

ST. JOHNS COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL (HHSAC)
MEETING MINUTES
October 3rd, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tara Haley, Chair; Howard Hitzel, Vice Chair; Chip Cover; Shannon Nazworth (Zoom); Charles Daly; Deanna Jones; Kathleen Patneau; Leslie Barstow

MEMBERS ABSENT: **None.**

STAFF PRESENT: Shawna Novak, Director, Health & Human Services; Joseph Cone, Assistant Director, Health & Human Services; Tracy Dillon, Manager, Social Services; Katrina Tanner, Contract Coordinator

BCC LIASON: Commissioner Sarah Arnold – District 2

VISITORS: Anita Daniel (Flagler)
Via Zoom – Brian Robinson; Kelly Franklin; Judith Dembowski; Sara Rutan; Kristine Horner-King; Nancy Pulsfus; Debi Redding; Teresa Matheny; Austin Burns; Anthonia Levy; Chynequa King; Nancy Russo

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

MINUTES: Tara Haley opened the floor for a motion to approve the previous meeting minutes. Howard Hitzel motioned to approve the August 1st General Council Meeting minutes and August 15th Executive Meeting minutes. Leslie Barstow seconded the motion; minutes approved unanimously by the Council.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

REPORT FROM COMMISSIONER ARNOLD: All items in the budget presented by HHS were approved with no changes.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Continuum of Care (CoC) Update from Anita Daniel:

- a. Additional Challenge funds have been allocated and the board approved. Flagler Hospital is the only one who can start assisting immediately with housing because they are under DCF contract. The other providers' amendments are still in process and are expected to be fully executed in about 30 days.
 - i. Under the housing needs- Flagler Hospital was awarded \$80,000; Catholic Charities was awarded \$60,000; and Betty Griffin Center was awarded \$41,342.65.
 - ii. Under the Program needs- Homeless Coalition was awarded \$61,700; St. Francis House was awarded \$135,694.61; Catholic Charities was awarded \$6,500; and Betty Griffin Center was awarded \$26,900.
- b. NOFO (Notice of Funding Opportunity) helps bring money specifically into the CoC itself for staffing positions to grow and/or strengthen their crisis response system.
 - i. Project applications for the DV bonus- 6 from Flagler Hospital and 1 from Betty Griffin.
- c. The Governance Charter for the CoC is expected to be approved this month.
- d. Once the Strategic Plan is closer to finalization, invitations will be sent out for participation in that process.
- e. PIT (Point In Time): Snapshot of homelessness in one day across our county, state, and country. HUD requires this to be done annually. Presentation is expected in January 2025.
- f. Anita will give an update again at the next General meeting November 7th.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **GAPS Analysis PowerPoint presented by Austin Burns, CCIN Coordinator, UF Health St. Johns.** The CoC conducts an annual GAPS Analysis that helps identify the gaps in the system, community needs and available services within St. Johns County.
 - a. This data is compiled from various sources, such as:
 - i. HMIS system (Homeless Management Information System) that is reported by any funded agencies in the community
 - ii. 2021 Census Data
 - iii. LSA and SysPM- multiyear review
 - iv. PIT- annual snapshot
 - v. HIC- snapshot of what housing or resources are available (shelters, permanent housing, transitional, etc.)
 - b. Austin reviews the totals for last year's GAP Analysis (October 1st, 2022, to September 30th 2023) and mentions the following points:
 - i. Total served by the CoC were 1216 households and 1709 individuals.
 - ii. Some of the percentages in the snapshot do not align with the percentage of demographics within St. Johns County so there will be over representation in some categories.
 1. One example mentioned is based on the 2021 census data, St. Johns County has an original makeup of 5% Black or African American population, however, 22% of the reported homeless population identifies as Black or African American. That is showing more than 4 times that amount, which may demonstrate an over representation of one demographic accessing services.
 - c. **Chronically Homeless Notations:** Austin paraphrased the HUD definition of chronically homeless as anyone on the street for a longer period, that also has a physical or mental health condition.
 - i. LSA, PIT and HIC reports all showed there has been an increase in people being chronically homeless. 1 in 3 people surveyed in the 2023 PIT are identified as chronically homeless. Of those individuals, 44% stated they currently struggle with a mental health issue or have in the past. The count of chronic individuals has increased 8% from the previous GAP Analysis. Anecdotal feedback from CoC's providers agree with seeing an increase, noting an increase in frequency of return visits for services.
 - d. **Housing Inventory Notations:** The number of transitional housing units has declined by 15 units over the last year. One provider had a utilization rate of 125%.
 - i. **Insight:** Transitional housing is seeing an increase in smaller families (1-2 parents and 1 child) and this can negatively impact utilization. The families are coming from an equal distribution of shelter and street. Majority of the families are in transition from an unsafe environment and/or have an income but are unable to afford housing at the current market rate.
 - ii. **GAP:** Higher needs of residence, growing elderly population, longer length of stay and greater health needs. Shelters are also seeing an increase in individuals with an income that are unable to sustain housing at the given market rate.
 - iii. Several attendees questioned which agencies or providers are represented for each category to know who's providing the services. Austin did not have this list but will plan to have this in next year's PowerPoint.
 - e. **West Augustine:** The representation of homeless individuals in the West Augustine area has begun to grow, however, the street outreach and other providers are finding there is an increased rate of refusal of services from this community. Outreach discovered the refusals are tied to a strong community and bond, as well as historical stigma around offered services like hospital stays. The gap has started to improve by hiring community members, which allowed direct insight to advise on programming, planning, and staying present in the community.
 - f. **Elderly and Aging:** From 2016 – 2023
 - i. 46% increase in individuals identified in the 62+ age group (including homeless prevention and currently homeless).
 - ii. 37% increase in individuals in the 55-61 age group.
 - iii. The needs of individuals in these age groups (Health, Mental Health, and Financial) are 20% higher than those under the age of 55.

- iv. Housing providers find that individuals in these age groups are on fixed incomes, and because of the needs of the population and the cost of housing in the county, this causes individuals to choose between some health, housing, and other necessities.
- g. **Coc Provider Survey Results:**
- i. How can current service provisions can be improved for the homeless community in St. Johns County:
 - 1. Funding, Resource Allocation Communication between providers, Affordable Housing Units/Workforce Housing, Transportation Assistance, and Training.
 - ii. What are the challenges you are facing moving individuals to the next level of care/support?
 - 1. Housing Affordability, Consistency in client communication, Operational space, Health Providers that will see those experiencing homelessness, paperwork/redtape/forms.
 - iii. What are some of the gaps your organization has noticed in the homeless system within St. Johns County?
 - 1. Lack of supportive housing, lack of “outside the box thinking” (retrofitting busses spaces, etc.), Shelter capacity, low credit scores/lack of government documents (ID’s), transportation for people that work
 - iv. What trends is your organization seeing the homeless population are you serving?
 - 1. Economically homeless (people who have income but still cannot afford basic needs), families, family care, physical health/mental health care, housing insecurity.
 - v. Is your agency noticing concerning trends in the overall service area ad your programs/organization? What may not be going well or what is something that may need assistance/fixing?
 - 1. Lack of senior resources for elderly homeless, funding for emergency services, New categories of homelessness rising – economically homeless, An increase in uninsured clients, Lack of housing for those with chronic conditions
 - vi. Is your agency noticing positive or helpful trends in the overall service area and your programs/organization? What is going well?
 - 1. An increase in collaboration across agencies, better client/agency relationships, The Resource Collective (monthly gathering with different agencies to discuss various topics with the goal of bettering the community), Positive outcomes relating to long-term sobriety, Increase in programming – Patriot Place.
 - vii. What systemic/policy barriers are your organization or programs facing regarding homelessness?
 - 1. Lack of housing authority, Grant deliverables, Shelter funding, Lack of workforce funding, the barriers associated with assisting those that have legal records.
- h. **Attendee Question:** What is the status on development of Affordable Housing/Workforce Housing?
- i. Shawna responded that the Villages of New Augustine are almost finished with one building. They should start leasing that by the end of the year and finish the other buildings. Following that, there are no other developments in the pipeline as far as rental units.
 - ii. Joe Cone mentioned there has been some workforce housing come through with the zoning that the commission opened a couple years ago and may see some local projects but those go through a different process than traditional process.
 - iii. Austin mentioned last year’s GAP Analysis showed the rental supply decreasing 3% year to year.
- i. **Attendee Question:** What are the barriers to building affordable housing?
- i. Shannon Nazworth responded saying the biggest barriers are:
 - 1. Resources - such as real estate.
 - 2. Affordability- since the rent needs to be lower/affordable, it requires the debt in the building process to be lower, so you need subsidies to make the units affordable.
 - 3. Zoning - Neighborhood opposition- Several projects in the past have not been approved by commission because of neighborhood opposition.
 - ii. Shawna responded that another concern is usually lack of infrastructure (school overcrowding, lack of roads causing more traffic).
 - iii. Commissioner Sarah Arnold agreed that infrastructure is one of the biggest concerns for these projects and this is not just locally, but nationally.
 - iv. **Follow up question:** Then why is there other housing being built?
 - 1. Shawna responded that a lot of things being built right now were approved years ago.
- j. **Attendee Question:** Any update on approving a housing authority?

- i. Shawna responded that it is not being pursued at this time because the commission voted, and it was not passed. So, unless someone who voted no, decides to bring it back to vote.

Health & Human Services/ County Administration Update -Shawna Novak, Director, Health & Human Services:

- Contract templates for all the independent agency funding were approved by the board, the contract templates are waiting for signatures from Administration and following that will just need approval from the providers. No gaps in funding are expected.
- The housing department launched a down payment assistance program on September 1st, 2024. Hired a new housing counselor, Sharon Whitcraft.
- Participated in a collaborative meeting with some of the community partners in this meeting, along with other agencies in our county regarding St. Johns County's youth. Some data Austin presented today in the GAPS Analysis reflects similarly to the county's youth, especially relating to the black or African American children's struggles with their mental health. All attending the collaborative meeting agreed to focus on ages 13-17 that are struggling with mental health and substance abuse. Currently this is running through a sub-committee within the Behavioral Health Consortium.
- November is National Adoption Month; FIP will be hosting an adoption day on November 22 for all the families adopting their children. We are trying to have this publicized at the courthouse so it's open to the public if anyone is available to attend.

Funded Agency Updates: Expected to resume in November. ****Blackout Period - No Updates****

Report from Community Partners:

- Nancy- SMA Healthcare was awarded the four years Sansa grant to do assisted outpatient therapy which will cover 3 counties. They will act as liaison between courts and clients to get people who struggle with stability into court ordered treatment to improve stability.
- Department of Health- Shane Lockwood emailed Shawna an update. He said they are continuing their outreach with WIC and being more present within the community to bring services to places like The Wildflower Clinic and St. Gerard.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Tara announced everyone's welcome to the 5th Annual Community Wellness Summit is at the Downtown Jacksonville Campus on Friday, November 15th, 2024. It's free admission and they're expecting over 50 professional presenters throughout 6 breakout sessions.

Executive Meeting: Thursday, October 17th, at 3:30 p.m., in the Muscovy conference room, 200 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine, FL 32084 and via Microsoft Teams.

Regular Meeting: Thursday, November 7th at 4pm in the Kingfisher conference room, 200 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine, FL 32084 and via Microsoft Teams.

ADJOURNMENT: Meeting was adjourned at 4:56pm