

**Metro Social Services Board of Commissioners
Meeting Summary
of
December 3, 2014**

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

Board Members Absent: Bill Sinclair, Chrissy Kirkwood and William Harris

Metro Legal Advisor: Josh Lee

Mayor Liaison:

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

Finance

Pam McEwen noted the December meeting is being held earlier in the month, so her report is through October 31. At that point, MSS was approximately \$97,314.04 under budget.

Pam is projecting that MSS will be approximately \$320,600.00 under budget, primarily in personnel services and very little in all other line items. MSS will be approximately \$340,000 under our projection revenue, because the homemaker revenue had been projected before the changes to end the program.

The MSS donation fund is at \$31,258.83 which is split between Camilla Caldwell and Meals on Wheels. The Homelessness Commission donation fund is currently at \$84,099.57 primarily in the How's Nashville initiative.

Pam further stated that the two contracts for the Campus for Human Development spent approximately 50% of their contract through the end of October because they bill MSS early in the year. All the other contracts are about 20% to 25% where they should be this time of year.

Pam then introduced Rhonda Pedley, the new Metro Social Services Chief Financial Officer. Rhonda is coming to MSS from the Metro Finance Department and has been with Metro for 16 years. Commissioner Rolando then thanked Pam for all she has accomplished and all the contributions that has been made for Metro Social Services.

Commissioner Rolando then welcomed the new Metro Social Services Board of Commissioner, Kim Johnson, Director of Programs and Education for the National Museum of the African American Music which is scheduled to start in 2017.

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

Program Reports

Homelessness - Commissioner Boehm began his report by stating that he, Renee, Commissioner Rolando and Commissioner Betty Johnson had been working on a project called "Make Nashville a Homeless Free Zone for Families".

Commissioner Boehm provided statistics on information he had obtained from The American Youngest Outcast issued by National Center for Family Homelessness (NCFH), that homeless children in the United States in 2013 has topped 2.5 million. It was estimated that there were 1.3 million homeless children in public schools, plus another 1.2 million of children too young to attend school. These numbers are up from the previous years.

Commissioner Boehm further commented that the same things are happening here in Nashville/Davidson County. First Focus reported in 2013 that there were a total of 2,821 children in public schools, homeless here in Davidson County and in 2014 there was a total of 3,200. Commissioner Boehm felt that of the 3,200 approximately 2,400 actually live in homes with friends or family members. They are sleeping in someone's home, but still considered homeless and close to being on the street, with about 800 children on the street.

At the last meeting, Commissioner Boehm proposed that there be level 1 and level 2 categories. Level 1 is considered to be the 800 children living in the shelters, or sleeping in vans or cars or sleeping on the streets, the most vulnerable and most needy. Level 2 would be the other 2400.

Commissioner Boehm then spoke on the "How's Nashville - Ending Chronic Homelessness", and the Commissioner feel this is considered to be good reading to find out more about the homeless in Davidson County. Commissioner Boehm further stated that Will Connelly and the Homelessness Commission have done an excellent job with this document.

Commissioner Boehm then referred to page 2 of the "How's Nashville" document and asked Will to include children and families under the section that reflect ending veterans and chronic homelessness through the new campaign called Zero: 2016.

Commissioner Boehm made a comment concerning two topics of discussion that have been communicated to the committee previously. One is the lack of affordable housing, and the other is the need for help with additional expenses out of the norm, such as monies that is in the arrears. This is a discussion that Commissioner Boehm would like the board to have with the Mayor.

Renee Pratt then discussed Metro Social Services partnership with the HERO Program. The HERO program works with homeless children in the Metro Nashville Public School System. This program touches approximately 800 children a year. The Mayor's office along with the Finance office is aware of this existing partnership with HERO's. However, MSS is developing a formal process with the HERO Program in order for them to refer about 50 families annually to MSS for assistance with finding housing and support services.

The Mayor's office asked that MSS provide some type of financial assistance and Finance is allowing MSS to redirect some of our local funding from the Homemaker program to this initiative and that would be about \$30,000 annually. This program will start in January with approximately \$15,000 budgeted for the six months remaining in the fiscal year.

Commissioner Rolando made a motion to move \$30,000 from the Homemaker Program over to the HERO's Program to work toward the new initiative of assisting families with finding housing and support services. A motion was properly made, seconded and accepted unanimously.

Renee stated that she would be meeting with some of the local providers that currently assist with funding to clarify how the money would be used and to avoid duplication. HERO's will make the referral to MSS, which will then determine the need based on the situation the person is in.

Commissioner Rolando explained that the Camilla Caldwell Fund is a separate pot of money on which the Commission can build. The purpose for the Camilla Caldwell fund is to provide support in emergency situations.

Commissioner Rolando commented that the committee has met with the Rescue Mission, Sophia's Heart, Catholic Charities and Safe Haven. The purpose of this meeting was information gathering and identifying challenges, such as arrears for rent and utilities, multiple eviction, bureaucracy and HUD turn-over in 30 days.

Priorities identified in the meeting include getting families on the list for assistance and helping with the arrears, target \$250 per month per family assisting a total of 10 families per month over a 3-year period.

Commissioner Rolando stated that the next steps would be to meet internally with staff and noted that it would be helpful to have the Mayor's support. However the board should prepare a very good case statement about what it is the committee is trying to do. Commissioner Rolando suggested the Camilla Caldwell Committee meet internally again this month to keep everything moving forward.

Commissioner Betty Johnson stated that the committee needs to identify the gaps to avoid duplications and fill these gaps so families are able to get in shelters.

Commissioner Boehm stated that this started as a side project and he would like to see it grow and expressed interest raising money to fill the gaps and to find the applicants jobs. Commissioner Boehm then stated the four phases; 1) pay arrears, 2) get them on a list, 3) sustain the rent for 6 months and 4) get them employed. With these four phases, Commissioner Boehm felt that Nashville can eliminate homelessness for children. Commissioner Boehm also stated that some of the money can even be used to assist with education.

Nutrition –Commissioner Betty Johnson stated during the month of October, a total of 17,883 meals were served to 967 customers and 128 cases of nutrition supplements. YTD a total of 64,529 meals and 3,986 meals were served to seniors.

Commissioner Johnson then asked to be updated on the Family Meal Program. Renee Pratt stated that the meal program for families has started and vouchers have been purchased from Kroger and Aldi's. This program has helped families to supplement during the times of waiting on food stamps or money just running low due to some unforeseen circumstance.

Renee stated a report will be distributed at the next board meeting to show how much money has been spent and how many vouchers have been distributed. Renee thanked all the staff that helped to get this program up and running.

Planning & Coordination – Dinah Gregory indicated P&C's main focus at the present time is the needs evaluation, currently in draft form. Dinah stated that two research advisors review each section. The largest section of the evaluation will be sent to the board by the following day for review and the other sections will follow as they are completed. P&C plans to have the Community Needs Evaluation completed by early next year, with the public release probably in April.

Dinah then commented on the new format that will be used when introducing the 2015 Community Needs Evaluation. Dinah stated that instead of trying to cover and focus on everything in the presentation, it was decided they would specialize on a specific topic but still give the overall presentation. This year the topic will be affordable housing, in which a panel of experts will be available to address all questions during the program.

Commissioner Boehm asked if we had a section where we talked about the gaps that existed last year and what has changed because of the needs assessment. Is there a way to monitor the success?

Dinah stated that it has been determined how the evaluation is used due to the survey completed at the end of the event. However, in terms of following up with what or how a specific person or organization used the document we do not have a way to monitor that.

Commissioner Boehm then asked if there was a way to gauge the success of the needs evaluation. Dinah stated that to some extent it could be measured through the event

survey and another survey is sent to the attendees that signed up to provide information on how the document was used and how it was helpful. She indicated another survey would be conducted of affiliated organizations.

Commissioner Boehm thought it would be good to add some of these comments in an appendix that would show the value of the needs evaluations.

Commissioner Betty Johnson commented that Steve Lavigne and Giovanni Achoe will be hosting a meeting in a couple of weeks with some organizations. Commissioner Johnson suggested that Dinah take the list and go to the list of organizations first with a survey and ask how the needs evaluation has been used. Giovanni will provide Dinah with the list of organizations.

Commissioner Rolando suggested that Commissioner Betty Johnson speak at this meeting as a Commission member. Commissioner Boehm also suggested the survey be sent out to the Council members.

Indigent Burial – Carol Wilson began by stating for the month of October we have had 10 interested in cremation and only 1 met the criteria. So, from July 1 to October 31, 34 burials have been provided along with 16 cremations.

Commissioner Rolando asked if there was still a fixed amount allotted for burial and cremations. Pam McEwen stated yes, with certain amounts allotted for both burial and cremation. Pam stated with the new contract a standard cremation service, the price went from \$700 to \$750 and everything else remained the same.

Homemaker – Pat Wingfield began her report by stating that the Homemaker Program will be phasing out in 1 to 3 years. The entire funding program MSS was involved with has been closed out. The options will close out at the end of September and Medicaid-waiver closed out in October. Adult Protective Services has been closed out and transferred to Mid-Cumberland Human Resource Agency. Homemaker Services are now only being provided to 160 Metro funded customers. Pat stated that to date, the Homemakers have provided 5,421 hours of services to 160 customers.

Pat also stated that Goodwill Industries provided training with the Homemakers. Goodwill will provide computer training and imaging training.

Adult & Family Support – Giovanni Achoe reported the total number of current open cases is 572 and the year to date homeless with/VISPDATS is 107. There is a total of 208 homeless families and of these families, 164 are children. There were a total of 58 new and existing felons. So, for the month of October we had a total of 92 new cases. The program has served a total of 2,360 with customers coming in mainly for housing and financial assistance, with 751 for follow ups and case management.

Outcomes for case management for the month of October show YTD 120 households utilized rooftop assistance and 32 obtained housing.

Service gaps are affordable housing, employment for ex-felons, hotel/motel financial assistance and shelters for the disabled.

Commissioner Betty Johnson asked that all felons looking for assistance be referred to Goodwill for assistance.

Trends observed at MSS are affordable housing options for low income customers, rental deposits ranging anywhere from \$66 to \$1200 to move into an apartment, and landlords accepting individuals with prior convictions. Lastly, Giovanni stated that MSS has seen an increase in families with 4 or more children.

Homelessness Reports

Will Connelly began his report by stating that the commission does have a vision to end homelessness and it does include families. Will commented on Zero: 2016 and stated that this is a national campaign that has a focus specifically on veterans. So, in the context of that these are the two federal goals. However, there is a family homeless goal which will come about a little later in 2020.

There have been some questions as to what zero means and whether it means to stop someone from ever becoming homeless. It means there is a quicker response, so that the person only experience homelessness for no more than 30 days.

Will further stated that the Homelessness Commission joined the Zero: 2016 campaign along with 28 other cities. Many organizations are focusing on veteran homelessness and Will is getting very involved with what the VA is doing over the next 12 months.

The Homelessness Commission will also be getting free technical assistance from national providers that work on homelessness all around the country. Will also commented on Google Docs and this is the system the commission has been using to collect and share data. The commission is now upgrading to a better system in order to collect and share data.

The commission initiated an RFP process for a \$1.5 million grant from the federal government. The money will be used for case management for people trying to get into housing, with the deadline for proposals on December 15 and a selection would be made by January.

Director

Renee Pratt began her report by commenting on a partnership between Metro Social Services and the downtown Public Library. This partnership will provide case management to the homeless and help them find and keep housing.

Will Connelly was also instrumental in identifying this need. A press release was released along with flyers and 6-10 new clients have come by every day since November 1. The numbers are been documented so we can keep a count.

On Saturday, November 22, the Annual Thanksgiving Family Give Away was held. Commissioner Harris came out and volunteered, along with TSU and others. A total of 200 Thanksgiving meals were given out to families.

Renee Pratt also commented on the debriefing counseling sessions provided by Judy Bookman who is a Director of an employee assistance program in Memphis. This service will be provided to staff on a regular basis.

Budget

Renee Pratt stated that the Budget kick off will not start until January and it is generally before the January Board meeting. However, at this point we are not sure what the administration will ask for. The documentation presented proposed three budget reduction options 1% option, 2% option and a 3% option.

All three options contained a recommendation to change and downgrade a position with the Quality Assurance position changed to a Social Worker 3 position. The Quality Assurance position is currently filled, and that employee will fill the new Social Worker 3 position. The remainder of the cut would come from within the Nutrition Program the Family Meals Program and Fifty to Fifty Nine Program.

Commissioner Rolando made a motion to adopt all three options as follows: Option 1%, Option-2% and Option -3% will include the following: Quality Assurance position downgrade, Family Meals Program and Fifty to Fifty Nine Program. A motion was properly made, seconded and accepted unanimously.

Commissioner Rolando called for the meeting to be adjourned.