

**ST. JOHNS COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL
(HHSAC)
MEETING MINUTES
June 11, 2020**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Charles Daly, Chair; Tara Haley, Vice Chair; William “Chip” Cover; Shannon Nazworth; Tina D’Allesandro; Thomas Nielson

MEMBERS ABSENT: Eric Colon

STAFF PRESENT: Shawna Novak, HHS Director; Tracy Dillon, Social Services Manager; HHS Staff Support; Mary Garcia, HHS Staff Support

BCC LIASON: Jeb S. Smith, County Commissioner
Joy Andrews, Deputy County Administrator - sent regrets

VISITORS: No in-person attendees. 17 Zoom attendees

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL: Chair called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. Quorum was present.

MINUTES – February 20, 2020 Meeting (no meetings in March, April or May due to Covid-19): Shannon Nazworth **motioned** to approve the minutes. Tara Haley seconded the motion; minutes were **approved unanimously** by the Council.

REPORT FROM COMMISSIONER JEB SMITH: Commissioner Smith reported budget hearings were held for three days at the end of May. Commissioner Smith said there is a 10.6% gross taxable value this year and that this is very significant across the board with regard to both new commercial and residential builds. Commissioner Smith stated rising residential and commercial based values will increase what the County will receive with regard to ad valorem tax revenue. Commissioner Smith also shared the challenge the Office of Management and Budget is facing in trying to project income from sales tax and tourist development tax, which the County is heavily dependent upon for certain areas of the budget, as well as debt service. In regard to the setting and establishment of the 2020-2021 budget, Commissioner Smith said a 60% revenue collection has been projected, as compared to the 2019-2020 budget year. Commissioner Smith said this is a conservative approach and he hopes they will have solid numbers to work with late this summer in order to establish a budget.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

OLD BUSINESS:

a. **Homeless Workgroup Update:**

1. **Continuum of Care (CoC) Update:** Brittany Coronado reported that a request for \$300,000 in additional funding has been made for the homelessness initiative as it relates to Covid-19 and she stated this funding would come through the CoC. Ms. Coronado explained this is part of the first wave of funding to be disbursed to Florida counties in the total amount of \$20-25 million. Ms. Coronado said the second wave of funding may total close to \$65 million but stated she does not yet know how any of this funding will be divvied up.
2. **HMIS Lead Agency Support/Point in Time Update (PIT Count):** Ms. Coronado reviewed the 2020 Point in Time Count (digital and hard copy of presentation available in meeting folder), which took place on January 23, 2020. Ms. Coronado stated more than 30 volunteers assisted in the count and 245 surveys were collected via tablet and 68 were collected via HMIS. Ms. Coronado stated the official count was 368; 163 sheltered and 205 unsheltered. Ms. Coronado went on to review demographics, various comparisons and additional unsheltered information.

NEW BUSINESS

- a. **Early Learning Coalition:** Dawn Bell explained the Early Learning Coalition (ELC) is a subsidized school readiness program that exists in some form in every state. Ms. Bell said the program was created in the late 1990's to assist with the issue of child care for working-poor parents. Ms. Bell said the funding that comes from the County, through the HHSAC, allows Early Learning Coalition to leverage \$2 million in federal funding, which comes to them through the State. Ms. Bell said that funding allows 970 children in St. Johns County to attend the school readiness program. Ms. Bell said that while ELS is an education program, its primary function – and the reason it was created – is to facilitate parents' return to the workforce. Ms. Bell said ELC also has a VPK program, which is State funded, and this program is free no matter what the household income. Ms. Bell said 1,800 children attended this program in St. Johns County last year. With regard to Covid-19, Ms. Bell said as an essential service provider, they were able to keep nearly 95% of their childcare facilities open. Ms. Bell also said they have been able to offer free services to first responders whose childcare facilities had closed down during the pandemic and she said this benefit will continue for another three months.
- b. **Candidate Introductions:** Charles Daly introduced this item and explained there is currently one at-large member vacancy and one human service professional vacancy on the Health & Human Services Advisory Council. Mr. Daly stated all candidates were invited to attend this meeting and he provided

those in attendance the opportunity to introduce themselves and speak about their background. Candidates were called on in alphabetical order and Mr. Daly spoke first and explained he had served on the HHSAC for four years and had submitted his application to serve again as an at-large member. Only one other candidate for the at-large seat was in attendance, Tim Pribisco, and he addressed the Council and expressed his interest in serving. William Cover **motioned** to recommend Charles Daly to serve a second term as an at-large member. Shannon Nazworth seconded the motion; motion **approved unanimously** by the Council. Mr. Daly moved to the next vacancy and offered all those candidates that were in attendance, either in-person or via Zoom, a chance to introduce themselves. Kelly Battell, Russell Bodoff, Allen Drozd, Kim Elmore, Lorraine Keith and Joseph Thomasino spoke briefly about themselves and their backgrounds. Tara Haley **motioned** to recommend Kelly Battell to fill the human service professional vacancy. Shannon Nazworth seconded the motion; motion **approved by a vote of four (4) to two (2)**. William Cover inquired as to the make-up of the Council and wondered if it might be expanded as he said there were many qualified candidates applying at this time, making the selection very difficult. Ms. Garcia said the by-laws call for the Council to be made up of two at-large members and five human service professionals. Discussion ensued and Ms. Novak said she would consult the County attorney regarding this matter for discussion at a later date.

- c. **HHS Response to Covid-19 – Shawna Novak:** Ms. Novak stated Health and Human Services is deemed “essential” and has maintained operations throughout the pandemic. Ms. Novak reported the residential assistance program was launched on April 15th and used SHIP funds for disaster response. Ms. Novak said as of Monday, June 8th, the hotline received 663 calls and approximately \$310,321 had been allocated to assist more than 110 households with their rent or mortgage, and utility bills. Ms. Novak went on to say the Amphitheater and the United Way partnered to hold two food drives. Ms. Novak reported the first drive held at the Amphitheater received a total donation of approximately 32,000 pounds of food. Ms. Novak said the second food drive, which was held at the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall, received a total donation of approximately 27,000 pounds of food. Ms. Novak reported the donations were given to twenty local food pantries, which had diminished supplies due to increased need. Ms. Novak went on to say a small business recovery grant program, funded by CDBG and CARES Act funds, began on May 26th and ran for one week. Ms. Novak said during that time more than 304 applications were received and eligible businesses may receive up to \$10,000 to support payroll, rent or mortgage, and utilities. Ms. Novak said those applications are currently being vetted to establish eligibility.

REPORT FROM JOY ANDREWS, DEPUTY COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR: Ms. Andrews was unable to attend and sent her regrets.

FUNDED AGENCY UPDATES:

Alpha Omega Miracle Home: No report.

Council on Aging: Sharon Gesek reported most of their programs have been suspended due to Covid-19, with the exception of meal delivery. Ms. Gesek said they are delivering meals to approximately 330 clients during the week and nearly 250 clients on the weekend which, Ms. Gesek said, is an increase of approximately 33%. Ms. Gesek said they hope to open some of their programs in July in a measured and controlled fashion.

Epic Behavioral Healthcare: Patti Greenough reported that as an essential service, they have continued to offer services during the pandemic but have had to slightly reduce the number of detox and residential beds due to CDC distancing guidelines. Ms. Greenough said they hope to be back to capacity beginning July 6th. Ms. Greenough stated they were able to rapidly accelerate their plans to offer tele-health appointments for outpatient mental health, psychiatric services, and substance abuse disorders and they have also constructed plexi-glass protected booths for those that are not able to attend their appointments virtually. Ms. Greenough went on to say they have been bringing some staff members back in to the office for those clients that need in-person visits. Finally, Ms. Greenough stated they have opened an office in the northwest sector of the County, off County Road 210 and they are offering comprehensive outpatient and prevention services at that location.

Good Samaritan/Wildflower Clinic: Chris Mastroridis reported they have been able to keep their medical services running during Covid-19 by carefully screening patients and following CDC guidelines for distancing while patients wait to be seen. Mr. Mastroridis stated dental services resumed on June 1st and sixty clients were seen in that first week. Mr. Mastroridis also said a new denture program has been implemented and they have contracted additional help in order to catch up the backlog of dental patients that occurred due to the pandemic.

St. Augustine Youth Services (SAYS): No report.

St. Johns Welfare Federation: No report.

Betty Griffin Center (BGC): No report.

Early Learning Coalition: No additional report.

Emergency Services & Homeless Coalition (ESHC): Debi Redding reported they have stayed in operation during the pandemic and expressed her thanks to the Emergency Operations Center for the PPE equipment they provided. Ms. Redding said their food pantry is now overflowing thanks to the food drives held by The United Way and St. Johns County. Mr. Redding said ESHC applied for and was awarded Paycheck Protection Program funds and disaster relief funds from The United Way. Ms. Redding said these funds were critically needed as more than 90% of their residents lost their

jobs in March and were unable to pay their rent or program fees. Ms. Redding stated Epicure has been providing food boxes for their families and they have signed up for the summer lunch program so children will have healthy meals while they are out of school.

St. Francis House: Judy Dembowski reported day services were initially shut down due to the pandemic but shelter services were not and they are currently planning a four-phase reopening plan. Ms. Dembowski said none of their staff or clients have contracted Covid-19 and they will move very slowly and carefully with re-opening plans

St. Johns Housing Partnership (SJHP): Marissa Vetter reported that while their staff worked remotely for approximately six weeks, they are now back in the office to assist homeowners with their mortgage issues. Ms. Vetter said while their overall numbers are down somewhat at this time, they do expect that to change when mortgage forbearance terms expire and she asked that homeowners be referred to the Partnership for assistance, if needed.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

Florida Department of Health St. Johns: Jake Quigley reported staff has been working 7 days per week operating the Covid-19 call centers. Mr. Quigley also said their on-call nurse has been responding to between 50 and 200 phone calls per day from residents who have questions and concerns regarding Covid-19. Mr. Quigley also reported the Department of Health conducted free Covid-19 testing over a period of thirteen days earlier this month. Mr. Quigley said between 180 and 270 tests were conducted daily during that time. Mr. Quigley concluded by stating the Department of Health has received a shipment of 90,000 cotton masks and he said they will be sharing these with community partners that have a need for them.

Homeless Advocacy Council: No report.

SMA Healthcare: Sandi Jackson reported their offices have been open during the pandemic with approximately 50% of staff working in the office and 50% working remotely. Ms. Jackson also stated their mental health drop in center was furloughed for a few weeks but said staff did stay in touch with clients via phone and Zoom. Ms. Jackson said their outpatient clinic has been at full capacity, with some staff members working through TeleMed to see clients that are able to use the internet and other staff members have been seeing clients in person, as well as handling any walk-in crisis emergencies. Ms. Jackson concluded by stating their FACT team has used Tele-med when appropriate and instituted some safety precautions but they have continued working 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, to ensure clients' needs are taken care of. Ms. Jackson said SMA does plan to continue to use TeleMed post Covid since it has removed some barriers for clients that are unable to make it to SMA for their appointments.

Flagler Health +: Brittany Coronado reported more than 2,000 patients have been screened for Covid-19 at their testing site. Ms. Coronado also reported CareConnect

has had approximately 500 screenings and data is now available on the dashboard. Ms. Coronado stated the dashboard provides data on unmet needs in the community and shows how many individuals are seeking specific services. Ms. Coronado said Flagler Health + has plans for a three phase reopening that began on May 1st.

Health & Human Services Department: No additional report.

Faith Based Community: No report.

Public Safety: No report.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Executive Meeting: Thursday, July 2, 2020 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, July 9, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. at the St. Johns County Administration Building, County Commission Auditorium, 500 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine, FL 32084.

ADJOURNMENT - Meeting was adjourned at 5:34p.m.