TASK FORCE ON IMPROVING HUMAN SERVICES

FRIDAY, JUNE 20, 2014
10 a.m.

Hagler/Mason Conference Room
2nd Floor, City Hall

AGENDA

1. Call to Order

2. Approval of Minutes—May 1, 2014

3. Task Force Work Flow Process

4. Review of Task Force Expectations

5. Terms and Nomenclature

6. Continuum of Care (CoC) Video

7. Types and Triggers of Homelessness (Homelessness Not Homogeneous)

8. Consultant Proposed Recommendation – The Culture of Transformational Change

9. Consultant Proposed Recommendation – Universal and Real-time Use of HMIS

10. Public Comment

11. Adjourn

CITY OF PENSACOLA TASK FORCE ON IMPROVING HUMAN SERVICES

Meeting Minutes
May 1, 2014, 3 p.m.

Members Present: Kenneth Bell, John Johnson, Sara Latshaw, Dr. Samuel Mathews, Nathan Monk, Chase Saale, Gary Sammons, Dr. Frank Sansone, Lynn Schweigert, Zoya Webster Phillips, Randy Wilkerson.

Others Present: Consultant Dr. Robert Marbut, Jr., Dr. Lila Cox, Council Executive, Stephanie Tillery, Assistant City Attorney, Elaine Mager, Executive Assistant, Council Members Sherri Myers and Andy Terhaar, Cheryl Poister, Brian Heike, Sgt. Jimmy Donohoe, Capt. David Alexander, Marcie Whitaker, Tamara Fountain, Eric Olson, A. Sengstech, Dottie Dubuisson, Phyllis Gonzalez

1.   Introductions

Council Executive Cox gave a brief welcome, introduced Consultant Robert Marbut and asked Task Force members and the Consultant to introduce themselves. Task Force members and the Consultant made brief introductory remarks, noting agencies they represent and their interest in serving on the Task Force.

2.   Review of Open Meeting, Public Records and Ethics Laws

Assistant City Attorney Tillery presented the Task Force a summary of the Sunshine Law and Public Records requirements and answered specific questions from Task Force members on each topic.

3.   Review Purpose of Task Force

Council Executive Cox reviewed the purpose of the Task Force, which is to collect available data, research methods by which other jurisdictions provide services to address homelessness, assess types of services (qualitative) and capacity of services (quantitative) in regard to possible application of existing or redrafted ordinances, accept input from those providing and receiving services, and produce a report with recommendations for improvement.

Consultant Marbut indicated that he would be talking about this in the context of best practices he's seen in Florida. With regard to ordinances, he addressed the Pottinger Standards regarding ordinances which has some very simple terms to the provisions, basically says you can't arrest anybody for any of these type of these things unless you have a better alternative to where a person is currently residing, sleeping, living, etc. You have to know where the gaps are, you have to know the quality of service, you have to know the quantity of service, and what the needs are.

With regard to services, you need to know what the needs are. It is three dimensional. You need to know what currently exists in service delivery, both quantity and quality, what is needed out there in terms of both quality and quantity, and then look at the ordinances. That's the least that the Task Force will be looking at.

In terms of deliverables, he will lead the effort in the gaps analysis in terms of what is needed and what exists, do a broad stroke gaps analysis and needs. The consultant will go to the Escarosa Coalition on the Homeless. They have a lot of data and it's a good starting point. Some of that is validating the data in terms of where the gaps are, the Point in Time and HIMS and look at that information, what's available and where the needs are. Once information is gathered, then review ordinances and suggest edits for the ordinances for compliance. If the services and supply are not available ordinances can't be implemented.

With regard to recommending improvements to human services, some will be driven out of the gaps, what services we don't have, some of those could be broader than the gaps, need to know the level to be Pottinger compliant, which is the minimum level. If you want to really solve and address problems, you would have to go beyond Pottinger as a standard and if you go beyond Pottinger, that becomes very good if you ever get into a court situation. Look at the improvements in terms of a maximum and minimum. There is always a gap between those and normally that's about how much money you have for what is doable and what is not doable. You don't want dream goals that are never attainable; you want some stretch goals.

Throughout this process, we need to educate the community on things and cultivate community support. So the four would be gaps analysis, review and possible edits to the ordinances, recommendations, both attainable and stretch oriented and then educating the community and cultivating support.

The Task Force will be learning from each other, learning from experts, learning from service providers and will get a feel for how far we can go. The Task Force was established by the City Council and will be looking at ordinances as one aspect. We are limited in time and scope, and can't be drawn out. There are usually phases that are included in the developed recommendations.

4.   **Overview of the Homeless Situation in Pensacola**

Member Johnson, Executive Director of Escarosa Coalition on the Homeless, gave a statistical overview of the homeless situation, going over the process of one on one surveys utilized in gathering the information. Because of the cold weather that existed during the 2014 count, he felt like the numbers were low. There were a total of

843 homeless persons. Of that number, 153 were children under 18, 466 were 18 – 24, and 224 were 24 and over. This was a cross section of those that were sheltered and unsheltered. In the sheltered, that breaks down into families and individuals. To be homeless, you have to live in a place that is not meant for human habitation or be in an emergency shelter. Places not meant for human habitation are under a bridge, in the woods, in a camper, a tent or in a garage or an abandoned building. If someone is living in a dilapidated location, that does not meet the definition of places not meant, because with utilities and things of that nature, that place could become habitable.

There is also a problem with obtaining information from unaccompanied youth, they are incredibly hard to detect because they stay under the radar. But through partnerships with the school systems in Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties, they are able to collect data.

The other number they look at is transitional housing and there seems to be enough transitional housing to meet the need of the number of individuals that need to be transitionally housed vs what we get in the Point in Time count, we exceed that capacity. Utilization rates are low for transitional housing which is 2 weeks to 2 years and it usually has supportive services, like case management, where individuals are given time to get a job, to learn skills, things of that nature and then they are transitioned into more permanent housing. There is a shortage of housing for emergency shelters for families. Also, there is a shortage of housing for women.

Permanent housing has no length of stay and usually has some type of support where a case manager will check on the individual to see how they are doing from time to time, make sure they are taking their medication, making sure they are engaged and taking care of any needs that may arise.

During the Point in Time count, there were approximately 258 people in permanent housing. Total number of permanent housing beds available is 283. There were about 340 people housed in transitional housing. The bed capacity availability for transitional housing is 556, so there are plenty of transitional beds available. In emergency shelter, there were 271 during the count, with 288 year round beds.

A report has to be made to HUD for what the unmet needs are for families, individuals, youth, single men and women. Information is collected about where we stand as far as PIT and where we stand in terms of bed capacity to address the population.

Members Mathews, Sansone and Monk inquired about ways get a more valid count, especially with families and youth, and if the families and youth come forward, how valid their concerns of repercussion are, and if it would be possible to have someone

from the Department of Children and Families make a presentation to the Task Force.

Member Johnson stated that by energizing the community and getting more volunteers to go where the homeless congregate could be an effective means to gather more information about the homeless. It is difficult to get families and unaccompanied youth, they stay under the radar for fear of having children taken away or discovered and that unaccompanied youth may be reported. In 2013, Santa Rosa County reported about 1500 homeless children and Escambia County as well had about 1500. There is a strong sense that there would be repercussions and that would be an opportunity for education awareness for the community as well as educating the homeless or those that may be facing homelessness.

5.   Methods for Quantifying Homelessness

Consultant Marbut reviewed the different ways used to count homelessness: Antidotal, Point in Time Count, HMIS (Homeless Management Information System), and Survey Gap Filling and the accuracy, validity, variances of data collected and the reporting requirements of HUD. The federal government says that you have to have HMIS and are moving away from the Point in Time Count. Each group, coalition, area has to have one agreed upon software package.

The Escarosa Coalition on Homeless has good HMIS system, a good solid platform, however there is no universal compliance use. When you think of universal compliance use, you think of food. Everybody has to eat in a 24 hour cycle. So if you capture HMIS data at all the food feeding, whether it's a pantry, food bank, soup kitchen, or formal program you will have fairly accurate information, up or down one or two percent.

The Federal government is even confused about the definition of homelessness. At one time there were five different definitions of homelessness within the Federal government. They have now gotten it down to two. HUD, VA, and Department of Labor are on one side. HHS and Department of Education are on the other, with HHS slowly moving over to the other side. It is basically how you deal with children and couch surfers. HUD's view is if you are with grandmother and the building is a habitable place, you are not homeless. Department of Education says if you are not with mom and dad, you are homeless.

For the local groups, strongly encourage them to start with HMIS, work with the data that is currently available, work the data collected from the food agencies in, study the wait list and the data should be pretty good.

Discussion was held with several members of the Task Force concerning the software portal/license to use for the various agencies and how they could find the money to acquire, possibly through grants, foundations, and United Way to help subsidize for the users. It is probably more expensive to not be involved. HMIS could be moved to a case management tool, where it is not a score keeper, it is a case management tool, it is live action, requiring universal entry and same day entry. Everybody does need to be on the same system.

Member Sansone stated that the big concern of Congress and HUD has been duplicate services, duplicate count. That is the only reason for the 24 hour count. It is mostly a gap in services vs a duplicate of services. More people are hiding because they don't want to be part of the system.

6.   **Schedule for Future Task Force Meetings**

Council Executive asked Task Force members to list the dates from May 1 through August 31 that they would not be available, the preferred day and the preferred time to hold future Task Force meetings, so that the information could be reviewed with the Consultant and a schedule prepared for future Task Force meetings.

7.   **Selection of a Task Force Chair**

Motion was made by Member Saale, seconded by Members Webster Phillips and Sammons to nominate John Johnson to Chair the Task Force on Human Services. Member Monk nominated himself, seconded by Member Wilkerson.

Discussion was held, since two people were nominated, as to whether there could be a Chair and a Co-Chair or Vice Chair and by acclimation, the majority vote would be Chair and the secondary be Vice Chair.

Vote was taken, with Member Johnson receiving 8 votes and Member Monk receiving 3 votes. Member Johnson will be the Chairman of the Task Force. Member Monk will be the Vice Chairman of the Task Force.

8.   **Public Comment**

Ms. Dottie Dubisson addressed the Task Force, thanking them for giving their time and efforts to serve on the committee, acknowledging their efforts with the recent flooding events, expressing a desire for public conversation about human service issues and reminding the members of the Task Force to follow Robert's Rules by making motions and voting on so it is reported as official action of the Task Force.

Member Mathews commented on his involvement with a National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences Grant that is examining networks of agencies from Baldwin County to Cedar Key.

Consultant Marbut indicated as part of the process development, there should be one meeting that there is a community forum where the Task Force doesn't do any deliberation, that there is a community forum which would also be part of the community building.

Brian Heike, with the Breaking Bread Ministries at Holy Cross was unclear as to the role of the public in these meetings, if there is a role and could they be used as a resource for the Task Force.

Council Executive indicated that public comment could always be made at any of the Task Force meetings and that she would be working with the Chairman of the Task Force, along with the Consultant to organize what roles different organizations play and have them tell the Task Force their thoughts on what's needed and what's missing. The Consultant is going to be collecting data for the Task Force. Consultant Marbut indicated that he would be willing to meet with anyone at least once during the process, and that he would prefer to go by where the services are provided.

Member Monk made an inquiry if it would be better for him not to attend the Escarosa Coalition on the Homeless meetings from now until October. Chairman Johnson indicated that he did not think it would be an issue, as long as they followed the procedures discussed during the Sunshine Law presentation.

Consultant Marbut clarified the timelines involved with the process, gathering the information, drafting information, Task Force review and editing and ultimately producing the final recommendations to be presented. Council Executive indicated that the City's contract with the Consultant was through September 30 and the Council Resolution has the Task Force report due by October 15 and will advise the Task Force of the scheduled meetings.

There being no further business to come before the Task Force, the meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Attachments:

1)   Sunshine Law
2)   Public Records

SUNSHINE LAW

The Sunshine Law prohibits 2 or more members of the board from meeting (communicating!) regarding board business, or business which may conceivably become board business in the future, unless the meeting:

(1) is **noticed** in the newspaper within a **reasonable time** prior to the meeting;

(2) is **open** to the public;

(3) provides opportunities for the **public to speak** prior to board action; and

(4) provides **minutes** be taken.

"Meeting" = any communication, regardless of physical presence. A "meeting" takes place anytime 2 or more members get together, or communicate via any medium, casually or formally, and discuss some matter before the board, or matter which may ever conceivably come before the board at any time. Correspondence constituting a "meeting" includes communicating in person, via telephone, via email, via blogs, via websites, via twitter, via texts, and any other form of communication.

Board meetings must be **noticed within a reasonable time** prior to the meeting. The City Clerk can provide guidance as to notice particulars.

The board must select a **meeting venue open and accessible** to the public.

The board must **create an opportunity for the public to speak** prior to any board action.

The board must **create and retain minutes** of the meetings. Recordings do not constitute minutes.

Individual board members are personally responsible for not violating the Sunshine law. An unknowing violation is **punishable** by a fine of not more than $500. A knowing violation is a second degree misdemeanor.

PUBLIC RECORDS

Personal email, notes, etc. wholly unrelated to the board are NOT public records.

A Public Record encompasses all documents, papers, letters, maps, books, tapes, photographs, films, sound recordings, data processing software, or other material, regardless of the physical form, characteristics, or means of transmission, made or received pursuant to law or ordinance or in connection with the transaction of business by the Task Force on Improving Human Services.

All public records must be provided upon request. Request does not have to be in writing, no magical words.

Forward a public records request to the City Clerk. Determinations of whether any records are not public records or are exempt from disclosure will be made at that time.

A record is a public record unless exempt by law. Courts interpret the public records law strictly. "Strictly construed" means finding little to no exception. **The exemptions are very narrowly drawn. Do not create a record you do not want to provide.**

All public records must be retained. You may not destroy a public record (for years), until it may be destroyed according to the schedule adopted by the Division of Library and Information Services of the Department of State. The City Clerk can provide guidance as to when a document may be destroyed.

Form of the record is irrelevant. Includes correspondence of all types, such as texting or emailing. Includes draft documents. Includes postings to websites. As with traditional paper documents, individual board members have a statutory duty to retain and provide these public records, regardless of their medium. Do not create a record you do not know how to retain.

It is irrelevant how or on what equipment the document is created. **It does not matter if the document was created on city equipment or personal equipment (e.g., a text messages sent on your personal cell phone, or emails from a personal computer are public records and must be retained and provided upon request).**