

MEETING MINUTES
SOUTHERN NEVADA REGIONAL PLANNING COALITION
COMMITTEE ON HOMELESSNESS
June 12, 2014

In attendance:

Kathi Thomas-Gibson, Chair, City of North Las Vegas
Julie Calloway, Vice Chair, City of Boulder City
Tim Burch, Clark County
Stacy Sutton Pollard, Nevada Homeless Alliance
Dr. Cynthia Dodge, Veterans Administration
Jodie Gerson, Southern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services
Stephen Harsin, City of Las Vegas
Barbara Geach, City of Henderson
Paula Zier, Clark County School District (2:08 arrival)
Leone Lettsome, (alternate) City of North Las Vegas
Annie Wilson, Las Vegas Metro Police Department

Absent:

Maria Gatti, MGM Resorts International
Captain Shawn Anderson, Las Vegas Metro Police Department

Agenda Item 1. Call to order, notice of agenda compliance with the Nevada Open Meeting Law.

A meeting of the Southern Nevada Regional Planning Coalition's Committee on Homelessness was called to order by, at 2:00 p.m., on Thursday, June 12, 2014, at Clark County Pueblo Room, 500 S. Grand Central Parkway, Las Vegas, Nevada 89155. The agenda for the June 12, 2014 meeting was duly posted in compliance with the Nevada Open Meeting Law requirements.

Agenda Item 2. Public Comment.

No comments were made.

Agenda Item 3. Approval of the Agenda for June 12, 2014; for possible action.

A motion was made by Barbara Geach to approve the agenda for June 12, 2014. The motion was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item 4. Approval of the Minutes from the March 13, 2014 and April 10, 2014 meeting; for possible action.

A motion was made by Jodie Gerson to approve the Minutes from the May 8, 2014 meeting. The motion carried and the Minutes were approved with three abstentions (Barbara Geach, Steve Harsin and Annie Wilson).

Agenda Item 5. Receive an update from the Regional Initiatives Office; for possible action.

Catherine Huang Hara, Regional Initiatives Office, presented the update on the following: Inclement Weather Shelter Services; Cooling Stations available during excessive heat;

Mainstream Programs Basic Training scheduled for June 25th 1-4 p.m.; Coordinated Intake and Assessment to begin pilot on July 1st.
No action was needed for this item.

Agenda Item 6. Receive an update from the Nevada Homeless Alliance and a presentation from HELP USA; for possible action.

Stacy Sutton Pollard, Nevada Homeless Alliance, announced the next Project Homeless Connect meeting scheduled for June 18th at 525 E. Bonanza at 8:30 a.m. She then introduced Steve Silverman and Darlene Hein of HELP USA. An overview and history of the program nationally and locally was explained. HELP USA Las Vegas has two programs available to assist Veterans in need of housing or at risk for losing their housing. Transitional Housing is available for males, females or married couples which provides safe, quality housing, on-site professional case management, and employment counseling services. The Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) is a homeless prevention and rapid re-housing initiative funded by the US Department of Veteran Affairs. The SSVF program offers a wide range of resources that promotes housing stability to eligible very low-income Veteran individuals and families who are either homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness.

Chair Thomas-Gibson asked what trends they have observed regarding Veterans. Ms. Hein explained that there is a lot of need and they have been at capacity from the beginning. They are hoping for additional funding. She expressed that more and more vets are coming to Las Vegas because of the large VA system, cheap rent and mild winter weather.

Chair Thomas-Gibson asked about the referral system and how Veterans contact them. Dr. Dodge clarified that it is a coordinated intake with the hub being the Community Resource & Referral Centers (CRRC). There are three SSVF providers. Outreach happens through the various agencies and teams at shelters. Dr. Dodge explained Veterans are coming here from other states daily, often giving up their permanent HUD VASH vouchers from other states. She stated 25-30% of Veterans that are screened for benefits have moved here in the last 90 days.

Dr. Dodge asked Ms. Hein to comment about Rapid Rehousing and how they are helping people stay in permanent housing. Ms. Hein described how they encourage folks to look for low income housing that is inclusive. They teach a mantra of “get your check, pay your rent”. They help them find other income sources such as part time jobs and teach them to budget with their limited income.

Ms. Gerson asked about additional funding that is expected in October. Ms. Hein explained that more SSVF funding should become available for the new Priority One funding.

Mr. Burch asked about permanent housing in comparison to other cities and what barriers may exist in the community. He urged that we need more types of low income housing. Mr. Silverman explained that HELP USA is an active participant in the Governor’s Task Force examining permanent supportive housing.

Mr. Harsin asked Dr. Dodge why the influx of Veterans to our valley and why we don’t have increased funding to go with it. He also asked about barriers and how they may be addressed. She explained anecdotally Veterans come here because of the cost of living. People want to come to Nevada because they think they can manage better here. Ms. Hein spoke regarding barriers such as: people who have previously failed with housing, their lack of belief that they can succeed; problems with alcohol or gambling; living on limited income and how they choose to spend their money; older Veterans get tired of living on the street and seek housing; and poor credit and bad housing references are also factors.

Mr. Silverman explained about the programs offered by SSVF. The life program tries to wrap every service that they can around them to support them. Many times the barriers are self-inflicted. He said another barrier is trust in the programs that are available.

Chair Thomas Gibson concluded that it is important to coordinate information and stay on top of the trends.

Chair Thomas-Gibson excused herself from the meeting at 2:35. Vice-Chair Julie Calloway conducted the remainder of the meeting. Also Leone Lettsome, alternate, replaced Chair Thomas-Gibson.

Agenda Item 7. Receive and update on the 100,000 Homes Campaign; for possible action.

Michele Fuller-Hallauer, Regional Initiatives Office, provided an update on the 100,000 Homes Campaign. She reviewed the materials that were presented to the members. The goal of the program was to help communities find permanent housing for 100,000 medically vulnerable and chronically homeless Americans in four years without significant new tax money. She shared who participated nationally, who got housed nationally and Southern Nevada's involvement. From May 2011 to May 2014, 1,194 chronically homeless Veterans and Non Veterans were housed locally using 100,000 Homes process.

Mr. Burch added that with the 25 Cities Campaign it has been made clear that based on cost of living and other items, people think they can move here and get a part time job in one week. Entertainment based communities are very transient. He asked Ms. Fuller-Hallauer to explain our high multiplier for homelessness. She described the homeless census as a point in time snapshot of who we have on the streets. She described the ebb and flow throughout the year, often having people move in faster than we can house. There is a formula that has a multiplier which is assigned by our federal partners. This may be a low estimate. We don't have a lot of permanent supportive housing support. Getting to functional zero is an ongoing battle. Mr. Burch said that some communities have a multiplier of less than one (1) where ours was almost up to two (2). He wants to make sure we all understand the implications of it and use the multiplier in our planning efforts. With increasing pressure from our stakeholders, taxpayers and elected officials wanting to see success in the reduction of the people on the street, we need be able to articulate how our needs will double every ten years based on the multiplier. He stressed that we need to be able to keep everyone engaged and not give up on the investment. Ms. Fuller-Hallauer added that she was on a national call with the Veterans Administration recently and the multiplier for Veterans is closer to four (4). It may be even higher once a detailed analysis is done.

Mr. Harsin asked how the multiplier is tied to the funding that we receive. He said the electeds and the citizens getting very frustrated because it sounds like we are never going to catch up and it may continue to get worse. He said we need to make the situation clear to others and get appropriate financing. Ms. Fuller-Hallauer offered that as budget negotiations are taking place on Capitol Hill, it's a great opportunity for our community to advocate to our federal elected that it's very important that they pass the budget that is going forth for homeless services. She said we hope to not only renew the services that we have but also add dollars to the communities. The funding formula which is used across the country, to determine how much money communities are eligible for, is very antiquated. She also added that communities that are making significant progress have a lot of local business and foundational investment into homeless services. We need to increase that involvement. Mr. Harsin asked that with the information that we have learned, a letter be drafted specifically as it relates to this discussion.

He feels that many just don't know of the described multiplier. He thinks this would really help with the Community Engagement piece. It could be helpful if Mayors and electeds would write Senators and Congress and get the information shared clearly and succinctly about our situation and needs.

Ms. Sutton Pollard said we have had the conversation multiple times in the past about advocating to the Secretary of State and HUD about changing the formula. At one point the CoC produced a collaborative advocacy letter. She asked if HUD has ever provided us anything feedback on the process. She questioned how we should proceed. Mr. Harsin said the focus should be on the CoC and the multiplier. He said that biggest task at hand is to address the homeless issue and can get those dedicated homeless dollars for our communities.

Mr. Burch clarified that in the past we were just asking for more funding. This time we can be specific, the multiplier and the formula is a number that HUD and the VA have come up with together. Even more reason that it could be included and used for CoC funding.

Ms. Sutton Pollard asked who is the most effective voice. Mr. Harsin suggested that each member needs to start with their own electeds and expand from there. Ms. Geach agreed, however she feels that more voices are more powerful. She added that anyone who has any involvement should be heard. Ms. Gerson said that everyone needs to say the same thing and speaking points should be uniform. The Community Engagement Group was tasked with drafting a document. Ms. Sutton Pollard added that the next meeting is June 24th. She asked that someone from the RIO or CoC be present go over the numbers and facts to develop the speaking points.

No action was necessary for this item.

Agenda Item 8. Receive an update from the United Funding Agency working Group; for possible action.

Mr. Tim Burch, Clark County Social Service, gave an overview draft Recommended Process to Select a Unified Funding Agency (UFA) and how it aligns with the new Governance Charter. He gave the definition of a Unified Funding Agency and the Continuum of Care Designation of UFA. He reviewed the contents of the information that was provided at the meeting. He reviewed the CoC Readiness Assessment as the tool intended to facilitate CoH's discussion about whether the CoC should move towards a UFA structure for managing its CoC. The Government Agency Assessment is the tool intended to assist entities considering applying to the CoC to be its designated UFA applicant to HUD. The third tool in the draft is the Nonprofit Agency Assessment will help the entities assess their capacity to meet HUD's published UFA criteria and should be used prior to applying to HUD for UFA designation. All assessments will be used by the CoC review committee. He requested that all members give feedback on the draft by the next meeting on July 10th.

No action was necessary for this item.

Agenda Item 9. Receive an update from each committee member regarding relevant activities within their respective organizations relating to homelessness.

Dr. Dodge shared that the soft open of the centralized intake will begin July 1st. Someone from the VA will call and walk through the eligibility survey with each provider to familiarize them with the requirements.

Mr. Harsin requested that any additional comments be given regarding the Governance Structure within the coming week.

Ms. Zier reported that the final number of Clark County students for the school year was 9,284 (pre K – 12th grade). She announced a Summer Food Program. Over half of CCSD students receive free and reduced lunch. She shared a website called whyhunger.org that provides free sites for food programs throughout the summer.

Dr. Dodge asked about guidance in the event of emergency. Mr. Harsin said that the City of Las Vegas has an Emergency Management Plan. He knows that the plan would include homeless in his jurisdiction. Ms. Hara Huang explained that she has a distribution list such as cooling station notifications.

Dr. Dodge asked about what is happening as far replacing Tyrone Thompson's position. Mr. Burch explained that the funding is only valid for the current fiscal year. All of the jurisdictions contribute to the RIO budget and is still being finalized. Until guaranteed funding is in place, an outcome is not known regarding the position. Mr. explained that each jurisdiction is trying to find ways to work through the budget deficits. Ms. Geach said that no one jurisdiction makes the decision. The interlocal agreement must be finalized also. Ms. Gerson asked what they can do as a committee to help. Mr. Burch explained that the unit will operate in a decreased capacity until such time. He said it is only four jurisdictions that contribute to the budget. Staff time from the partners may be dedicated, but it needs to be specific and committed time schedule.

Agenda Item 10. Public Comment

Meredith Spriggs, Downtown Rangers, invited the agencies to participate in Speed Dating, Come Find Your Agency Match at 150 N. Las Vegas Blvd. at 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. on June 17th (Family and Youth agencies) and 24th (Singles, Veteran and Mental Health providers). The event is for volunteers to find a homeless agency.

Phillip Hollon, Salvation Army, commended the RIO for providing cooling station handouts. The Summer Day Shelters are open 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. 7 days a week. He gave a shout out to Anna Vasquez with Las Vegas Justice Court and many other Court employees. They reached out and organized fund raisers for bottled water. Last month 6761 men were served at the shelters. An increase is expected due to higher temperatures. He also gave a shout out to Wendy Lacrosse of Sunwest Custom Homes, she inquired how they may help support the homeless program. They raised funds for new washers and dryers at the shelters.

Julie Murray, Moonridge Group, is part of the Community Engagement Working Group. She thanked the group for consistent messaging. Additionally she loves the private partnership that she has seen. She introduced Dr. Ken McCown with the UNLV Downtown Design Center.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:25 p.m.