

**City of Lawrence, Kansas  
HOMELESS ISSUES ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**August 13, 2013 Minutes (Lawrence City Commission Room)**

**Members present:** Brad Cook (Bert Nash Homeless Outreach Team), Becky Peters (Family Promise), Laurie Hooker (LDCHA), Lt. Matt McCluer (Salvation Army), Trent McKinley (LPD), Michael Brouwer (Douglas County Sheriff's Office Re-Entry Program), Cary Strong (Lawrence Business Community), Hubbard Collinsworth (at-large)

**Members absent:** Kadie Jorgensen (LMH)

**Staff present:** Danelle Dresslar, Rhonda Peterson

**Public present:** Pat Benabe, CJ Brune, Crystal Camis (Willow Domestic Violence Center), Saunny Scott

The meeting was called to order at 8:32 a.m. by Chair Cook.

**ITEM NO. 1 Introductions**

The members of the HIAC, city staff and guests introduced themselves.

**ITEM NO. 2 Approval of the Agenda and the May 7, 2013 Minutes.**

Motion by Collinsworth **to approve the Agenda and the May 7, 2013 meeting minutes of the HIAC**; seconded by McCluer.

The motion passed unanimously.

**ITEM NO. 3 Approval of Transportation Memo of Support.**

Dresslar said this memorandum should have been approved in June as it was on the City Commission agenda on June 9. It had been planned that it would be approved by the HIAC the morning of June 9, and on the City Commission agenda that evening, but there was not a quorum present to approve it. The approval issue is now just a formality; the transportation item has already been discussed before the City Commission, and the City Commission allocated more money to LCS for bus passes.

Collinsworth asked how much money was approved for bus passes.

Dresslar said they doubled the initial allocation which made it \$8,000.

Cook added all of the additional allocation went to the shelter, it was not split among other agencies.

Motion by McCluer **to approve the Transportation Memo of Support**; seconded by Hooker.

The motion passed unanimously.

**ITEM NO. 4 Discussion of Attendance and Meeting Structure.**

Dresslar pointed out that there has not been a quorum at the last two HIAC meetings. Last month a City Commissioner made a presentation to the committee when there was not a quorum present; in fact, there were more people present in the audience than on the committee. Dresslar asked if this meeting time works for everyone, or if the reason the attendance has been an issue is due to busy schedules.

Hooker said she recently had a death in the family, which caused her to be absent.

Collinsworth said he believes the time of the meeting is good for everyone, and the public is used to the committee meeting on the second Tuesday of every month at 8:30.

Dresslar said she feels bad that speakers and presenters are invited to talk, and then there are only 3-4 committee members present at the meeting. Additionally, business cannot be done if there's not a quorum present.

McKinley said he wasn't on the committee last summer, and if that was a typical occurrence for June and July.

Dresslar said it is not.

Collinsworth said he had medical problems which caused him to miss the last two meetings.

Dresslar asked that committee members contact her if they are not going to be present for the meeting so she can table the presentations until the next month's meeting.

Dresslar asked if the structure of the meeting is working for everyone. A couple of years ago the committee switched to the Housing Vision Reporting format, and she wondered if this format is providing the structure and information that everyone is looking for, or if there are changes or additions that anyone would like to see. Now is a good time to look at the format and see if it's working since the committee is in the middle of planning for next year.

Collinsworth said since he is off the committee in December, he will let the rest of the members make those comments.

Cook said as long as the agenda can be modified to accommodate pressing issues, like the transportation issue, when they come up, he is fine with the format.

Dresslar asked what kinds of topics the committee would like to see for the non-housing piece. Dresslar said her staff is now cut in half, and it is a time-consuming task for her to come up with topics for the agenda and to make the calls to schedule people, etc. She indicated setting up some kind of a calendar would help.

Dresslar said in the past the committee has heard from the hospital; Kadie Jorgenson is the LMH representative from the hospital and she's been deployed. The hospital does not have the staff available to replace her on the committee, which is why she hasn't been here for months. Dresslar believes she will be back for the November meeting.

Dresslar added that transportation is also a topic that's been discussed; Bert Nash and Just Food have also been discussed, Heartland RADAC have also come in and discussed its services. At one time the committee tried to have the utility companies come in and give a presentation as to what they provide for cold weather services. Ballard has also come in in the past and talked about the Emergency Services Council.

Cook said it would be helpful to have someone come in and talk about the affordable healthcare access changes.

Hooker said someone from DCF/Kancare may be able to come in and give a presentation. She will see if she has a contact for Dresslar to call. Hooker said she thinks it's important for next year to keep track of the shelter, Family Promise and other places that are dealing with the homeless.

Dresslar said those agencies will be reporting under the Emergency Shelter portion of the agenda.

Collinsworth asked Peters if there is any additional church support available to host families.

Peters responded they currently have 30 congregations that provide assistance, but of those only 13 are hosting congregations. Their national board says they have to have 13 more congregations come on to be able to provide additional services, so it's probably not something that's feasible. Family Promise has expanded their temporary housing program, however.

Dresslar said the committee will definitely want to hear from the Kansas Homeless Coalition when the coordinated assessment piece is implemented.

Dresslar added that if members want to go home and think about topics they would like to have presented, that would be fine. They can be brought up at the next meeting. Dresslar said she will see if she can get someone lined up to talk about the Affordable Healthcare Act at the next meeting.

## **ITEM NO. 5 Housing Vision Reports.**

### **A. Non-Housing – Discussion of Upcoming Topics**

Presentation deferred for August.

### **B. Emergency Shelter/Temporary Housing – Willow Domestic Violence Center**

Crystal Camis introduced herself. She said the center is just now receiving some funding they have been waiting for. Their fiscal year ended in June. There was an increase of about 200 women that were served in shelter and in the outreach programs. There was a decrease of approximately 20 children that were served, which means there were a lot more single women coming in for help. Their bed nights were down about 380, which looks like a good thing. Because there were more people being served in the outreach program, they did not need to come in for shelter. The average length of stay was down about 5 nights; they have a 20 day average that people come to stay.

Camis said volunteers have been stepping up and remodeling the shelter. Some of the funds are coming from the Douglas County Community Grant, and the CDBG grant funds. Groups have come in and adopted rooms at the shelter, so they have repainted and put in new carpet, new linens on the bed, new artwork, etc.

Camis said they are gearing up for back to school, they have a couple of openings right now they are looking to fill. They are looking to implement lethality assessments this year. They have been working with their sister agency SafeHome to get this implemented. It is basically an assessment where they can ask clients a series of questions and it helps help understand how high the lethality is in their situation, or what the odds are they could end up dead as a result in being in the relationship they are in. SafeHome has seen a high success rate using this assessment. It can be a real eye opener for someone to see on paper just how dangerous a situation can be. They are reaching out to local law enforcement for training. As a DB agency, Willow guarantees shelter for any person who completes this assessment with an officer and it is determined they are in a high risk ranking as a result of their responses. This means the shelter could see an increase in numbers of clients needing shelter. The fire department is coming in this week to help determine what the true capacity is and where the agency needs to be. Camis added they just found out they had a grant come through which is affording them a part time person to help specifically with this issue.

Brouwer said there will be domestic violence awareness classes being offered at the detention center starting in the fall.

Camis said the agency's goal is to target more of the preventative or outreach side so that fewer shelters are needed.

The committee thanked Camis for her presentation.

### **C. Transitional Housing/Supportive Services – LDCHA (if needed)**

Hooker said they have received their transitional housing vouchers and are rolling them out slowly due to cuts. They have a commitment to the transitional housing clients that when they finish the two year program, they can move into the house toward voucher. LDCHA has a high success rate getting them through those first two years. Due to the sequestration and other cuts, the HCV/Section 8 program is basically frozen right now. They will not really know anything until October; it's hard to budget when the funds are not there. The budget cuts have really been affecting the affordable housing. Hooker is afraid we may see the homeless numbers grow if the Section 8 program has more funding cuts.

Dresslar said two years ago, TBRA went from a funding of \$300,000 to \$177,000. That was a result of a 48% cut in the program; it was not as a result of the CDAC not allocating funds to that agency.

Cook asked if LDCHA is still accepting Section 8 applications.

Hooker said they are still accepting applications, but there will be a waiting list. She said they are seeing a lot of people coming in to Douglas County from Johnson County.

Collinsworth asked if LDCHA is re-verifying the waiting lists.

Hooker responded yes. Those who don't respond to the mailings are dropped from the waiting list.

### **D. Permanent Supportive Housing**

Dresslar said there is nothing new to report for Hope House.

Cook said he has heard that there is concern it may not continue.

Hooker said she will see if the contact can come speak at the next meeting about Hope House.

Dresslar said she will see about having Doug Wallace come back and give a presentation when the NOFA is released.

Collinsworth asked how Project Able is doing.

McCluer said there has not been any month-to-month change with this program. It is at capacity at the moment. He added there may be some funds still available for clients for leasing. They just have to be particular about who comes in to the program because it's a long term program.

## **E. Permanent Housing**

Dresslar asked what types of topics the committee would like to see under this category. Tenants to Homeowners is currently the only permanent housing piece, so there's not much new to hear every month from them.

Hooker said LDCHA has a home ownership program; she will see if the coordinator would like to come in and give a presentation.

Hooker asked if Habitat for Humanity has ever come in to talk. Dresslar said she didn't think so, and that she will call them and see if someone can come discuss their agency.

## **ITEM NO. 6 Miscellaneous/Calendar**

Collinsworth asked for an update on the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

Dresslar said MacLink is doing refresher training right now. The same issues and training challenges still exist. The Balance of State HMIS Oversight Committee looks at the systematic piece of HMIS: what's working, what's not. There is also a user group, which talks about their issues and those comments are then taken to the BHOC. Those two groups have been regularly meeting for a couple of months now. It is still a work in progress.

McCluer would like to discuss the need for additional shelter. LCS has been full, and the Salvation Army has been at capacity. It seems like there is a need for more shelter.

Cook said the city did not want to build a shelter to house 125. It will be difficult to get an additional shelter.

Dresslar added the funding piece makes it difficult as well.

Hooker said the churches are over-burdened right now as well.

Peters said it is important to discuss this now before it gets colder; there is definitely a need.

Dresslar said she will add that to the next agenda.

## **ITEM NO. 7 Public Comment.**

Brune asked there is an increase similar to the national trend of children needing to be removed from their homes and placed in foster care, and what happens to the children after they have been removed.

Peters said a lot of times, if there is a history of problems with a family, they will already have a family preservation worker in place to try and help keep the family together and work on resolving the problems because they realize that is part of the family's success, to keep them together. Peters said there has only been one situation where a teenage daughter was removed from the family situation for a brief period of time; she lived with her single mother. They knew the daughter would eventually be moving back in with her mother.

Brune said she wondered if the Salvation Army and Housing Authority are involved in situations where the children are removed from the families.

Hooker said she herself is a mandated reporter, so if she sees a bad situation she has to report it. If she sees them in a tough situation where it appears it may lead to the child being removing, she will typically ask that family to self-report. Kansas does believe strongly in family preservation. The state will work very hard to keep the child in the home. Kansas also has resources in place to provide assistance to families. The state will only remove children if the risk factor is high. Just because a parent is unable to pay the rent or provide utilities does not make them a bad parent.

Peters added just because someone reported a family to the state does not mean the child will be removed from the family environment.

Brune asked for clarification as to how a call is handled if someone reports a family.

Hooker said the family is investigated then depending on what the investigation finds, the child is either taken out of the home, or the family is assigned a case manager to work with them. The case worker will not speak to LDCHA workers about the situation, unless the client brings them in to the situation.

There was no further public comment.

**ITEM NO. 8 Adjourn.**

Motion by McCluer **to adjourn the May 7, 2013 meeting of the HIAC**; seconded by Cook.

The motion passed unanimously.

**Attendance Record**

Members	01/ 13	02/ 13	03/ 13	04/ 13	05/ 13	06/ 13#	07/ 13#	08/ 13	09/ 13	10/ 13	11/ 13	12/ 13
Michael Brouwer	E	+	+		+	+	U	+				
Hubbard Collinsworth	E	+	+	+	E	U	U	+				
Brad Cook	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+				
Brent Hoffman	+ ^											
Matt McCluer	+	U	U	+	+	+	+	+				
Trent McKinley	E	+	E	+	+	E	+	+				
Cary Strong	E	+	U	U	U	E	U	+				
Laurie Hooker	+*	+	+	+	+	+	E	+				
Becky Peters		+ ^	+	+	+	U	+	+				
Kadie Jorgensen		+ ^	U	U	E	E	E	E				

X - Meeting Cancelled Due to Inclement Weather  
 E - Excused Absence  
 U - Unexcused Absence  
 () - Last meeting in term.  
 \* - First meeting in term.  
 ^ - Last Meeting  
 # - Meeting not official – no quorum