

**LEE COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
December 17, 2019**

Members Present: Jean DeWalt
Rexann Hosafros
Timothy Hennessy
Terry Tucker
France Rose
Danyale Kinney
Johnny Streets
Paul Milford

Members Excused: David Newlan
Diane Ziggrossi

Members Unexcused: James Reilly, Jr.
Mary Klunk

Public Attendance: Irene Kupler
Willie Miller
Rob Lawhead
Susan Schimmel
John Moon
Carl Baxter
Shary Landbo
Paul Carbone
Jack Snow
Patricia Ross
Rob Lawhead
Kerry Constantine
Ramona Miller
Denise Traficante
Tammy Tomczak
Greg Tomczak

Staff Present: Roger Mercado
Jeannie Sutton

ITEM

I. Welcome and Introduction of Members

Ms. Jean DeWalt called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.; introductions were made.

II. Approval of October 15, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Ms. DeWalt requested a motion to approve the October 15, 2019 meeting minutes.

ACTION:

Mr. Timothy Hennessy made a motion to approve the October 15, 2019 minutes. Mr. Terry Tucker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

III. Lee County Human and Veteran Services Updates – Roger Mercado

- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Grant Submission/Critical Time Intervention**

Mr. Mercado mentioned the Human and Veteran Services office submitted for a grant called Critical Time Intervention. Critical Time intervention started in New York City in the 80's working with individuals that experience behavioral issues and homelessness. The concept is to work with a Behavioral Health agency who will assist individuals leaving the hospital, jail, transitional living facilities, etc.; help them find housing and be part of their lives in the first 9 months while they are getting used to their new living arrangements. If the grant is awarded, we will receive \$400K a year and it's a five year contract.

- **Partnering For Results**

Mr. Mercado explained Partnering for Results is the process of General Fund Dollars that are provided to Non-Profits in our community. The process for this fiscal year started a few months ago when we published a Notice of Funding Request for application, then different non-profits have the ability to submit an application to receive funding for their programs.

We are in the application review process right now, where a Review Panel is going through applications and after, it will go for final recommendation to the commissioners on January 21st, 2020.

The application for funding changed from 69 questions to 47 questions and 13 attachments to 1 attachment. We are trying to make it a little easier for non-profits to apply for funding, instead of scrambling to submit paperwork so they can focus on doing the great work they do in the community.

- **Funder's Forum**

Mr. Roger Mercado said they started a conversation with different municipalities and agencies that provide funding to different non-profits to create a group called Funder's Forum. Part of the conversations included: best practices, identify what organizations or programs are being funded and ensure there is no duplication of funding. The goal is to share outcomes, streamline the process and maybe a universal application to where non-profits can receive different funding from different agencies. Part of the agencies and municipalities are City of Cape Coral, City of Fort Myers, United Way, Children's Network, SWFL Community Foundation, among others.

- **Gaps Analysis Update**

Mr. Mercado mentioned, Herb Marlowe has been meeting with different non-profits, funders, municipalities and the general public to get information regarding the needs and gaps in Lee County. We are anticipating a draft report will be submitted by the end of this month and then it will be provided to the Commissioners. Some of the main issues that have been brought to his attention are: behavioral issues, housing and transportation.

- **Coordinated Entry**

Mr. Mercado asked the group to take a look at the draft document in their packet: How Coordinated Entry works?

He mentioned within Lee County there was a concept called: No Wrong Door. Agencies working with families and individuals experiencing homelessness were asked to complete a coordinated assessment and get as much information to determine the needs and assist them with the different resources in the community.

Through different workshops with a consultant and conversations, it was decided to have United Way (211) be the central point to achieve consistency.

Ms. Jeannie Sutton explained coordinated entry is targeted specifically for individuals experiencing literal homelessness: living in their cars, in a tent, on the streets and or a place not meant for human habitation. If experiencing homelessness and looking for permanent housing, we are trying to funnel everyone through United Way (211) to complete a coordinated entry and be referred to resources in the community in a consistent manner.

From there the individuals or family, gets on a connection list, the list highlights all of their potential housing strengths and barriers and assesses them for what services might be best for their situation. We have several secondary referral points which include our outreach staff, community cooperative, and some other locations. Once they are referred to an agency or case worker, they work with them to help figure out how to get them into housing as quickly as possible.

Since this started on September 3, 2019, 577 assessments have been completed, 115 were referred to the Bob Triage Center, 23 were referred to the Salvation Army family shelter, 395 were accepted to the Continuum of Care Program for housing, 66 went into transitional housing and out the 577 assessments – 317 were new to being homeless.

- **Candlelight Vigil**

Mr. Mercado asked the members of the council and public to look at the handout for the 23rd annual Homeless Coalition Candlelight Vigil which will take place on December 1, 2019 on the Commissioners steps in downtown Fort Myers.

- **Point In Time Event**

Mr. Mercado asked the group to look at the Point in Time Event handout. The event will take place on January 25th, 2020 at City of Palms Park hosted also by the Homeless Coalition.

This event is an effort to collect information of individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Individuals can also get a haircut, a lot of agencies will bring food and clothing and also provide information of different resources in the community.

- **Christmas Breakfast for the Hungry**

Mr. Roger Mercado mentioned the Christmas Breakfast for the Hungry hosted by Temple Judea will be on December 25, 2019 at Quality Life Center of Southwest Florida from 8:30 to 10:30 am. Local businesses around Lee County donated a variety of items.

- **New Application for Membership**

Mr. Mercado mentioned he reviewed and forwarded an application to administration for a new appointment member in January.

IV. Announcements

A member of the council announced the Children's Services Foundation formerly Pennies for Progress will be coming to speak to the group at the February meeting.

V. Public Comment

A member of the public named Joe said there needs to be consistent affordable housing, a safe place to park and a place to use the bathroom other than in the libraries for homeless individuals without law enforcement getting involved.

A discussion took place between members of the council about the idea of having a homeless campus here in Lee County, zoning was discussed as an issue. Different ideas and issues of human and social services were discussed by members of the council and public.

Different members of the public and the council mentioned the number of homeless individuals has gone up over the years and it is now a crisis.

A member of the public, Kerry Constantine from Blankets and Blessings mentioned she believes there is a disconnect between the human and social services organizations in Lee County. Discussion took place between members of the council.

A member of the council suggested that if anyone has ideas, to please submit them to one of the members of the Human Services Council in writing, and they will be more than happy to submit it to the Commissioners.

Lack of law enforcement and Commissioners attendance in Human Services Council meetings was discussed.

A member of the public, Jack Snow shared his success story of overcoming homelessness and now has an organization called People helping People. They feed the homeless every 1st and 3rd Saturday of every month.

Different members of the public mentioned the lack of involvement of the Homeless Coalition with other organizations and lack of actions to help homeless individuals.

John Moon a member of the public said that after hearing all of people's comments, he believes the Gaps analysis will be the beginning to come up with solutions of the issues happening in Lee County. Discussion took place between members about the topic.

A member of the council suggested to have an Open Forum at one of the meetings with passionate members of the community and members of the Human Services Council to brainstorm ideas, prioritize the most important issues, narrow it down to a document and then present it to the Commissioners. Discussion took place between members about the idea of an open forum meeting.

Mr. Roger Mercado suggested bringing all the different social services organizations in the community and having them share what they all do to help the community. Members of the Council respectfully declined and would like to have a brainstorm session with the public.

Greg Tomczak with Come as you are Ministry, a member of the public mentioned they have an event that provides food, healthcare and toiletries every Saturday at 4:00pm. The event has taken place for over 14 years and they do not see many people. Discussion took place of ways to promote an event like this to the community and homeless individuals.

Ms. DeWalt requested a motion to have a brainstorm session with the public to address the Human Services issues of Lee County on January 21, 2020 at 5:30pm at the Lee County Human Services building. Ms. Rexann Hosafros seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:15 p.m.



Ms. Jean DeWalt, Chair



Mr. Timothy Hennessy, Secretary

C: Lee County Board of County Commissioners, District #1, #2, #3, #4, and #5
Roger Desjarlais, County Manager
Glen Salyer, Assistant County Manager
Amanda Swindle, Assistant County Attorney
Ms. Jean DeWalt, Chair