

**Metro Social Services Board of Commissioners
Meeting Summary
of
April 22, 2015**

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

Board Members Absent: Chrissy Kirkwood

Metro Legal Advisor: Mark Murray

Mayor Liaison:

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

Commissioner Rolando began the meeting by welcoming our new board member Steve Meinbresse, who has a long history in public service.

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

Finance

Pam McEwen stated that YTD Metro Social Services is very close to being within budget. Ms. McEwen projected that MSS would be approximately \$360,000 dollars under budget by year end.

The MSS donation fund has approximately \$34,000, which is split between the Camilla Caldwell Fund and Meals on Wheels. The Homelessness Commission fund has approximately \$6,000 in the Project Homeless Connect Program and approximately \$63,000 in the How's Nashville Fund.

Ms. McEwen then commented on the Budget Proposal. Ms. McEwen stated that the meeting with MSS and the Mayor went very well. The Mayor seemed very confident that no money will be removed from the Homelessness Commission and the Mayor was very complimentary on the handling of the Homemaker Program.

Homelessness

Judy Tackett will be giving the Homelessness report today in the absence of Will Connelly. Ms. Tackett began her report by commenting on the strategic processing plan. Ms. Tackett stated on May 7, Focus Strategies, consultants from California will hold an online kick-off event along with CoC and other community partners. Invitations will be sent out this week for the May 7 event.

Ms. Tackett then commented on How's Nashville and the *Zero: 2016* campaign and a community effort to help end homelessness which is follow-on to the *100,000 Homes Campaign*.

Nashville's local campaign is called *2016 by 2016* which outlines our goals to house 595 homeless Veterans by the end of this year and 1,421 people who experience chronic homelessness by the end of 2016.

From the beginning of How's Nashville from June 2013 to the end of December 2015, 900 people experiencing chronic and/or vulnerable homelessness obtained housing. As of January 2015, *2016 to 2016* has counted 129 Veterans who obtained housing and 150 people who are chronically homeless who moved into housing.

The launch for the Coordinated Entry System (CES) is scheduled for July 1. This includes a hotline to handle emergencies, and with Metro Social Services being one of the front doors for the CES. The Homelessness Commission will help match housing. Weekly meetings will also be held with the stakeholders in the CES.

Ms. Tackett further stated that the CoC has received a Technical Assistance grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Federal Health and Human Services. They will send a technical assistance person to Nashville to help create an organization plan process to link people who are homeless and low-income with various services. However, Nashville already has a process in place called Hospital 2 Homes, which fit nicely with the above process. Under this process, various stakeholders have been brought in such as Room in the Inn, United Neighborhood Health Services, National Healthcare for the Homeless Council, Mayor's Office, General Hospital and the Nashville Public Health Department.

Hospital 2 Homes has already begun conversations with hospitals to help identify people as they enter hospitals as to whether they may be experiencing chronic homelessness while they are still in the hospital. This will help determine whether the patients are eligible for any other programs.

Dinah Gregory commented on an event that is being held by a local advocacy organization, A Voice for the Reduction of Poverty. The event will be held at Martha O'Bryan and this will be a debate regarding affordable housing. This following an affordable housing community forum held in March. Dinah stated that she will make sure the Commission is aware of the date, time and location of this event.

Program Reports

Nutrition - Commissioner Betty Johnson reported during the month of April, 904 customers were served and 13,430 meals were served. YTD a total 131,171 meals, 8,648 meals were served to seniors and we have a total of 263 new Nutrition customers inclusive of Homebound & congregate.

Planning & Coordination – Dinah Gregory began her report by discussing the American Community Survey of the U.S. Census Bureau which is described in the 2014 Community Needs Evaluation. The collected data shows us who is more likely to be poor in Davidson County.

Dinah then discussed the upcoming event on the Community Needs Evaluation, which is to be held on Tuesday, April 28. This event will be conducted a little differently this year. The first hour will include a discussion on the data; then a brief discussion on the different sections of the Community Needs Evaluation. Afterwards there will be a local panel of experts to discuss affordable housing.

At last month's meeting, the board looked at film "A Place at the Table". After viewing this film some of the Commissioners had questions regarding the food desserts and how the council and Mayor's office are handling the food issue. Julius Witherspoon with Planning and Coordination provided the board with documentation on the food dessert detailing the locations, an ordinance and resolution from the Metro Council and the Ideas to Reality from the Mayor's office.

Mr. Witherspoon further stated that Metro purchases a lot of food across schools, hospitals, jails, MSS, MAC and other agencies. The goal is to pull all of these agencies together to create some efficiency in which Ideas to Reality will play a big part with helping to consolidate purchases and pull the nutrition services division together to help put this in place.

Indigent Burial – Commissioner Harris began by stating for the month of March there were 11 requests for burials and MSS provided 4. There were 7 requests for cremations and MSS provided 4. YTD we have a total of 71 burials and 25 cremations.

Ms. Pratt stated that we are starting to see more requests this month for burial assistance.

Homemaker – Pat Wingfield reported that Homemaker Services have been provided to 149 customers. Homemaker staff is down to 14 with 10 Homemakers, 2 Social Workers and 2 Supervisors.

Family Support – Giovanni Achoe reported for the month of March, stating that there are a total of 798 open cases, 70 felons were served (new and existing), 43 new cases with 29 being female and 14 male. There was an increase of the 60 to 69 and 70+, probably due to the James Robertson Apartments situation.

Ms. Achoe further stated that there were over 1400 total services requested with 601 homeless/housing, 191 financial and 519 follow up/case management (with 232 maintaining housing and 101 obtained housing. Some of the service gaps are employment/employment for ex-felons, housing/housing for sex offenders and shelter for customers with moderate to severe Mental Health concerns.

Some of the trends seen here at MSS would be affordable housing options for low income customers decreasing, increase in move-in costs ranging from \$600-\$1200 and decrease in landlords accepting individuals with prior evictions or Section-8 vouchers.

Director

Renee Pratt began her report by stating a few months ago a proposal was submitted to the Mayor's Office and the Office of Management and Budget. The purpose of this proposal was to create an intake unit that would assist our Social Workers with resources, referrals and data to enhance outcomes. MSS was approved to move forward with this unit with four vacant homemaker positions moving to the Family Support Program to create this unit. Four homemakers were interviewed and hired into the newly created positions. The new Intake Support Staff members are Trumeko Foxx, Dorethia Fulson, Carolyn Jackman and Catherine Pond.

Ms. Pratt then commented on Pam McEwen's position as Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and when Ms. McEwen will actually retire from Metro Social Services. The CFO position will be reposted in May since, we had to wait for the first registry to expire and at that time the position will be reposted.

Ms. Pratt spoke regarding the James Robertson situation. Back in January, MSS was notified that James Robertson Apartments had been sold and the new owner decided not to renew the HUD Section 8 contract, resulting in the eviction of about 110 residents to be evicted by April 21, later extended to April 30.

Venus Allen, MSS Social Workers was asked to lead this project and assist the residents with obtaining and locating housing. Ms. Pratt noted that Ms. Allen has done an excellent job with this project in an effort to touch every single person in the James Robertson Apartments. Ms. Allen thanked everyone for their assistance in making this happen. Letters were sent out and MSS was also able to set up a temporary office to meet with the people at the site. Staff continues to work with individual residents to find permanent housing.

Ms. Pratt made mention of the Ride 2 Thrive event which was rescheduled due to inclement weather and has been rescheduled to Saturday, June 27 from noon until 6:00 p.m. at Cumberland Park. The sole purpose of this event is to share resources and share information with the community regarding issues that affect lives on a daily basis.

The MSS all staff meeting is scheduled for May 22 at Howard School that will include staff and partners appreciation luncheon starting at noon.

The Metro Social Services budget hearings are scheduled for May 26 in the Council Chambers at 5:30 p.m. and any Commissioner that would like to attend needs to arrive by 5:15 p.m.

New Business

The Nashville Sounds had their first game in the new First Tennessee Park on last Friday. The park is located approximately one block from the agency. Since the parking deck for the park is still under construction, the Sounds have made an agreement with Metro Government to use our front lot for parking beginning at 5:00 p.m. for the VIP 2015 season permit ticket holders.

Commissioner Rolando called for the meeting to be adjourned.