

ST. JOHNS COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL (HHSAC)
MEETING MINUTES
February 6th, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT: Howard Hitzel, Vice Chair; Deanna Jones; Leslie Barstow; Kathleen Patneau

STAFF PRESENT: Shawna Novak, HHS Director; Joe Cone, HHS Assistant Director; Katrina Tanner, HHS Contract Coordinator; Juliette Maronel, HHS Admin Coordinator

VISITORS: Marion Blohm

Virtual- Anita Daniels, Tara Wildes, Nangy Pulsfus, Brian Robinson, Chynequa King, Judy Dembowski, Kristine King, Paige Stanton, Suzanne Clulow, Sara Rutano, Emily Taylor, Kelly Franklin

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL: Tara Haley called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. Quorum was not present.

MINUTES: Quorum was not present so the minutes will be reviewed and approved at the next General Meeting on 3/6/25.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

REPORT FROM COMMISSIONER ARNOLD: Commissioner Arnold was unable to attend.

OLD BUSINESS:

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

- a. The annual HUD required Point-in-Time (PIT) count was conducted on Tuesday, January 28th. The annual 2025 PIT Post-Count ended Tuesday, February 4th at 11:59pm.
- b. It's still in the early stages of analyzing the data but the numbers are lower this year and the lowest since 2021. Locations where the number of people experiencing homelessness are normally located were basically empty, such as St. George Street. The numbers at the breakfast event were also lower than expected. Anita praised the SJC Sheriff's Unification Project for the significant number of families successfully unified. This may be contributing to the lower results, but it cannot be determined until the data is fully reviewed
- c. The full PIT report will be presented at the Annual Meeting on Wednesday, April 9th at 9:30am in the Muscovy/Osprey conference rooms at HHS and all are invited.
- d. Annita will present the full PIT results at the May HHSAC meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. 2024 Annual Report

- a. Required report that showcases the activities and blank of the previous calendar year.
- b. Objectives for the upcoming year discussion: Implement on-site audits for funded agencies. This was a discussion a few years ago but before it could be introduced, there was complication due to COVID. Katrina will collaborate with the HHS QA team to obtain the necessary tools and coordinate with the funded agencies to schedule meetings.

2. FY 2026 RFP

- a. We haven't conducted a formal needs assessment since 2010, and the county has had exponential growth. This will run through the county's purchasing department. The process includes submitting applications, conducting

reviews, establishing an evaluation committee, ranking the applications, and then presenting them to the board for contract approval.

- b. The eCivis portal is being rebuilt so Katrina's been working with them to manually construct the application process in time for our submissions. If eCivis is not able to finish in time, HHS will create a one-time electronic submission format.
- c. The proposed RFP Timeline Draft will be reviewed and voted on by the council for approval.

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

- Joe and Shawna met with the executive director of St. Gerard House today. The organization has modified their model and would like the opportunity to present their new approach to the council. They received legislative appropriation that will allow them to expand. It was suggested that HHSAC would be interested in having them back during the blackout period since they are not a funded agency.
- HHSAC must conduct an on-site review from December 15-19 for reaccreditation by the Council on Accreditation, which occurs every four years. This review will cover social services, community-based care agencies, and the housing counseling program.
- April is Child Abuse Prevention Month so FIP and St. Augustine Youth Services will collaborate to develop an event in recognition of the month.
- Ms. Andrews has instituted a Citizen's Academy, offering members of the public the opportunity to register and learn about county government. A trial was conducted last fall with a few departments, and it had successful responses, so all county departments will participate. Joe, Shawna, and various department managers will present for HHS on May 1st to about 30 participants, along with a presentation by Veterans Services. The goal is to educate the public on county government operations and spark interest in being involved.

Funded Agency Updates:

Early Learning Coalition (ELC): Emily Taylor stated currently they are now enrolling children from school readiness waitlist for children under 5 and processing VPK applications for program year 2025/2026.

Betty Griffin Center (BGC): Kelly Franklin reported in January BGC served 356 individuals, including 264 through nonresidential services and 101 through residential services. This included 263 adults and 93 children. Due to increased demand, they have started a team of 12 interns, with plans to add possibly three more. They also initiated a support group at Port in the Storm in partnership with Judy, aimed at supporting young adults in the community. Additionally, they expressed gratitude to the county commissioners for recognizing Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month in February. Currently, they are providing education and presentations at Toco Creek High School on healthy relationships. On March 3rd, from 7-9 AM, they will host a breakfast to support the agency at Plantation Ponte Vedra. Tickets are available on their Facebook page.

Council on Aging (COA): Brian Robinson reported in 2024 that COA served over 4000 seniors through different programs and services. This month, they celebrate the groundbreaking ceremony for shelter and shade project.

Emergency Services & Homeless Coalition (ESHC): Marion Blohm reported that the campus is almost at full capacity. They are preparing one house for a new resident to arrive in a couple of weeks and another house should be ready in two months. Once these houses are ready, the campus will be at full capacity, and they can start working on the expansion project that Debbie is managing. More details on this project will be shared next month.

Good Samaritan/Wildflower Clinic: Chynequa King stated the clinic has pre-natal care services, a hearing clinic, which includes free hearing aid help through local partnerships and vision screenings, including glasses, are available through local partnerships. Despite a long waitlist for dental services, they have a new dentist playing a larger role in the organization and are finding more volunteer dentists. The clinic now offers Point-In-Time lab-tested finger prick and oral swab tests, allowing them to conduct tests in-house without sending anyone out to a lab for results and to treat most illnesses. They now have two dermatologists, which is very much needed due to a growing waitlist. The medical director, who is also a surgeon, have removed small areas of cancer from patients free of charge, which is a significant advancement in treatment offerings. Additionally, the Buddy Bus from Baptist visits once a quarter to provide on-site mammograms, the dental bus from Ascension visits Hastings once a quarter, and the UF Health Bus has four locations throughout the city each month offering their services.

St. Augustine Youth Services (SAYS): Sara Rutan reported that the Coaches and CAT programs are currently full, with a short waiting list. The latest statistics show the MRT is averaging a response time of 36 minutes for in-person responses, with a 95% diversion rate from the Baker Act.

St. Francis House (SFH): Judy Dembowski mentioned that at Port in the Storm, Caitlyn is discussing healthy relationships and advocating for the kids, many of whom have been victims of sexual assault. It's been beneficial to have someone to guide them through the process. With the approval of Challenge funding and partnering with UF Health, they have embedded a therapist into the program for 20 hours a week. This consistent presence from Natasha helps build rapport and work with the kids effectively without them realizing they're being worked with, which is going very well.

The first steps to start the Street Academy have been taken, which will serve as an off-site satellite of a private school, allowing students to earn their high school diplomas on-site. The family shelter downtown is finally progressing, with parts and pieces being ordered and roofs approved. The street part is planned to open in 2025.

Epic Behavioral Healthcare: Kristine King mentioned that their focus has been on the Second Wind transitional housing property. They remain steadily engaged with the land purchase process for the Collier Heights property. A request has been received for a Phase 1 Cultural Resources Survey for the Second Wind property due to its classification as an archaeological site with a medium probability of finding historical or archaeological materials within the land.

They met with the Development Review Committee and expressed gratitude to the BCC and Shawna Novak for their instrumental role in securing matching funds for the land purchase.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

SMA Healthcare: Shawna received an email from Nancy Russo stating that she and Sandy are tied up in another meeting and have no updates at this time.

UF Health St. Johns: No representative present. Shawna mentioned the BRAVE Summit is the 26th from 3-7pm.

Department of Health: Shawna read a statement on behalf of Shane, sharing that 2024 saw a 34% increase in WIC participation, the health education team participated in 110 events last year and the DOH and HHS are partnering together on February 25th from 10 AM to 2 PM, with the Buddy Bus in the parking lot for mammograms.

Public Safety: Director Tara Wildes reiterated from earlier in the meeting that the re-entry and reunification program is making a difference in the community. They have just finished the first full month of the co-responder program, which seems to be well-received by patrol deputies, receiving numerous referrals. She believes that all these efforts together are making a significant impact on the community.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Executive Meeting: Thursday, February 20th, at 3:30 p.m., in the Muscovy conference room, 200 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine, FL 32084 and via Microsoft Teams.

General Meeting: Thursday, March 6th at 4pm in the Kingfisher conference room, 200 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine, FL 32084 and via Microsoft Teams.

ADJOURNMENT: Meeting was adjourned at 4:41 pm