

**ST. JOHNS COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL
(HHSAC)
MEETING MINUTES
July 9, 2020**

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Shawna Novak, HHS Director; Tracy Dillon, Social Services Manager

BCC LIASON: Jeb S. Smith, County Commissioner – sent regrets
Brad Bradley, Deputy County Administrator – Assistant
Stacia Cotter attended via Zoom in his stead

VISITORS: No in-person attendees. 15 Zoom attendees

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

REPORT FROM COMMISSIONER JEB SMITH: No report.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Homeless Workgroup Update:

- a. **Continuum of Care (CoC) Update:** Brittany Coronado reported that the primary need in the community continues to be rent or mortgage and utility assistance. Ms. Coronado said they are finding that people are circling back and coming for more assistance as the pandemic continues, causing people to remain unemployed or underemployed. Ms. Coronado said there is great concern regarding evictions once the moratorium ends. Discussion ensued with regard to programs and initiatives to deal with this inevitability. Ms. Coronado said she is aware that providers such as Catholic Charities have shifted their funding in order to address these needs. Ms. Novak said the County does anticipate allocating CARES funds to continue to assist residents with their rent or mortgage and utility payments, but she is not sure what the amount of funding will be at this time. Shannon

Nazworth encouraged sharing with landlords who have their mortgages secured through Florida Housing Finance Corporation that they can apply for assistance with arrearages and, if approved, there can be no eviction of tenants.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Covid-19 Updates:

- a. **St. Johns County School District:** Shawna Novak reported Kelly Battell was having connectivity issues and she would be unable to attend the meeting via Zoom. Ms. Novak said Ms. Battell had intended to provide slides for this meeting, which outlined the four options for attendance the school district provided to parents for this school year; unfortunately, these local options were trumped by a recently released executive order so they were no longer valid. Ms. Novak said further information will be coming from the school district with regard to updated options and an extension to allow parents more time to make choices with regard to how their children will enter this new school year.
- b. **Care Connect:** Brittany Coronado said Covid-19 testing is being done at Flagler Hospital in Parking Lot B, beginning on July 9th, from 7am to 11am, Monday through Friday.
- c. **Department of Health:** Shawna Novak said Department of Health employee Jake Quigley went home ill and will not be available to give a report. Ms. Novak said this was unexpected and no other Department of Health staff members were available to step in and attend this meeting in Mr. Quigley's stead.

REPORT FROM BRAD BRADLEY, DEPUTY COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR: Stacia Cotter reported for Mr. Bradley and said that patients wishing to be tested at Flagler Health + can download the health app and pre-register in order to expedite their Covid-19 test. Ms. Cotter also said she has been advised by the Office of Management and Budget that there will be no significant changes to independent agency budgets this year.

FUNDED AGENCY UPDATES:

Alpha Omega Miracle Home: Tonorey Callins reported on the job skills training they are offering. Ms. Callins said they have had to move to one-on-one training due to Covid-19 but they are planning on holding classes via Zoom in the near future.

Council on Aging: No report.

Epic Behavioral Healthcare: Patti Greenough reported they have been successful in their efforts to expand residential treatment and they will now have six beds for men and six beds for women. Ms. Greenough said they are building out the recovery center in order to make space for the additional beds. Ms. Greenough explained they will have to move their outpatient substance abuse treatment programs in order to accommodate the expansion and they have leased space for this on Lewis Speedway. Ms. Greenough said specialty programs for criminal justice will also be housed at this new 4200 square foot location. Ms. Greenough gave an update regarding the space they have leased on County Road 210 and said they hope to be moved in to this new office by mid-August.

Good Samaritan/Wildflower Clinic: No report.

St. Augustine Youth Services (SAYS): Staff reported they have been using Zoom when possible but many assessments, such as Baker Acts, require face to face intervention. Staff stated they are pleased to be partnering with Epic in their space on Lewis Speedway and on CR210 in order to provide more options to families. Amanda Callahan of the Crisis Team said they were recently able to hire a family support partner for that program.

St. Johns Welfare Federation: No report.

Betty Griffin Center (BGC): Joyce Mahr reported technical difficulties and was not able to join the meeting.

Early Learning Coalition: No report.

Emergency Services & Homeless Coalition (ESHC): No report.

St. Francis House: Judy Dembowski reported they have entered the first phase of reopening and they are handling case management by appointment in order to avoid overcrowding. Ms. Dembowski said they are still requiring full personal protective equipment and practicing social distancing. Ms. Dembowski said they are expanding their family units from four to seven and they are partnering with Flagler Health + to add two respite beds for individuals recovering from illness.

St. Johns Housing Partnership (SJHP): Marissa Vetter reported they are open and providing housing counseling for anyone with a mortgage in the County. Ms. Vetter also stated they aren't getting as many referrals as they typically do and she encouraged agencies that have a client request for food, utility payments or a one-time mortgage payment to please refer that client to SJHP so that they can be screened for options with their mortgage lender that might provide a long term solution.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

Florida Department of Health St. Johns: No report.

Homeless Advocacy Council: Ellen Walden reported their meetings have been suspended due to Covid-19.

Ms. Walden stated Home Again St. Johns has been open four days per week and 25-40 people per day are seeking services there. Ms. Walden said there has been an increase in out of state visitors, primarily from the northeast and they have had to be careful to properly isolate those individuals. Ms. Walden said there has also been a marked increase in mental health issues with their clients that have required police involvement. Ms. Walden expressed her worry that when the moratorium on evictions expires, there will be a homelessness crisis. Discussion ensued. Shannon Nazworth asked about ESG funds and Brittany Coronado confirmed the CoC has applied for \$300,000 but she said she is not sure how the funds will be divvied up, as she said the funding is primarily for the most vulnerable unsheltered individuals and families. Ms. Nazworth inquired about CARES Act funds and Ms. Novak explained she does not have information on that funding yet but she did reiterate the County has had a residential assistance program in place since April 15th that has been paying rent or mortgage and utilities for up to 3 months. Ms. Novak said Health & Human Services staff have run similar programs in response to past hurricanes and she said additional staff have been brought on board from the Amphitheater to assist. William Cover expressed concern that the worst of the economic impact may be yet to come and Ms. Novak said she did expect there to be future resources and that the Board of County Commissioners would determine how to allocate any funding in that regard. The Advisory Council expressed their desire to assist the community in any way possible and Ms. Novak said she would discuss with Mr. Bradley to see what he would suggest.

SMA Healthcare: Sandi Jackson thanked those that wrote letters in support of maintaining FACT Team funding and she said while the funding is in the non-recurring category, it was not vetoed.

Flagler Health +: No additional report.

Health & Human Services Department: Ms. Novak advised there has been a slight restructuring in staff since Hunter Conrad took over as County Administrator. Ms. Novak said Joy Andrews' new title is Deputy Administrator of Strategic Affairs and Brad Bradley's new title is Deputy Administrator Chief of Staff and he will now oversee Health & Human Services. Ms. Novak went on to talk about the SHIP-funded residential assistance program, and said that it is being staffed by the Housing Department, and is paying up to three months of rent or mortgage and utilities for those affected by Covid-19. Ms. Novak said 185 households have been assisted and approximately \$465,741 in SHIP funds have been encumbered. Ms. Novak also reported the Back to Business grant program has received approximately 303 applications, which are being vetted for eligibility. Ms. Novak stated CDBG funds are being used for this program and there are very strict restrictions and guidelines that must be followed. Ms. Novak said she has

executed 14 grant agreements to date and approximately \$124,514 has been encumbered.

Faith Based Community: No report.

Public Safety: No report.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Executive Meeting: Thursday, August 6, 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, August 13, 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 4:55 p.m.