

**Metro Social Services Board of Commissioners  
Meeting Minutes  
February 27, 2019**

**Board Members Present:** William Harris, Michael Bradley, Steve Meinbresse, Betty Kirkland and Brandon Thompkins

**Board Members Absent:** Charlotte Peacock

**Metro Legal Advisor:** Alex Dickerson

**Mayor Liaison:**

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

***Commissioner Harris requested a motion to approve the October Meeting Minutes. The motion was moved by Commissioner Bradley, seconded by Commissioner Kirkland and accepted unanimously.***

Finance Report – Lisa Ricketts

For the month ending January 31, Lisa stated total expenditures were \$893,598 under budget. Lisa stated that the reason we are under budget right now is due to open position vacancies. On the revenue side we have \$43,466 over and part of that is due to \$70,000 given to us in November by GNRC.

Lisa stated that the MSS donation fund is at \$23,561.42 and this includes Camilla Caldwell, Two Generational and Meals on Wheels. The Metro Homeless donation fund has a balance of \$66,256.85. Lisa closed her report by asking for questions.

***Commissioner Harris asked for a motion to approve the February Finance Report. The motion was moved by Commissioner Bradley, seconded by Commissioner Meinbresse and accepted unanimously.***

Directors Report – Renee Pratt

Renee began her report by thanking staff along with former and current board members that have donated funds to the Camilla Caldwell Fund and the 2 Gen Fund. Renee also introduced Garrett Harper who has joined the MSS Planning and Coordination unit. Garrett will be taking Abdelghani Barre's position and Abdelghani has been promoted to Director of Administration & Research. Garrett comes to MSS from the Chamber of Commerce where he was Vice President of research.

Renee then discussed MSS 2018 Budget Narrative that was sent out to each board member. Renee stated that she would like to give the Commissioners an idea of

where we are in our current budget year and the direction MSS is moving in for the 2019/2020 budget.

Renee stated that MSS had our budget hearing this morning with the Finance Director and it went well. They discussed the need for additional positions, the need for the HMIS system and what it would take to manage this system. They also talked about additional funding for the extreme weather shelter and that the shelter was open more days than originally planned. So, the shelter cost is running a little over budget and will continue to cost more if the required opening temperature remains at 28 degrees.

Renee then provided the Board with a cold weather shelter report. Last year the shelter never reached over 200 people per night with exception of New Years, but this year majority of the nights we have had 200. The last night the shelter was open we had 280 people which is considered a hazard. More people were opting to come to the Metro Shelter and it became somewhat of a problem due to the capacity of the Community Center which is 240. Renee is working with the Fire Marshall's office to get something official regarding the capacity, so it can be posted. Renee will also be meeting with the Vice Mayor regarding some issues around the shelter. After meeting with the Vice Mayor, he felt MSS should not be in the shelter business.

Commissioner Kirkland asked why people were choosing to come to the Metro Shelter versus the Mission or Room in the End. Renee stated that research is being done to answer that question. Youth 18 to 24 years of age can go to OASIS or Launch Pad.

The Vice Mayor is very interested in looking at the data we have obtained since we have conducted a survey of the people staying at the Metro shelter as to why they selected this shelter over the others. Renee further stated that a meeting is being held next week to discuss these issues

Renee did state that Metro Parks and OEM have been great to work with and very accommodating in helping with the shelter. Renee closed by stating that if Metro Social Services is in the shelter business we will do our best to make it great.

Commissioner Bradley asked how many people staff the shelter. Renee stated that we currently have two shifts, first shift has seven people dedicated who start at 5 pm and end at midnight. The next shift starts at midnight, with six people dedicated, and ends at 8 am in the morning.

Commissioner Kirkland asked how long has MSS been working with the shelter and Renee stated that we have been working with the shelter for the last seven years. Renee further stated that 2 years ago MSS was asked to take over the shelter by the Office of Emergency Management and the reason for this is that the Social Workers can also give assistance while at the shelter.

In Judy Tackett's absence, Renee provided an update on our Homeless Impact Division (HID) and the HMIS System. Judy hired an HMIS Administrator last week, and interviews will take place next week for another open position. HHID has been

collecting data for the HMIS system which will give a better idea of homelessness in Davidson County.

Next Renee stated that she wanted to discuss what MSS and HID were requesting for the budget.

- HID is asking for six additional staff positions to help with the HMIS database and to help with some of the work around the CoC. These six positions come to a total of \$370,900, then we have operation/administration cost of \$102,300, and lastly, we have software investment of \$192,100, which brings the budget request total for HID to \$665,300.
- MSS is requesting four new Social Work positions, \$50,000 for the overflow shelter, and \$50,000 for Indigent Burial.

Renee then asked the Board if they had any questions regarding the Budget Narrative or the Budget Proposal that was presented.

Commissioner Meinbresse asked how much of the money for HMIS and staff will be drawn down from HUD? Renee stated that currently we are drawing down \$53,000 from MDHA which covers one position.

Renee congratulated Judy on getting the Youth Development Grant in which we will receive funding.

Commissioner Kirkland asked how we enunciate that these new positions being requested by HID will help us in our goal of reducing homelessness?

Renee stated in last year's budget we asked for positions for outreach workers in the Homeless division and HID received those positions and it made a tremendous difference. The outreach workers go out to the encampments and respond to any requests that come in regarding homeless persons. HID is in the process of doing some community strategic planning around homelessness. Everyone has input into the goals, objectives and process of how we move forward to address the issues of homelessness. Judy Tackett has done an excellent narrative about the needs of the homeless people here in Davidson County.

Renee then commented on the Finance meeting that was held this morning and how the Finance Office wanted her to submit the 2018 Budget Narrative. However, Renee wanted to make sure the Board agreed for her to submit this information. The Finance Office also wanted to know more about the Conservatorship Program. Renee stated that this gives her hope that they see the extent of the work that is being done. So, Renee wanted to get the Board's permission to submit these documents.

Renee stated that she does not have a date yet for the Mayor's budget hearing, but as soon as she gets that date she would inform the board.

Renee then spoke about on the 10th year anniversary of the CNE that we will celebrate at the presentation event on March 20th at Catholic Charities, to which you should have already received an invitation. The CNE will be acknowledging Dinah Gregory at this event. Also, Renee informed the Board that the name Planning and Coordination will be changing to Strategic Planning and Research.

The Board felt the CNE documents are not only helpful to Council members but are also useful to the city because nonprofits are able to bring in outside resources that benefit the city. Renee stated for future we would like to look focus the CNE more into the disparities that are happening all around us.

Renee moved on to comment on the open position within MSS and that we are excited to say that they all have been filled but one.

Renee also commented on the Board terms and that we have two vacancies that are coming up and the Board members that are being affected will be notified by the Mayor's office.

#### New Business

##### *Community Needs Evaluation*

Abdelghani Barre began his report by commenting on the name change from Planning and Coordination to Strategic Planning and Research.

Abdelghani stated that the Metro Charter assigns MSS several powers and duties with one being study and research. The CNE over the past 10 years has been documenting regarding the extent of poverty. It can be said that poverty this year is decreasing from 14.8% to 14.5%. But when we look at the number of people MSS serves and the amount of homelessness and hunger in the Davidson County area it is confusing to say poverty is going down.

Abdelghani talked about structural and persistent poverty. Part of that consists of households headed by female single parents, advent of the working poor and public systems of care such as welfare. Davidson County currently has 15,000 people on the waiting list for housing vouchers and at the current number of vouchers issued per year it could take 15 years to get to the last person.

Abdelghani stated that another area causing people to struggle is the Government enabled persistent and extremely negative impacts of segregation. Some of the highlights would be housing red-lining and highway construction, public education (underfunded/less skills), employment discrimination, wealth building opportunities, criminal justice system/mass incarceration and unemployment. Unemployment in Nashville is about 2% but one census tract has 36%. These are the structural things that are happening in Nashville.

Abdelghani stated that we have been doing the CNE for 10 and it is always repeating the same thing, but the conversation never elevates. Abdelghani felt the Strategic Planning is helping to do the following

- **articulate** where the issues are
- building **partnerships** with other area organizations in Davidson County
- **staff development** dealing with our research tools
- **data collection** detailing how we do surveys, so the community can see what is being done.

So, Abdelghani stated that a forum will be organized for the Fall entitled, "21<sup>st</sup> Century Outlook about People who Financially Struggle to Pay Their Bills".

### *Community Partnership Fund*

Renee began the report by reminding the board of the MSS CPF Priority Area name change from Economic Security to Financial Prosperity. The Mayor's office has selected various Metro departments to handle the processes in different areas.

This year Lee Stewart along with Giovanni Achoe is working with the Community Partnership fund. Lee stated that they have posted the solicitation on the website and it will also be sent out to over 4,000 on the MSS email distribution list. The premise of the grant this year is to help a financially struggling family to manage household finances better, which has widespread benefits, in housing, food & nutrition, education, healthcare and more. One way for a person to learn to deal with their finances is to go through the Metro Financial Empowerment Center.

Lee stated that this year they are asking for agencies to come up with creative ways to give incentives, and support families in the Promise Zones to use the Financial Empowerment Center and to continue to use those learned behaviors for at least three months after referral to the FEC.

Lee stated if we focus the effort and put more resources into some of the most struggling families and help them learn successful financial behaviors then we could have a bigger impact than if we just give money to help with crises.

Renee stated that there will be a five-member evaluation committee to review all the proposals and we have asked Commissioner Orr to represent the Board on from that Committee again this year.

Judy Tackett will make the MHID report at the next meeting. Renee then welcomed Alex Dickerson our new Metro Legal representative.

***Commissioner Harris adjourned the meeting.***