rent down to a level that is more affordable. Mr. Connelly stated the housing trust fund help build affordable units and developers could apply for the money to decrease the cost per unit.

Commissioner Rolando asked about the Habitat for Humanity and what required. Commissioner Johnson offered to report back to the board at the July meeting on the requirements for Habitat housing.

Mr. Connelly stated that Habitat is a valuable program, but, it is probably beyond the reach of those who are chronic and vulnerable homeless. Part of the requirements for Habitat is for participants to attend various classes such as financial planning. Mr. Connelly further stated that they are trying to work with what they have such as existing resources, different subsidies such as Section 8 and asking landlords to discount rent.

Mr. Connelly commented that the Homelessness Commissioner has distributed a Housing Retention Report last month and the Homelessness Commission is currently at full staff. In closing the Metro Council just approved legislation to keep the Homelessness Commission going beyond 2015.

## Director's Report

Renee Pratt began her report by introducing our Vanderbilt Intern, Yu-Chia Wu. Ms. Wu is working with Planning and Coordination. Ms. Pratt also recognized the death of Ernest Freudenthal who was a long time chair of MSS in the late 80's and early 90's.

Ms. Pratt stated that since we will not experience a cut next year, we are back to serving our 50 to 59 individuals and possibly looking to expand our services to children and families. After reviewing the data provided by P&C, children are a high priority after seniors as a need for food. However, this is contingent on the audit.

On May 12, the Mayor signed the new Metro Open Data Executive Order. This mean there is an open data movement to have information available for the public as it relates to Metro Government. MSS was one of 15 departments that presented data and we currently have 2 to 3 data sets available. It is available for you to go out on the Mayors web site and view the data sets.

The Metro Audit should be available to review the findings in July. This report will be made available to the board once it is received. Ms. Pratt also stated she hope to have a timeline available for Strategic Planning process by the July meeting.

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