

**Metro Social Services Board of Commissioners
Meeting Summary
of
September 24, 2014**

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

Board Members Absent: Bill Sinclair and Chrissy Kirkwood

Metro Legal Advisor: Josh Lee

Mayor Liaison:

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

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

Finance

Ms. McEwen reported on expenditures through August 31, 2014 with MSS being \$192,000 under budget. Under the expenditures by type section, Ms. McEwen stated that the internal services fees are currently \$18,000 under budget.

Ms. McEwen is projecting MSS will be \$318,600 under budget with the vast majority being personal services and most of the programs will be on budget. The projected revenue will be significantly under budget and that is all within the Homemaker program. The Social Services Donation fund has approximately \$31,695.85 with \$18,072.96 in Camilla Caldwell and \$13,591.04 in Meals on Wheels. The Homelessness Donation Fund has a balance of \$112,280.41 with 14,473.20 in Project Homeless Connect and \$53,046.77 with How's Nashville.

An area vendor is planning a Project Homeless Connect event and the balance for Project Homeless Connect fund will be used to support this activity. Ms. McEwen also stated that this is not a recurring fund and these are donations that were made specifically for this purpose.

Ms. McEwen then commented on the contracts and how the burial providers recently completed the process of becoming approved funeral service providers and we now have a total of seven providers. The additional contracts are moving along at the present time.

Program Reports

Renee Pratt commented that the Homeless Unit and the Family Support Unit will now have combined reports. Commissioner Boehm will only report for the Homelessness Commission

Homelessness - Commissioner Boehm began his report by stating that poverty and homeless go hand in hand and for 2013 the official poverty rate declined in the U.S. from 15% to 14.5%. Davidson County's poverty rate dropped from 18.9% to 17.8%.

From June 4, 2013 to July 1, 2014 a total of 595 people were experiencing chronic homelessness. Commissioner Boehm stated that a total of 42 people were housed in June of this year which included 4 families with a total of 8 children. The Homelessness Commission was able to find housing for 41% if these families who were at risk of premature death and met the definition of chronic homeless. Ms. Pratt stated that this data is collected from various partners in the city that assist with housing the homeless in Davidson County. Commissioner Boehm further commented that 111 people moved into permanent housing during June and July of 2013.

Lastly, Commissioner Boehm reported that he had the opportunity to visit the Family Life Center that houses approximately 300 people. However, they do not have housing for families and it is considered emergency housing.

Nutrition - Commissioner Johnson stated that during the month of August a total of 955 customers serving 15,816 meals, sold 144 cases of Nutritional Supplement and year to date for July and August approximately 32,000 meals to over 1,900 senior meals. Within this group we also have a total of 22 Homebound and 43 Congregate.

Ms. Pratt added that the Nutrition Program is in the process of starting the Family Meal Program and we are partnering with Kroger and Aldi to provide gift cards for families to purchase food only. The program should be up and running by mid-October.

Planning & Coordination - Julius Witherspoon began by stating that the American Community Survey came out with 2013 figures and Davidson County did fall from 18.9 to 17.8. However the bad news is that Davidson County has a total of 117,000 living below the poverty level and 30% are children under 18.

Planning and Coordination are currently preparing for the 2014 Community Needs Evaluation. Mr. Witherspoon further stated that two of the P&C staff has completed the Office of Innovation and Ideas for Reality Series.

Indigent Burial - Commissioner Harris stated 19 burials has been requested with 3 out of county, 2 in custody of the state and 3 above the income level. This left a total of 7 burials. Commissioner Harris then stated that a total of 7 cremations were requested with 1 out of county and 1 above the income level. This left a total of 5 cremations provided. From July 1 2014 through August 30, 2014 there have been a total of 14 burials and 11 cremations.

Family Support - Lonnie Wade began his report by stating for the month of August, MSS has a total of 405 open cases YTD, with 95 being new cases and 78 being female and 17 male. From the 95 new cases 57 African American female with 11 male, 17 white female with 5 male and 4 other female with 1 male.

There was a total of 30 VISPDATS completed with the Homeless. There was a total of 42 families that identified being homeless with 74 being children amongst all the families. During the month of August there were a total of 31 felons that came to MSS for services which was an increase from last month.

MSS Family Support had a total of 2,625 request for service including homeless, housing services, financial assistance, transportation, employment, food assistance and miscellaneous. Gaps of services and trends for August were ex-felons and housing.

Homelessness Reports

Will Connelly began his report by stating that they are still monitoring housing placements city wide. Mr. Connelly stated that the Homelessness Commission applied for the Samsha Cabhi Federal Grant of the Substance Abuse of Mental House Services Administration. This grant will be partnered with the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and if the grant is received, it could bring 1.5 million to Nashville for Case Management. The applicants must be veterans or chronically homeless individuals. The amount is \$500,000 per year with the allocation beginning around September 30, 2014.

Mr. Connelly commented on the affordable housing options and that the Homelessness Commission has started to attend more meetings and get more involved. The Commission is also becoming more involved in the community meetings on transportation.

The Federal Government invited Nashville Homelessness Commission along with ten other cities to D.C. to talk about employment.

Mr. Connelly stated that he met with the OEM team to discuss the planning for cold weather. The goal is to increase the capacity at Room in the End, Rescue Mission and Open Table to provide shelter. A four phase plan has been put together such as:

Phase 1 - business as usual

Phase 2 - 27 ° below

Phase 3 - 19 ° below

Phase 4 - Nashville shut down due to the weather

Another meeting is scheduled in a couple of weeks for further discussion on planning for the homeless during the cold weather.

Director

Renee Pratt began by stating on September 23, the 4th Annual Health and Wellness' Fair was held at Howard School. Vanderbilt was on site conducting glucose screening, weight, BMI, cholesterol and blood pressure, along with several presenters that were on site for the day.

Ms. Pratt further commented that over the last few months', MSS numbers increased significantly regarding customers coming to MSS for various services. For the month of July the workers assisted approximately 482 customers and August 463 customers. This increase is due to the various advertisements and the needs for the people here in the city.

Ms. Pratt stated that each Commissioner should have received a copy of the final audit response and nothing has changed, it is the same content that was provided to each Commissioner several weeks ago. The audit response will be posted on the audit web site probably by next week.

On October 3, MSS will host a meeting on Sudden Housing Loss. This came about after the Hallmark Inn incident and the purpose of this meeting is to discuss lessons learned and hopefully to put a protocol in place in terms of how emergency situations are responded too in the city.

The regularly scheduled November and December Board of Commissioners meetings have been cancelled due to the holidays. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 3 at 3:00 in the large conference room of Metro Social Services.

Pam McEwen Metro Social Services Chief Financial Officer will be retiring on November 21, 2014. Ms. Pratt stated that she will be interviewing applicants starting next week for Pam's replacement. Ms. McEwen has also agreed to come back on a part time basis as needed. Pam McEwen will be greatly missed.

New Business

Commissioner Rolando asked that we change the Rental Assistance Committee to Camilla Caldwell Fund. The purpose of this committee is to determine what the fund could do and how it could be integrated with other activities that are going on relative to homelessness and emergency support. Commissioner Rolando convened a group consisting of Commissioner Johnson, Commissioner Boehm, herself along with Renee Pratt to look at the data that would support building the fund. After researching data it was determined that the majority of the people coming for services are looking for housing, rental or utility assistance. The primary focus would be on families.

Commissioner Rolando asked what case can be built that can be taken to potential donors that would not step on the donor base of other organizations. The committee is looking to make Nashville a Homeless Family Free Zone. Commissioner Rolando stated that she and

the committee will be looking for input from everyone including staff, public and the commission, because there is a lot of work to be done.

Commissioner Boehm asked Josh Lee with Metro Legal if there were any rules regarding Commissioners going out to solicit funds from the community. Mr. Lee stated that as long as it is for the commission it should not be a problem. The problem will come with the financial record keeping requirements. As soon as funds are received for the Commission, they immediately need to be deposited. Pam McEwen, Chief Financial Officer for MSS will provide the procedures to the board on how to collect funds.

Commissioner Rolando commented on the board member assignments and the Commission should continue the reports thru December and then possible have commission members participate on an ad hoc basis regarding different topics discussed at the board meetings. Commissioner Rolando stated that she would like to have a discussion with the board on whether being involved with a single program has been beneficial and use this as a bench mark to evaluate the current process.

Commissioner Rolando called for the meeting to be adjourned.