

**ST. JOHNS COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL (HHSAC)**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
March 7, 2024

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Tara Haley, Chair; Charles Daly; Shannon Nazworth; Chip Cover; Kathleen Patneau; Leslie Barstow

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Howard Hitzel

**STAFF PRESENT:** Shawna Novak, Director, Health & Human Services; Katrina Tanner, Contract Coordinator, Social Services; Mary Garcia, Administrative Coordinator, Social Services

**BCC LIASON:** Commissioner Sarah Arnold, District 2

**VISITORS:** Via Zoom – Teresa Matheny; Judi Dembowski; Brian Robinson; Nancy Russo; Sandi Jackson; Chynequa King; Nancy Pulsfus; Anita Daniel; Schuyler Siefker; Debi Redding; Paige Stanton  
In-person – Sara Rutan; Steve Dekorte; Susan Jackson; Nangela Pulsfus; Patti Greenough; Dawn Bell; Kristine King

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

**MINUTES – January, 2024:** Shannon Nazworth **motioned** to approve the February, 2024, general meeting minutes. Kathleen Patneau seconded the motion; minutes **approved unanimously** by the Council.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

**REPORT FROM COMMISSIONER ARNOLD:** Commissioner Arnold congratulated Patti Greenough on her retirement and she acknowledged the great work being done to increase participation in the WIC program by Shane Lockwood and his staff.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

- a) **Continuum of Care (CoC).** Legislative report provided in lieu of usual CoC update.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- a) **Legislative Updates: Homelessness – Anita Daniel, CoC:** Ms. Daniel spoke about House Bill (HB) 1365 and concurrent Senate Bill (SB) 1530 and said they've been getting a lot of national coverage. Ms. Daniel said the bills revolve around prohibiting counties and municipalities from authorizing or otherwise permitting any person from regularly engaging in public camping or public sleeping. Ms. Daniel said counties and municipalities can designate land for the

purpose of public sleeping or camping, provided it meets certain standards as set forth by the Department of Children and Families. Ms. Daniel said the HB will be going to the governor and if approved, it will become effective October 1, 2024, with a second part of the bill to become effective January 1, 2025. Ms. Daniel said the language in this part of the bill relates to the ability of a business or a resident to bring a civil lawsuit against a county or municipality if their the property is in a location where such a designation of public camping/sleeping would adversely and materially affect the property value or the security of other existing residential or commercial property. Ms. Daniel said both bills were prompted by a recent 9% increase in individuals experiencing homelessness, with 50% of those being unsheltered.

**Betty Griffin Center – Kelly Franklin:** Ms. Franklin talked about SB 1224 which will establish lethality assessment protocol by requiring law enforcement to be trained on how to better understand if someone in a domestic violence situation is at a high risk of serious injury or death. Ms. Franklin said there is also a proposal from DCF to allocate \$10 million to domestic violence shelters for transitional housing. Finally, Ms. Franklin said there is a proposal to cut Victims of Crime Act funding by 25%, which would affect not only domestic violence shelters but also victims' advocates at all levels and agencies.

**Council on Aging – Brian Robinson:** Mr. Robinson reported they have been advised by the Florida Council on Aging that this area, PS4, will see a funding cut of \$25,000 to their Meals on Wheels program.

**Early Learning Coalition – Dawn Bell:** Ms. Bell said that unfortunately, the bill that included changing the program income requirements from the currently used 150% of the federal poverty level to the state median income has failed. Ms. Bell said that the current use of this guide excludes many deserving families and she said that all coalitions have had to leave federal funds on the table because there weren't enough children coming into care. Ms. Bell shared some good news, stating that Voluntary Pre-K got a raise.

**Epic and SAYS – Patti Greenough and Schuyler Siefker:** Ms. Greenough said a bill seeking to make updates to Baker and Marchman Acts has passed the House and is up to pass at the Senate. The bill would make changes to the state's mental health and substance abuse laws, including allowing psychiatric nurses to release patients from a crisis receiving facility, and giving police officers discretion in whether or not they need to bring someone in for an involuntary examination, which could influence how school children are treated when officers are called regarding their behavior. Ms. Greenough said \$4.4 million has been allocated for sober living transitional housing and she said they are planning to build four additional homes in the county. Ms. Siefker talked about the Live Healthy Legislation package and said it will create and expand training programs that will help to develop and retain the health care workforce by funding increased medical residency slots and by providing funding to pay for training of these residents. Ms. Siefker said the package also includes tuition assistance for ARNPs and therapists, and others working in behavioral health. Ms. Novak asked if anything was included in proposed legislation with regard to licensing reciprocity between states for healthcare professionals and Ms. Greenough said it was written in but had ultimately been removed from the bill.

**SMA Healthcare – Sandi Jackson:** Ms. Jackson said SMA has a \$1.6 million request for operating funds for their residential program pending and she said

the possibility of this going through looks very good. Ms. Jackson said the funds will be for a jail re-entry program serving Putnam and St. Johns.

**REPORT FROM COUNTY ADMINISTRATION:** Shawna Novak said the County budget process, which takes place in the first or second week of May, will be seeing some changes this year. Ms. Novak said it won't be as formal a process as it has been in the past and it will be more of a conversation, with department directors presenting their needs. Ms. Novak said the public will still be invited to attend and commissioners may or may not be there.

**FUNDED AGENCY UPDATES:**

**Early Learning Coalition (ELC):** Legislative report provided.

**Council on Aging (COA):** Legislative reported provided.

**Epic Behavioral Healthcare:** Legislative report provided.

**Good Samaritan/Wildflower Clinic:** Chynequa King reported they have hired an audiologist and they have been scheduling patients for this service. Ms. King also announced that as a result of the grant applied for last year, Heart to Heart did a site visit at Wildflower and they are now waiting to see if they were successful in winning the grant for the installation of a full lab.

**St. Augustine Youth Services (SAYS):** Ms. Siefker said that if approved by the governor, \$1.4 million will be granted to SAYS and she thanked the County, Cindy Stevenson, and Travis Hutson for their efforts.

**Betty Griffin Center (BGC):** Legislative report provided.

**Emergency Services & Homeless Coalition (ESHC):** Debi Redding said they are continuing to work on their campus expansion program and they are currently dealing with permitting and tree removal. Ms. Redding said they are partnering with Better Together on their first "parents night out", and she said they hope to make this a quarterly event.

**St. Francis House (SFH):** Ms. Dembowski said she is currently working on their strategic plan and she is carefully watching HB 1365.

**COMMUNITY PARTNERS:**

**SMA Healthcare:** Legislative report provided.

**Department of Health:** Mr. Lockwood and Ms. Sample were unable to attend.

**Flagler Health +:** Paige Stanton reported on the groundbreaking at the hospital's new Durbin location, which was held in late February, and she said it will have 150 beds and will bring about 2,000 new jobs to the area. Ms. Stanton said the hospital started screening for social determinants of health in late December and they are tracking data on their dashboard. Ms. Stanton said approximately 50% of people screened have a positive need for one of the five determinants of health and she said they are now working to hone in on those populations. Finally, Ms. Stanton reported there are currently 1,000 students registered for the BRAVE summit, which will be held on March 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Health & Human Services Department (HHS):** Shawna Novak reported there has been some contentious legislation this session that would have negatively impacted child welfare in St. Johns County. Ms. Novak said portions of a bill target an effort to place more accountability on private entities receiving public funding and would prohibit any community based care agency (CBC) from providing

more than 35% direct service by requiring them to contract out. Ms. Novak said this would have impacted more than 50 CBC employees and would cost approximately \$2 million. Ms. Novak said a lobbyist was engaged to ensure there would be a mechanism to include a waiver to this requirement. Ms. Novak said another piece of the proposed legislation is related to the continued deficits by several CBCs in the state that repeatedly rely on risk pool and back of the bill funding. Ms. Novak said that in an effort to find a funding formula the state hired a contractor to develop an actuarial model and had planned to adopt this methodology. Ms. Novak said that through a lot of work with the house sponsor the bill no longer includes implementation of this method which she said had not been vetted and used two years of data from Covid years. Ms. Novak reported the draft independent agency RFP timeline will be posted on the County website on Friday, March 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Faith Based Community:** No representative in attendance.

**Public Safety:** Sgt. Manning was unable to attend the meeting.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

**Executive Meeting:** Thursday, March 21, 2024, at 3:30 p.m., in the Kingfisher conference room, 200 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine, FL 32084.

**Regular Meeting:** Thursday, April 4, 2024, at 4pm, in the Kingfisher conference room, 200 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine, FL 32084 and by Zoom

**ADJOURNMENT:** Meeting was adjourned at 4:56 p.m.