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**ST. JOHNS COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL  
(HHSAC)  
MEETING MINUTES  
April 18, 2019**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Charles Daly, Chair; Tara Haley, Vice Chair; William Cover; Shannon Nazworth; Vasco Valov; Eric Colon

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Tina D'Allesandro

**STAFF PRESENT:** Shawna Novak, HHS Director; Angie Cowling, HHS Staff Support; Mary Garcia, HHS Staff Support

**BCC LIASON:** Jeb S. Smith, County Commissioner  
Joy Andrews, Assistant County Administrator

**VISITORS:** DeAnna O'Flaherty; Gayle Webb; Ellen Walden; Debi Redding; Toby Erwin; Cyndy Dailey; Joyce Mahr; Lindsey Rodea; Ann Breidenstein; Judith Dembowski; Sandra Jackson; Teresa Andrews; Becky Yanni; Emma Hayes; James Norman; Dawn Bell

**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL:** Chair called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

**MINUTES – February, 2019 Meeting (no March meeting):** Shannon Nazworth **motioned** to approve the minutes. Chip Cover seconded the motion; minutes were **approved unanimously** by the Council.

**REPORT FROM COMMISSIONER JEB SMITH:** Commissioner Smith reported County Budget Hearings are scheduled to take place on May 22, 23 and 24, in the Health and Human Services Building's Muscovy Conference Room. Commissioner Smith said he is not yet sure which of those days the Health & Human Services budget will be addressed but that information will be available soon and Ms. Novak will advise the Council of that date.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**a. Homeless Workgroup Update:**

- 1. Continuum of Care (CoC) Update:** Lindsey Rodea reported the preliminary 2019 Point in Time Count report was distributed at the CoC's annual meeting.

**2. HMIS Lead Agency Support/Point in Time Update (PIT Count):** Ms. Rodea provided the Council with a hard copy of the PowerPoint presentation on the PIT Count and she reviewed some of the more salient points. Ms. Rodea said more than 30 volunteers assisted with the surveys, which were completed via tablet this year. Ms. Rodea said the official count was 356, with 156 sheltered and 200 unsheltered. Ms. Rodea said the 2019 PIT count showed a 4% increase from 2018. Ms. Rodea stated they will be seeking agency input, to try to find out what factors can be attributed to this change. Ms. Rodea said a more detailed report will be forthcoming, once they have assembled all of the data. Charles Daly asked about the decrease in youth homelessness this year. Ms. Rodea said Brittany Coronado is looking into this but she believes it may have to do with the area that was being canvassed and that it may not be where the younger homeless congregate. Judy Dembowski stated the Port in a Storm facility housed 46 youth last year and said this may have impacted this year's count.

**b. 2019 Goals:**

Chip Cover said he would like to create a number of different youth-focused metrics for issues that are unique to children or to possibly segment children out of targets that are already established. Mr. Cover mentioned suicide rates, vaccine preventable diseases, immunization coverage of school-aged children, as well as the influence of pneumonia, enteric disease, zoonotic disease, and dental care on the youth population. Mr. Cover stated that data specific to children is not typically available and he said he would like to meet with staff at the Department of Health to see about breaking this data out and tracking it over time. Mr. Cover said he would also like to determine how many pediatricians are actually working in St. Johns County and, if based in Jacksonville, how often they keep office hours in St. Johns County. Ultimately, Mr. Cover said the long range plan would be to develop a pediatric database and identify programs and agencies that will impact pediatric metrics and set goals and track progress. Discussion ensued regarding the outbreak of measles around the country and the mandate in place in some communities that stipulates children that are not immunized may not attend public schools or take part in other public programs.

Shannon Nazworth stated her goal is to create a crosswalk to track and measure how HHSAC programs are addressing the strategic objectives of the 2018-2020 Community Health Improvement Plan for St Johns County and/or the St Johns County Continuum of Care priority goals. Shawna Novak said staff will work on this, pending the Continuum of Care's strategic plan, which is currently being re-worked.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

- a. **Report on April 11<sup>th</sup> Grant Workshop:** Providing guidance to the independent agencies, insofar as grant writing and external fund opportunities, was Tara Haley's goal. Ms. Haley arranged for the workshop, led by Jim Clark, to be held at the Health and Human Services Center on April 11, 2019. Ms. Haley shared that Mr. Clark is the former CEO of Daniel Memorial and currently a state and federal grant evaluator. Ms. Haley also stated Mr. Clark now runs his own consulting firm. Ms. Haley said 40 people attended the workshop and Mr. Clark presented a comprehensive PowerPoint and shared his personal and professional experiences with fund raising and grant writing. Ms. Haley stated Mr. Clark identified documents every agency should have for grant writing, he shared resources and also provided a grant proposal template.
  
- b. **FY20 Independent Agency Funding Timeline and Process:** Charles Daly said the application for funding was reviewed and approved at the April 4, 2019 executive meeting of the Advisory Council and it will be posted on the County's website on April 22, 2019. Angie Cowling reported the application will be completed online, through eCivis, and it is very similar to the applications used in the past. Ms. Cowling said a free eCivis login will be necessary and it is quite simple to set up. Ms. Cowling said instructions are available online and she will also be available for technical assistance, if needed. Ms. Cowling said questions should be emailed to her and they will be shared, along with the answers, on May 20, 2019. All applications are due on June 7, 2019. Some discussion ensued with regard to an increase in funding and Shawna Novak said she has asked for more funding to be added to this year's budget. Several independent agency staff members expressed interest in advocating for increased funding from the County. Joy Andrews said the budget hearings are an appropriate forum for that and there will be time for public comment, during the hearings. Further, Ms. Andrews said agency board members can certainly request time with their County Commissioners, in order to advocate in general for more funding for health and human services. Chip Cover suggested those advocates make a point of advising the County Commissioners of the gaps that will exist should there be no increase in funding and what these gaps will cost the County. Ms. Novak said she would let Advisory Council members know which day of the Budget Hearings the Health and Human Services budget will be addressed.

**REPORT FROM JOY ANDREWS, ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR:** Ms. Andrews reported the County Commissioners have directed the Growth Management department to look at the land development code, overall, to consider strategic amendments to affordable housing provisions. Ms. Andrews said affordable housing does not currently have enough provisions in the land development code and she stated this subject has had a great deal of advocacy from the general public. Ms. Andrews said this advocacy has encouraged the BCC to look at possibly relaxing or changing some regulatory requirements in connection with affordable housing, such as expediting certain

processes, and addressing setbacks and accessory units. Ms. Andrews said there has also been advocacy for impact fee waiver at the state level and within our community. Ms. Andrews said that Senator Hutson has been championing the issue on the State level. Ms. Andrews reported there is a workshop on affordable housing scheduled for May 7, 2019. Ms. Andrews was asked about the Sadowsky Fund and she responded that the Chair of the County Commission sent a letter to Senator Hutson and to Representatives Renner and Stevenson. Ms. Andrews said the intent of the letter was to request that they maintain the Senate budget, as the House budget will wipe out the Sadowsky fund from the counties that were not impacted by hurricane Michael and it will divert those funds to Florida Panhandle communities.

### **FUNDED AGENCY UPDATES:**

**Betty Griffin Center:** Joyce Maher reported the shelter has been over capacity in the last quarter, and their outreach and counseling teams are booked out for 2 to 3 weeks. Ms. Maher said they are in the process of engaging a company to do a feasibility study to determine whether it is time for a capital campaign to fund an expansion of the shelter. Ms. Maher said the current average number in shelter is between 60 and 64 women and children and this would allow them to shelter approximately 100.

**Early Learning Coalition:** Dawn Bell reported her agency has been working with Pedro Menendez High School, and Chief Hardwick from the St. Augustine Beach police department, on a stuffed animal drive. Ms. Bell said the goal was to provide stuffed animals for police officers to carry in their trunks for children that are involved with DCF investigations/removals. Ms. Bell said the drive has resulted in 800 to 1,000 stuffed animals. Ms. Bell stated that, because of the success of the drive, they have been reaching out to other organizations, such as the Department of Health and a new child care center in Putnam County, to share the stuffed toys. Ms. Bell said the toys could be given to children receiving shots or other medical treatments.

**Epic Behavioral Healthcare:** Teresa Andrews followed up on the report given by Patti Greenough last month, regarding the Appropriations Bill, sponsored by Cyndi Stevens and Travis Hutson, to grant 4 additional residential beds and 4 additional detox beds to Epic. Ms. Andrews said it is in both the House and Senate budgets but in differing amounts. Ms. Andrews said the hope is that the final amount will be approximately \$900,000. Ms. Andrew also mentioned a grant Epic has received for the JET program. Ms. Andrews stated it is a 3 year grant, which will begin on July 1, 2019. Ms. Andrews said the grant is for \$1.2 million, and funding is designed to assist those with mental health and substance abuse disorders transition from jail to daily living. Ms. Andrews also mentioned several events coming up soon, including the Taste of St. Augustine and the Race to the Taste, both on April 26.

**St. Francis House:** Judy Dembowski reports the need for her agency's services is ever increasing. Ms. Dembowski said they are still attempting to rebuild their 3<sup>rd</sup> building, which was damaged during Hurricane Matthew. Ms. Dembowski said they plan to add more family beds in the area designated for people with children and this will open up

other areas of the shelter for more beds. Ms. Dembowski said they have been looking at which clients they are assisting with basic needs and which clients they are connecting with that are struggling with their housing. Ms. Dembowski said that while St. Francis House will continue to offer food, they would like to try to move away from being considered a food bank, since it is an enormous drain on staff time and there are other agencies filling this need. Ms. Dembowski said that in the last quarter, they served 1,300 individuals and provided day shelter services, other than food, to 470 people. Discussion ensued with regard to duplicating services and people “double-dipping” for food and other services. Debi Redding said she is constantly receiving calls regarding food banks and she stated there are eleven of them in the area. Ms. Redding said the United Way weekly report lists all food banks, their location and their hours. Ellen Walden wondered how many people are served at the Thursday food drive on State Road 207 (no one had that information readily available) and she commented it is a very efficient operation.

**St. Johns Housing Partnership (SJHP):** DeAnna O’Flaherty reported HUD printed an article about SJHP’s mortgage modification services. The article stated a homeowner was in imminent danger of default on her second mortgage and SJHP was able to assist and bring the homeowner’s mortgage from a monthly cost of \$1,496 to just \$569. The article also included some comments from the homeowner and she stated she and her disabled husband are thrilled by the services provided by St. Johns Housing Partnership and the assistance has allowed them to remain in their home. The newsletter was distributed to the Council. Ms. O’Flaherty said this is the second time SJHP has been featured in this national HUD newsletter and they expect to be included once more this year.

**Council on Aging (COA):** Becky Yanni reported their second quarter shows a 9% increase in those served but she said the unmet need in the County is still quite high. Ms. Yanni reported 494 elders have called in to be assessed for services in the last quarter and 19% of those reported the highest inability to take care of daily activities (those that have difficulty with 4 out of 5 of those activities). Ms. Yanni said this population is at the greatest risk of needing nursing home placement. Ms. Yanni reported May is “Older Americans” month and they will hold a centenarians luncheon and invite all those between the ages of 95 and 100 years old. Ms. Yanni concluded by stating COA hosted an evening out for caregivers in late January, in conjunction with the Alzheimer Association, and approximately 80 people were in attendance.

**Emergency Services Homeless Coalition (ESHC):** Debi Redding reported they are at capacity and she said she receives calls every day looking for housing. Ms. Redding said all of their permanent homes are occupied and under 12-month leases. Ms. Redding stated these tenants do make use of the supportive services that are offered and she believes these services are what keep the families on track. Ms. Redding said when the families move into the permanent homes, everything is provided, from beds to linens, and the tenants are able to take these belongings with them when they move on from ESHC. Ms. Redding said transitional housing is still a struggle and ESHC is taking in the most vulnerable in the community. Ms. Redding said most referrals come from Betty Griffin Center or St. Francis House, through the coordinated entry system. Ms. Redding said

the biggest problem is finding reasonably priced rentals for her tenants to move to from her transitional housing and she stated they are currently backed up 3 months in this process due to this lack of affordable rentals. Ms. Redding said another issue is those tenants that have felony convictions on their records, as many landlords will not rent to that population.

**Wildflower Clinic:** Cyndy Dailey reported the biggest change at their clinic is they are no longer accepting walk-ins and now operate by appointment only. Ms. Dailey said there were too many problems with the population arriving early and fighting over placement in line. Ms. Dailey said they still desperately need more volunteer dentists. Ms. Dailey said the outreach program has been very successful and they have been reaching out to various organizations, in order to perform health care screenings and educate the public about the clinic and what services are available. Ms. Dailey reminded everyone that May 8, 2019 is St. Augustine Giving Day and approximately 52 non-profits are registered for it.

**St. Augustine Youth Services (SAYS):** Emma Hayes reported their mobile crises team completed 99 suicide screenings this past quarter and were able to divert 80% of the children they assessed. Ms. Hayes said they have this success because they are able to work with the family to do an intervention immediately, in place. Ms. Hayes said with their grant expansion, they are also able to send a counselor out to the home, immediately after the screening, even in the evening or on the weekend. Ms. Hayes said this helps to stabilize a family in crises and offer them a bridge to get to the next provider.

**St. Johns Welfare Federation:** Jim Norman said they have added 11 residents in the last quarter. Mr. Norman also shared some concerns regarding the hospital process of discharging patients without transferring them to a skilled nursing facility, which would allow for Medicaid approval of assisted living. Some discussion ensued with regard to the hospital's ability to do this as, according to someone familiar with hospital regulations stated, a 48-hour stay in the hospital would be required for this transfer to occur and for the hospital to have the ability to bill Medicaid. Ellen Walden commented this issue is something the CoC may have to look into, since several area agencies receive these individuals on a regular basis and they are too ill or infirm to be helped by these agencies without some medical intervention.

## **COMMUNITY PARTNERS:**

**Homeless Advocacy Council:** Ellen Walden reported they did not meet this month. Ms. Walden said she did want to let the Advisory Council know about a book that was written by a Flagler College student, based on her interviews with the homeless in St. Augustine. Ms. Walden said the name of the book is "Memoirs of St. Augustine's Homeless".

**Stewart Marchman Act:** Sandi Jackson reported their FACT team has been in operation for almost three years and, out of 100 slots, they currently have only 83 filled. Ms. Jackson did say that people are sometimes referred to the team with the idea that it is a housing assistance program. Ms. Jackson said the individuals referred to the program

must be prepared to take medication and they should not be referred simply because they are homeless. Ms. Jackson stipulated the team is in place for the severely, and chronically, mentally ill. Ms. Jackson said the FACT team does see clients in their homes and medication is also often administered in the home.

**Florida Department of Health St. Johns:** Gayle Webb reported there is currently a national alert for Hepatitis A and the Department of Health has been reaching out to City and County leaders to advise them on the situation. Ms. Webb said St. Johns County is currently under medium risk and she stated it is very important to be vaccinated for Hepatitis A. Ms. Webb also handed out flyers that provide information on how to avoid contracting and spreading this disease.

**Flagler Hospital:** Nothing to report.

**Health & Human Services Department:** Shawna Novak reported April is “Child Abuse Prevention” month and St. Augustine Youth Services (SAYS) will be hosting a “Pinwheels for Prevention” event and parade on Friday, April 26, from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., at their facility. Ms. Novak said DCF staff and the County’s FIP Department will be in attendance. Ms. Novak went on to say May is “Foster Parent Appreciation” month and the County Commissioners will recognize the Foster Parent Association at their May 7<sup>th</sup> meeting. Ms. Novak also stated the FIP Department will be hosting a “thank you” dinner for foster parents on May 19<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Novak reported the Social Services staff have done an excellent job of spending down the additional \$58,000 the County received in ESG funds and she said she believes they will spend most, if not all, of the allotted funding. Ms. Novak said the Social Services Department was only given 6 months to use these funds and the task was made even more difficult due to the dearth of fair market rentals in the County. Ms. Novak concluded by reporting the Housing Department has been working on amending the LHAP (Local Housing Assistance Plan) to put before Florida Housing for their approval. Ms. Novak said the amendments would include a tenant based rental assistance plan which, she said, would hopefully allow the County to use some SHIP funding to help bridge an existing gap. Ms. Novak said another amendment added to the LHAP would be the ability to rehab mobile homes built after 1994, which is currently not allowed under the LHAP.

**Faith Based Community:** No representative was present.

**Public Safety:** Toby Erwin, from the St. Johns County Sheriff’s Office, reported Operation School Zone will be going into effect on Monday and it will focus on safety for pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as addressing school zone safety and school bus violations. Officer Erwin said there has been an increase in the number of closed head injuries lately, resulting from accidents involving golf carts and other low speed vehicles. Officer Erwin said the Sheriff’s Office will be conducting a public awareness campaign regarding this issue on social media and through Public Service Announcements.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

**Executive Meeting:** Thursday, May 2, 2019 at 3:30 p.m. at the St. Johns County Health and Human Services Building, Kingfisher Conference Room, 200 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine, FL 32084.

**Regular Meeting:** Thursday, May 16, 2019 at 4:00 p.m. at the St. Johns County Health and Human Services Building, Kingfisher Conference Room, 200 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine, FL 32084.

**ADJOURNMENT** - Meeting was adjourned at 5:26 p.m.