



TREASURE COAST HOMELESS SERVICES COUNCIL, INC.
2525 St. Lucie Avenue
Vero Beach, FL 32960

trhscfh@aol.com

www.tchelpspot.org

772-567-7790

Minutes of the meeting of the Treasure Coast Homeless Services Council, Inc. –

This meeting took place at 9:00 am on April 20, 2018, at Community Church, Vero Beach, FL.

Present: Todd Heckman, Anita Cocoves, Louise Hubbard, , Anthony Arroyo, Socrates Aguoup, Stacy Bart, Dennis Bartholomew, Cynthia Beddow, Jean Bunten, Jim Burk, Amy Burns, Stacey Bush, Bruce Cady, Gary Campbell, Bob Carey, Lorne Coyle, Kandiss Davis, Brenda Dickerson, Penny Dietzen, Samantha DiPiero, Sara Donovan, , Emily Durham, , Kylee Fuhr, Barbara Galloway, Leslie George, Debra Gerthoffer, Robert Gonzalez, Diana Grossi, , Margaret Hearnden, Joel Herman, Bonnie Hurd, Holly Hiple, Tracy Jahn, Lalita Janke, Andrea Johnson, , Lauren Johnson, , Karen Knapp, Eric Khorhanmer, David Long, Kelly Long, , Jay Lundy, , Victor Melendez, Trena McCloud, Maria McGowan, Sharon McPeak, Michelle Miller, Barbara Moody, , Angela Morris, Carl Muti, John Porta, Julianne Price, Rob Ranieri, Yasmin Rivera, Barry Roberts, Roberts, , Cindi Siepel, Daniel Silvestri, Colleen Statler, Julie Summers, Kim Tolbert, Daley Trejo, Anita Wester,

Excused: Brad Bernauer, Shaun Fedder

Todd Heckman, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:00 am,

First order of business was the formal approval of two sets of minutes which had been sent out previously and were also contained in the packet. December 2017 Annual Meeting and March 2018 meeting were approved unanimously.

Todd presented the quarterly budget report in the absence of the Treasurer, Shaun Fedder. He explained the method we use to review and present annual budget and expenditures by quarter.

He pointed out that the Resource Center did have some turnover. The Resource Center Manager retired at the end of the year. The new Manager will not be on board until May 1, 2018. This should impact quarterly budget to actuals as payroll expense will come under budget

He also noted that Professional Fees will increase, based on increased audit costs.

We do have a large expense, Homeless Management Information Systems licenses for the entire Coc, which needs to be paid all at once, coming up in the second quarter.

Motion from a board member to approve –review approved unanimously after discussion.

2018 Point in time Homeless Count

Louise Hubbard, Executive Director referred to the document in the packet which attempts to address a number of the issues raised by CoC members during the 2018 PIT and afterward. She reported that the review showed several critical things which impacted the count in all counties.

FEMA HOTEL BEDS We were required to count persons in FEMA beds in hotels. Whether the persons in those FEMA beds were actually homeless or not before or after IRMA, if they were in FEMA beds on the day of the count, the beds get counted as homeless emergency shelter beds. There were so many people still in hotels on the 26th of January who had no idea what was going to happen. Of the over 400 FEMA beds occupied in our CoC on that date, 223 people were in St. Lucie County reported by FEMA as homeless on that day. We assumed that there were about 80 or so beds actually occupied by homeless persons after that date, who were extended for weeks and weeks by FEMA.

Sweeps of Camps - Somehow camps get swept by law enforcement, regardless of what law enforcement says or tells us. That was clearly and obviously observable. We had identified tent encampments ahead of time. The teams told the guys in the woods we were coming, but by next morning, the camps were gone. Almost all of them had been swept in Martin County and Ft. Pierce.

Development – There is an unusual amount of development in the CoC geography. There appears to be more, especially in Indian River than there has been in a decade. This has had a lot to do with cleaning out places where people stayed, especially those with kids. For those who were requesting more information on this topic, there is a list of where we went and where that happened.

HOMELESS SCHOOL COUNT – Diana Grossi, Homeless Family Center raised the issue of the Homeless Children's Count provided by the school districts. When somebody says, you've got 1700 homeless kids??? Where are they? Several of the PIT count staff reported that the answer is "I don't know". That's why that database is so critical. If you've got a bed we can count it. However, people are highly mobile with their children when they are homeless. Usually, they ride a bus, get in the car, go to a feeding site, hang out in an encampment. A reliable database is developed by the way we use the people who participate in the count and the HMIS...We have to count on the information provided to us by the people who actually participate.

Penny Dietzen and Anthony Arroyo, TCHSC, reported that Couch Surfing is a very large issue with school children being reported as homeless. The School districts total numbers were 1700 homeless children. There is no way that we can document that number. We spent months verifying and deduplicating data. We are very uncomfortable with this count of 1700 homeless children provided by the schools.
NO COUCH SURFERS, NO DOUBLED UP, NO UNFIT FOR HUMAN HABITATION. IF YOU ARE ON GRAMMA'S COUCH YOU DO NOT COUNT

Louise reported that one of our biggest problems is that we do have way too many people with evictions, poor credit, law enforcement involvement, etc. who are precariously housed or couch surfing, However, for the PIT, they don't count as homeless. They cannot be counted unless they are LITERALLY ON THE street or in an emergency shelter on the day of the PIT.

PIT ANALYSIS - The group reviewed the analysis of the PIT from 2013 till 2018 contained in the packet. The top line is everybody, middle is adults, children is the bottom. As you can see the children line is pretty even across the years. However we validate the numbers over the years, it evens out to about 2.21 kids per 1 adult. We made a special effort to find the kids. Not a lot of adults and kids in the street. They are living at grandpa's house today, Walmart tomorrow .

TCHSC has provided a fact sheet for each of the counties for the PIT count. This is actual, verifiable, identifiable data which has been validated over many months. Disability status is self reported and not verified, in the same way as substance abuse.

The names of providers are stated on the bottom of the county specific data sheets so we are able to identify who participated in the count

St. Lucie County had the highest number of homeless persons again this year. It took the brunt of the hurricane. Water in Sable Chase was up to the second floor. It is still not habitable. There are still people in hotels who are unable to go home

Alex from Catholic Charities reported that they have received a grant for hurricane case managers and other services to hurricane victims. They are partnering with Red Cross to assist households with financial assistance. And to complete construction not covered by insurance. He will be providing more information on this program. His contact information is 5613603324. Support staff will come through Volunteer Florida. He reported that two case managers are already stationed at St. Joseph's Center in Stuart.

Martin County –Rob Ranieri, House of Hope reported that their experience and data is showing that the numbers of homeless seeking assistance have gone up three years in a row but the numbers reported on the PIT are too low. Penny explained that we actually got the homeless children information from the school district, most children were reported as “sharing the residence of another”. She explained that, if there's an actual address where people slept on the night of the count, it doesn't count as literally homeless. There are questions which we followed up with the homeless children's school liaisons and will continue to pursue.

Carl Muti, St. Vincent DePaul, discussed his observations from attending the C.R.A meetings in Ft. Pierce . Officer have stated that they were already enforcing all the current laws and the members of the board have said “get them out of here”, and “see if you can find some more laws that you can use”

Bob Carey, Sarah's Kitchen, reported that after four years in Ft. Pierce, with free one dollar per year lease location vacant, in the last two years, there is still not a program which will address the downtown homeless problem in Ft. Pierce. Bob Carey talked about bulldozing properties before people had time to get out. It's a local political will issue. They can do pretty much whatever they want. Theoretically, there exists a way to address inequities in the system, but the reality is that the process is locally driven by political will

Bob Carey also announced that he has a photo exhibit attempting to raise the consciousness of people to homelessness. We are allowed to use his website photos for whatever promotions we would like.

The Group determined that WE SHOULD HAVE A SPECIAL MEETING ABOUT THE COUNT PROCESS. It will be scheduled over the summer.

OUT OF REACH REPORT

Louise pointed out the newest Out of Reach Report contained in the packet. It is valuable data provided by the national low income data base which illustrates what you as a worker would need to afford housing in our communities. Being employed at minimum wage requires working 82 hours a week to afford a one bedroom apartment. Overall, the average was in this state is \$15.46 per hour but the two bedroom housing wage is \$20.00 per hour. That's what happens to credit. 35% of people in Florida are rental households. The data packet illustrates each county and the numbers relevant to percent renters, housing costs, etc. This is an extremely useful tool to document what housing costs are and how they impact evictions, , homelessness and affordable housing.

Barry Roberts-American Legion, discussed the prevalence of suicides among Veterans...approximately 20 Veterans per day nationally commit suicide. His organization is launching a proactive outreach program to Veterans, raising awareness, hosting an event Sunday. Trying to unite resources in the community to identify what resources exist and what resources may be lacking. Homelessness is a big factor in depression and suicides.

Vic Melendez- Career Source-discussed the third Treasure Coast Homeless Veterans stand down, to be held at veterans park in Ft. Pierce. Currently there are 20 providers participating with more signing up. Last year we gave out over 800 items to homeless vets, we will have hot lunch, haircuts, coming together to help. 12 tables available. Registration forms are available at the table. PLEASE PUT THE FLYERS UP IN PLACES WHERE HOMELESS PEOPLE GET SERVED AS WELL AS GIVING THEM TO HOMELESS VETS Sharon Mc Peak, SSVF reported that this is something that TCHSC does as part of our SSVF Veteran outreach.

Louise reported that TCH is doing an experiment with SEBHN We will currently take one house, in a place where there are no issues with people who have problems with prior history, status, etc. credit. and rent the house for the year from a friendly landlord who trusts us. We are going to allow SEFBH to house the individuals for whatever length of time they need, and provide the follow up services at the site. Hopefully, it should work without a problem

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

Sincerely,

Louise Hubbard

Executive Director

Dear Senator Joe:

May 5, 2018

As the Executive Director of the **Treasure Coast Homeless Services Council, Inc.** I am sharing the **attached letter we sent on behalf of St. Lucie and Martin Counties to Governor Rick Scott** regarding Homeless Challenge Grant funding for Fiscal Year 2018-19.

The 2018-19 Fiscal Year (FY) Homeless Challenge Grant funding is at risk, despite the fact that the Legislature fully appropriated the governor's budget request for the **Homeless Challenge Grant Program in the Department of Children and Families (DCF) budget – Specific Appropriation in the General Appropriations Act, line 345.**

The Legislature made a Specific Appropriation in the General Appropriations Act, line item 345, for the Challenge Grant Program in the DCF budget. No cuts were made to the program or the budget authority in the DEO budget. In fact, the Legislature adopted the budget recommendation to increase the Challenge Grant Program by \$307,206.

The Transportation and Economic Development Appropriations budget conference subcommittee did not adopt the Senate's proviso language to increase funding to \$5 million, **HOWEVER, no action was taken to cut the recurring budget in DEO for the Challenge Grant and the Legislature expressly made an appropriation for the Challenge Grant Program on Specific Appropriation 345 in DCF.**

In fact, no action was taken by the budget conference subcommittee to reduce or eliminate THE REMAINING, RECURRING, BASE BUDGET IN DEO for the Challenge Grant Program. In fact, the Legislature expressly made an appropriation for and increased funding for the Challenge Grant Program on Specific Appropriation 345 of the General Appropriations Act in the Department of Children and Families (DCF) budget. In summary, both DEO and DCF have \$3.8 million in RECURRING Appropriations for the Challenge Grant Program.

At issue, however, is whether appropriations proviso language granting authority to DEO to transfer trust funds to DCF to support the Challenge Grant Program is necessary. We do not believe proviso language is necessary due to the recurring budget for the Challenge Grant Program that exists in DEO's budget. There are hundreds upon hundreds of programs and services embedded in hundreds of line items in the General Appropriations Act, that based upon the original, historical purpose of the appropriation, are continued each year, by Executive Branch Agencies, absent proviso language or specific line item appropriation. **Funding for the Challenge Grant Program is no different than these other embedded, base budget appropriations.**

But what is different is how important this seemingly small amount of money is to us, especially on the Treasure Coast. Without this funding we will lose our ability to help local working families who don't qualify for any housing assistance, especially our local working moms and dads who make less than \$29,420.00 in our very own counties. Challenge grant dollars keep families with children from being evicted by landlords in Port St. Lucie who can easily charge WAY more than fair market rents, especially now, after the Hurricanes. We have already used the money in the past to renovate a duplex which now houses 10 homeless Veterans. We used the Challenge Grant to build 8 efficiency units for homeless

men who are all now all fully employed and stably housed. You have always been a godsend to us and have been very responsive to our pleas for help in keeping our families from being left out and ending up homeless.

In fact, we have always counted on you to make sense.

On a personal level, as a resident of Port St. Lucie, I respectfully request that you assist us in freeing up these funds so they can go to the kids and families who really need them. Please help us avoid homelessness in the first place.

Sincerely,

Louise Hubbard

Treasure Coast Homeless Services Council, Inc.
And
Florida Coalition for the Homeless