

Meeting of the Metro Dallas Homeless Alliance Board of Directors

MINUTES

Friday, March 17th, 2017

United Way of Dallas, 100 N. Lamar Street, Dallas, TX 75202

Board Members in Attendance:

John Castaneda-Chair, Edd Eason-Vice Chair, Karen Hughes-Treasurer, Britton Banowsky, Gerald Britt, Dr. Theresa Daniel, Jennifer Dominguez, Jay Dunn, Vicki Ebner, Traswell Livingston, Jim Malatich, Candy Copley for Bernadette Mitchell, Dustin Perkins, Ricky Redd and Dr. Susan Spalding

Staff & Guests in Attendance:

Cindy Crain, Lynette Austin, Lester Collins, Freda Coleman, Rebecca Cox, D'Arcy Dresher, Alexandra Espinosa, David Gruber, James McClinton, Eryca Peters, Amber Puga, Wayne Waslien, Erin Moore (Dallas County, District 1) and Isabel Camacho (Hope's Door/New Beginning Center)

Approval of Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 9:07 am by John Castaneda, Chair, followed by self-introductions of those present.

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of January 20th, 2017 was made to include the correction that Karen Hughes was not the chair of the PRAC last year and seconded. Motion passed.

CEO Report

Cindy Crain reviewed the SOHA 2017 Point in Time Count data, highlighting ½ % reduction in homeless based on HUD guidelines and an 8.6% increase in homeless, a 47% increase in the count with the help of 1,300 volunteers. The bottom line is that 1,000 people are sleeping on the streets in Dallas and Collin counties. MDHA is reviewing the data, focusing on the gap between homeless persons and available housing to be reported to HUD by May 1st.

She noted that this year most areas used the mobile app to capture data except for Collin County who has committed to doing so next year. There was a significant increase in homeless persons in Garland and other areas in the county with street outreach efforts. MDHA will use the new benchmark number of 1,087 persons, with average length of time homeless at 3 years for chronically homeless, with 70% homeless more than 1 year. Crain also noted that homeless vets, 9.5% of all homeless, increased this year to 362. Chronically homeless vets are housed by the VA and is still manageable; this year this increase will be reported to HUD.

Cindy pointed out that for homeless households with children, there was a significant reduction in the number, perhaps due to converting transitional housing to rapid rehousing programs. She noted that due to financial hits, Family Gateway has converted its Strauss building from transitional living to emergency shelter beds. This reduction is due to the change in definition.

Cindy led a question and answer session, beginning with the question, Are we better off than 24 months ago? She shared that we are serving more people with the same amount of money – higher efficiency. For example, ¾ of persons exiting are moving into permanent housing; 70% of those served are African American. Dustin Perkins inquired about the quality of data, such as the CoC, for which exiting information provided indicates that 70% are leaving without income. John asked if that is a true measure?

Other questions and answers included: 1) Is the amount of change in the homeless count due to more volunteers? Cindy responded that only one of the 194 routes was not counted and she believes that the increase in the number of homeless is due to more volunteers; what it means is that persons who have been homeless for over 3 years were not ever counted. 2) Vicki Ebner asked are looking at adding more areas to the count in the future? Cindy said that the need right now in Irving is to count after 9:30 pm to get just those persons who are unsheltered in Irving at night. 3) Does the data provide more clarity about who needs housing? Cindy responded that without the accurate count of unsheltered (with Duncanville and Lancaster not counted), it is difficult to determine the % of those uncounted. 4) Does the data shed any light on mental health issues? Only if they self-identify as having mental health problems. 5) Turnover in shelters reduced significantly. What correlation is there? Cindy noted that 280 units of housing were lost in the 4th quarter last year.

Dustin Perkins stated that the Community Dashboard is designed to capture homeless housing demand and supply information. Karen Hughes noted that the families with children in shelters numbers are different from DISD's report of 3,900 homeless kids because they are not on the street (unsheltered). Cindy shared that a separate report on sheltered youth, 18-24 in transition, will be prepared this summer. She is also preparing a one-pager for the media so that the report can be the same over time during the year. Vicki Ebner noted that there is a bonus in having data on youth in school that are homeless, with 733 in the Irving ISD.

Edd Eason said the decline in chronic homelessness is encouraging and it may be less. Cindy noted that may be because it is self-reported. With new additions to the HMIS system, such as Salvation Army and UGM, there will more data.

Lester Collins shared that the count only documented 105 chronically homeless, those with a documented disability. Edd noted that annual 10% decrease in this population puts MDHA on par with Houston. Traswell Livingston inquired about Dallas Housing Authority programs – do they report to HMIS? Cindy noted that their information will be included as it becomes available on the Community Dashboard.

Two final questions were asked to end the discussion on the 2017 PIT count: 1) It was noted that Collin County had a reduction of 30 people. Was this from going from transitional housing to rapid rehousing perhaps? NO RESPONSE NOTED 2) How many persons are in Domestic violence (DV) shelters? Cindy responded probably 85 of Homeless with children, noting that DV is a special subpopulation.

Cindy Crain talked about the annual renewal demand. Right now, we receive about \$15.4 million and we can earn more thru performance. HUD technical assistance, lots of money going back to HUD unused.

Cindy advised that MDHA's performance cannot be measured/updated without data. She and Alex will analyze data from 2014-15 and 2015-16. When we transfer to IRIS, we may get some legacy data that can help improve reporting. The City of Dallas' Audit focused on HMIS to monitor on how well MDHA is performing.

Cindy shared that Christina Crain with Unlocking Doors is using IRIS now and will share the data on ex-offenders she has captured thus far. At the upcoming Emergency Shelters meeting, they will learn more about IRIS and the transition. Data conversion with IRIS/PIECES, a \$44,000 contract, is ready for the migration process to go live on May 1st.

Dustin Perkins asked is there a corrective action plan in place relating to the strategic plan to raise our CoC score? Cindy responded that the problem is really a lack of housing...what can we do?

John suggested that we recommend to HUD that some points be awarded for PIT count increase. Cindy shared that lack of data continues to hurt us in reporting.

Britton asked how will you capture more local funds to support efforts done by HUD????

City and County effort may help with addressing housing needs – long term. Karen Hughes asked what is happening with City/County effort? To date, County has approved, City briefed and will vote in April, before May's election. Cindy and John met with new City Manager recently.

Nominations Committee Report

A. Election of New Board Member

It was reported that two Board members recently resigned: Stacy Brown moved from the area and Linda McMahon resigned in anticipation of being asked to serve on the City/County Homeless Task Force. The proposed new member is Shanette Brown of the Collin County Homeless Coalition, endorsed by Edd Eason and Molly Van Ort. Ms. Brown is the Housing and Community Services Manager for the City of Plano's Neighborhood Services department. A motion to approve the recommendation of the Nominating Committee was made. Motion passed.

B. Performance Review Committee

Karen Hughes was selected as the Performance Review and Allocation (PRAC) Committee Chair by MDHA Board Chair. A motion was made to elect the following persons to serve as 2017 PRAC Committee members: MDHA Board members – Ricky Redd-Consumer, Daniel Roby-Austin Street Center, Susan Spalding-Parkland; Mark Pierce-DISD, Bob Wright, Theresa Daniel and Shanette Brown-Collin County Homeless Coalition; Former MDAH Board member Connie Wilson; and Community representatives Ashley Brundage-United Way and Rachel Tryska-Life in Deep Elum. Motion passed.

HMIS Governance Committee Report

Daniel Roby, Committee Chair was not present and Cindy provided updated information about HMIS and IRIS transition in her report.

CoC Assembly Report

Edd Eason provided a report of the last meeting. Committees that were reorganized around tasks to increase participation were launched and Committee Chairs will be selected at the next meeting on March 28th. One new committee, Permanent Housing, was presented information by James McClinton, MDHA Housing Resources Director regarding his work and efforts with landlords.

The CoC Assembly recommended approval of the Rapid Rehousing Policy and Procedure by the MHDA Board. Rebecca Cox, MDHA's Vice President, explained the various models for rules of the program and announced that the flexible assistance model was selected – case managers can target the assistance needed monthly to make it more individualized. There is an exception for victims of domestic violence to not look at AMI (average monthly income) until 90 days after they flee unsafe environments in determining the assistance required. This will allow time for necessary legal processes to occur. The CoC vote to approve and recommend was unanimous. Dustin Perkins noted that the Policy and Procedure recommendation was based on the Houston Rapid Rehousing program guidelines/model to provide the subsidy for up to one year and the calculation of income is projected for the coming year, not past. The great need for the policy and its dynamics was explained by Isabel Camacho of Hope's Door/New Beginnings Center by sharing the needs of clients at domestic violence shelters she has personally encountered.

Executive Committee Report

John and Cindy shared that they met with TC Broadnax, the new City Manager for 28 minutes and he expects the City to get the job done with the homeless situation. He was concerned that only \$150,000 of city funds is being spent on the problem. He is creating an Office of Homelessness, basically a one-stop shop to provide information about what the City is doing to help. He stated that he does not believe in criminalizing homelessness, is considering using Senior Centers as shelter for the homeless after hours and wants to see where the newly formed partnership with the County goes.

John reported that there are several issues the Public Policy Committee have lost their advocacy role on. Homelessness is on and in the news and MDHA needs to move in the direction of taking advantage of opportunities. Dr. Daniels asked what are the local advocacy issues.

It was suggested that John gather those already involved to share information to determine a course of action and add those interested in getting involved. Cindy is to provide input to them. Dustin Perkins suggested that we bring in others as advisory and Jay Dunn asked where are we and who is doing what right now. Jay volunteered to send out a note to forward advocacy agendas to MDHA and John will assist. A Public Policy Working Group was suggested. Cindy noted that several national organizations are ramping up advocacy and that United Way, Paige Fink and Behavioral Health all have some materials.

It was noted that HUD funds are at risk beginning October 1st, 2017 which includes CDBG and Homeless programs. Streams of funds for homeless are at extreme risk and local resources are watching. CDBG is used as match for ESH (Emergency Shelter Housing) at best double digit cuts are expected to negatively impact housing, homeless and in poverty populations. An example is Meals on Wheels; it was wondered that if recipients can't stay in their homes, where will they go?

New Business

Edd Eason asked when will we have the new strategic plan? Cindy responded that the goal is to have it ready by the CoC Assembly meeting in April, with a power point presentation in May to the Board and approval in June.

Cindy shared that, along with others, she is preparing for a HUD visit on May 31st here in Dallas. This is a listening tour and HUD officials may visit some agencies in the CoC.

It was announced that the State of Texas has \$8.4M in funding available for mental health.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:02 am by the Chair.