

**Metro Social Services Board of Commissioners
Meeting Summary
of
August 26, 2015**

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

Board Members Absent:

Metro Legal Advisor: Corey Harkey

Mayor Liaison:

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

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

Commissioner Rolando then welcomed Lisa Ricketts, Metro Social Services new Chief Financial Officer.

Finance

Lisa Ricketts stated that at the end of July, MSS is projected to be \$536,329 under budget.

The Social Services donation fund has approximately \$33,357.13, and this includes the Camilla Caldwell Fund, Frist Fund and Meals on Wheels.

Ms. Ricketts will provide an updated August report at the next meeting for the Homelessness Commission.

Homelessness

Will Connelly stated that the Metro Homelessness Commission (MHC) is continuing to lead the campaign to end Veterans' and chronic homelessness. A master list is being prepared to list all the homeless Veterans in Nashville, and this list will be sent to the Veterans Administration in Nashville to verify their eligibility. Will further stated that the Homelessness Commission has VISTA workers that work through these spreadsheets and search for any duplications prior to the list being sent to the Veterans Administration

Will stated that there was a presentation on Homelessness by Dr. Beth Shinn of Vanderbilt last week in which several staff attended. Dr. Shinn spoke on the most effective interventions for families.

Will then commented on the Fort Negley camp site and the cold weather project for Nashville. The Mayor's office has already started to plan for the homeless during the cold weather. The Fort Negley camp site has about 30 people living in the camp. The property is run by Metro Parks and now a closure date is going to be set. Will stated that the Homelessness Commission along with Metro Social Services will be working together to prepare for the closure.

Commissioner Boehm asked Will about the request made at a previous meeting about preparing a list for the chronic homeless families in Davidson County to assist with getting the most vulnerable families in housing. Commissioner Boehm stated that there are only four facilities in Nashville that house families and three have men and one does not. Commissioner Boehm stated that he was requesting a list of families similar to the one which was prepared for the Veterans.

Will stated that the Coordinated Entry Committee has been put in place that will use the same tool to assess all the families that go to the shelter. However, at this time not all the shelters are equipped to gather this information. Some of the shelters have their own set of questions they are determining how to prevent overlapping questions as well as, who will give the assessments and where will the assessments be given.

Renee Pratt stated that she and Will Connelly will have more to report at the October meeting and will hopefully launch the Coordinated Entry program this fall, through which MSS Social Workers will be able to maintain the phone line and speak directly with the shelters.

Program Reports

Nutrition – Commissioner Betty Johnson reported that we had a total 891 customers which included 19 new customers during the month of July and served 15,116 meals. MSS Nutrition program offers an educational program each month and for the month of July the educational program was "Reducing Salt in the Diet and Reading Food Labels". Carol Wilson indicated that the seniors will be visiting Farmers Market and the food mobile market in order to have more fresh fruits and vegetables.

Planning & Coordination – Dinah Gregory began her report by stating that Planning and Coordination is continuing to work on the Community Needs Evaluation. Dinah recently spoke on another event regarding poverty, featuring Melissa Boteach, Vice President for the Prosperity Program at the Center for American Progress. This organization is known for looking at a wider array of issues including and not limited to poverty issues.

Ms. Boteach is very knowledgeable about the Federal Government and discussed best practice initiatives such as the Clean Slate Initiative. This would allow inmates records to be sealed after five years if it is a lesser offense and 10 years if a greater offense. There was also discussion on the Federal budget issues that will be coming up this fall.

However, Dinah stated that there may be one area that one may see an improvement and that being the child Summer Food Program. Renee stated that notifications has already been sent out to SNAP reciprocates that under new policy; several customers will be cut in January 2016.

Indigent Burial – Commissioner Harris began by stating for the month of June a total of 27 burials were requested and 9 burials provided. With a total of 7 cremations requested and 3 cremations were provided. For the month of July a total of 20 burials were requested and 15 were provided and 4 cremations were requested and 1 was provided. Year to date, 102 burials have been provided and 31 cremations.

Homemakers – Pat Wingfield stated that MSS is currently providing services to 139 customers and for July there were 1,039 units of service provided to these customers. The second letter has been sent out to the customer informing them as to how the program is transitioning.

Pat Wingfield then informed the Board of Commissioners that she would be retiring on October 2 after 44 years of service. The Board then thanked Pat Wingfield for her many years of service.

Director

Renee Pratt began by stating that MSS has been asked by the Mayor's office to participate in the Fort Negley project, in which MSS will assist with housing placement.

It has also been decided that MSS will be instrumental in heading up the cold weather plan by staffing the Metro site. The cost involved with this plan will be tracked for future reference.

Renee stated that she and Will Connelly will be working on the Coordinated Entry and will provide a report for the October meeting.

Commissioner Kirkwood sent her resignation to the Mayor's office. A new Commissioner will be appointed to the board when the new administration begins.

The MSS Health Fair is scheduled for September 29 at the Boy Scouts building and Vanderbilt has agreed again to come out provide various test to staff.

Renee then Commented on the trip to the Brighton Center and thanked Commissioner Kim Johnson for attending along with MSS staff. Commissioner Kim Johnson reported on the Brighton Center, located in Newport, Kentucky. The Brighton Center is a non-profit organization that works with families by moving them to self-sufficiency.

Commissioner Johnson commented on four main areas in which MSS were interested: database/information technology, community needs assessment, safety alliance and family support stabilization. Commissioner Johnson stated that she was really impressed with

MSS, because this gave her a better understanding as to what MSS staff does with the intense case management services.

Commissioner Johnson stated that she was impressed by how Brighton works around collaborative partnerships. Brighton has developed a very good network around addressing and funding community issues. An example would be funders, foundations, corporations as well as nonprofit agencies came together to identify problems. Then they would say this is how we are going to address the issue by looking at who can provide the services to help us address needs.

Commissioner Johnson thought this could be a strong point to help drive this issue here in Nashville. Commissioner Johnson stated she would like to increase that collaborative partnership here in Nashville and really have an impact on issues.

She described the Northern Kentucky Safety Net Alliance, a group of 133 nonprofit agencies that work in the areas like intensive case work services and emergency assistance services. Commissioner Johnson stated that the Brighton group found this to be difficult at first, but discovered that bringing these organizations together to work with groups like the food pantries and emergency assistance helps to increase effectiveness and efficiency in the services that are provided. From this alliance, a database has been formed in which it allows everyone to be able to communicate with each other in a more effective manner. For example, if one of the food pantries has more of something than another one, they can share this information so that families receive what they need. From this database, they can also provide information such as the number of shelter beds on a daily basis and see the different resources that are available.

Brighton also has a Coordinated Entry System. If a family is at one place, all the information is collected and the other agencies on this database can see this information.

Commissioner Johnson stated that one of the main issues Brighton brought up was the children and the need to maintain them in the same school. Commissioner Johnson felt that this was an opportunity for MSS to pilot services for six months. It would begin in January with a budget of \$50,000 to assist families (approximately 25 families) with maintaining housing. This would help families with deposits, arrear charges, rent, etc. Adding this funding piece will help stabilize families, stated Commissioner Johnson.

Ms. Pratt stated that the \$50,000 would be coming from surplus funds in the Homemaker program. Ms. Pratt further stated that from this meeting she has had the opportunity to meet with Commissioner Meinbresse and we discussed ways to get this collaborative effort in the communities here in Nashville. From this discussion, Commissioner Meinbresse has agreed to meet with Planning and Coordination during the month of September and will give an overview at the October MSS Board of Commissioners meeting.

Abdelghani Barre with Planning and Coordination encouraged the presentation Commissioner Johnson made and noted how important the funds are for each family. This is an important opportunity. With funds at MSS services could be provided more quickly to address unmet needs of families.

A motion was moved to accept the six month Pilot Project starting in January of 2016 with an amount of \$50,000. The motion was, seconded and accepted unanimously.

Commissioner Rolando then asked for discussion.

Commissioner Meinbresse asked how it was decided to allow \$2,000 for each family. Ms. Pratt stated that it was just an average after seeing client's needs coming to MSS. However, not all families will need the full \$2,000.

Ms. Pratt also stated that she and some of the MSS program staff are working on eligibility guidelines along with income criteria as to who will qualify for the service. This will also include maintaining and uptaining housing. Ms. Pratt further stated that there will be measureable outcomes based on long and short-term goals.

Commissioner Rolando suggested that we look back on the Camilla Caldwell Committee formula that was put together to ask for resources for this same purpose, that had been put on hold. Bonnie Campbell will provide the formula that was created by the Camilla Caldwell Committee that could work with the pilot project.

Commissioner Rolando asked Mr. Connelly what is the rate at which people have remained in their homes. Will responded from last year approximately 77% of the homeless still retained housing.

Commissioner Meinbresse stated that going forward with this project could be an asset to offer the family shelters. Commissioner Rolando also suggested that Rooftop and Metro Action Commission should also be included.

Commissioner Rolando called to question those in favor of the pilot, yes 6; no 0.

New Business

Board Assignments

The recommendation is that Commission members no longer report out about the report staff develop, but rather Commission members be able to partner with staff in assigned programs. The following assignments are effective October 1, 2015:

Commissioner Boehm – Homelessness Commission
Commissioner Meinbresse – Planning and Coordination
Commissioner K. Johnson – Family Support
Commissioner B. Johnson – Homemaker
Commissioner Harris – Indigent Burial
New Commissioner – Nutrition

The primary responsibilities are to have a good understanding of the program and to be an advocate for the program.

Board Chair and Vice Chair

The Nominating/Personnel Committee meet and the nomination for Board Chair were Commissioner Harris and Vice Chair Commissioner Boehm.

A motion was moved to accept Commissioner William Harris for Board Chair and Commissioner Frank Boehm for Vice Chair. The motion was, seconded and accepted unanimously.

Ms. Pratted thanked Commissioner Rolando for her many years of service and that she will be missed.

Executive Director's Contract

Metro Social Services Board of Commissioners met to discuss Executive Director's Contract.