



CITY OF NORMAN, OK CITY COUNCIL BUSINESS & COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING

Municipal Building, Executive Conference Room, 201 West Gray, Norman,
OK 73069

Thursday, March 04, 2021 at 4:00 PM

MINUTES

A virtual Meeting of the City Council Business and Community Affairs Committee was hosted at the Municipal Building Council Chambers, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma on the 4th day of March 2021, at 4:00 p.m. and notice of the agenda of the meeting were posted at the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray and on the City website at least 24 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Petrone called the meeting to order.

PRESENT:

Councilmember Ward 3 Alison Petrone (Chair)
Councilmember Ward 4 Lee Hall
Councilmember Ward 5 Michael Nash

OTHERS PRESENT:

Mayor Breea Clark
Councilmember Ward 6 Elizabeth Foreman
Councilmember Ward 8 Matthew Peacock
Ms. Michelle Evans, Homeless Program Coordinator
Ms. Brenda Hall, City Clerk
Lieutenant Cary Bryant, SRO/Officer
Mr. Darrel Pyle, City Manager

1. UPDATE ON THE CLEVELAND COUNTY CONTINUUM OF CARE EFFORTS TO ADDRESS HOMELESS.

Ms. Michelle Evans, Homeless Program Coordinator, said beginning in 1994 there was a Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requirement for community wide planning for individuals and families to address homelessness in the City's service area, it is Called OK504 and encompasses all of Cleveland County in participation within the Continuum of Care (COC). It is a requirement of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Entitlement Program, based on our population; The City receives a formula allocation and only 15% can be used for homelessness. It is also a Federal Program Continuum of Care through HUD. The COC has around 40 different agencies, nonprofits, faith based, and governmental entities, working in Norman and Cleveland County. The COC meet in quarterly meetings, which are open to the public to have the community support. It is the COC Executive Board who set the guidelines as a whole. The Board must consist of one representative to be homeless or formerly a homeless individual. The City of Norman is a Collaborative Applicant (CA) and is referred to as the lead agency or the CA. The CA is a union of state or local government. The CA does not provide direct client services the many agencies within the COC provide services. The City of Norman as the CA is here to administer the COC and Environmental Social and Governance (ESG) Programs at the local level and help monitor the federally funded partner organizations. We provide service coordination and project planning within the COC area. The COC provides annual training for all of our providers coordinating the implementation of housing and service system within the areas. The City of Norman serving as the CA, is responsible for all of the coordination and organizing the information, tracking the availability of resources. Understanding the regulatory requirements of multiple programs to address homeless within our community. There are many independent providers within our own area with different missions and funding resources. All funding is contracted directly from the funder, which would be HUD or ODOC, which is the Oklahoma Department of Commerce, to the agency in most cases. Continuum of Care funding has \$443,000 from our FY19 budget that rolls into the FY20 budget. The Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) is from the ODOC and the ESG the awards totaled \$251,403. The COC ESG Coronavirus (CV) funds is a totally separate award totaling \$767,882 and Staff is applying for additional \$1.2 million with the ESG CV grant. The City of Norman received \$188,502 out of the \$767,882, Food and Shelter received \$368,000 and Thunderbird Clubhouse \$211,190.

Since 2015 the COC has housed over 200 Veterans and over 380 chronic homeless persons across the Continuum. Our community reached Functional Zero for veterans the City ranked first in the State and seventh in the Nation and reached all federal criteria benchmarks for Zero Criteria. Functional Zero means COC had enough bed space for as many veterans as we can count in our jurisdictional area. The City of Norman had over 40 participating organizations, which helped accomplish being the first in the state to effectively end veteran homelessness.

It all starts with the By Name List (BNL) if we do not know who is homeless, where the gaps are and segment of the population are not receiving the care. It is very important to maintain the BNL list. No community can end homelessness of any kind without the real time persons.

specific data. The COC community uses the VI_SPDAT triage tool to quickly assess the health and social needs of homeless individuals/families to match them with the most appropriate support and housing interventions that are available. It is very important to realize the data that comes from that, the COC can provide case conferencing and prioritize housing based on the acuity scores and placement on the list. Through the VI SPDAT it monitors people's housing

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status housed or unhoused and most importantly, each person has a file that includes their name, history of homelessness, health and their housing needs. That is where all of our partners can go in and view a particular person and see their history.

On December 6, 2019, the COC used the building formerly occupied by the Pioneer Library as a winter warming shelter with sleeping mats, COC had a cleaning service and a blanket service was covered by the Norman Police Department budget of \$37,946. That amount did not cover the CDBG staff or reimbursement to COC partners for working shifts through February 29, 2020. COC registered 204 unduplicated individuals and 174 names were new to the system. Vulnerability Index Assessment 84 individuals attached to a housing plan and 64 housed out of the warming shelter. COC counted two chronic Veterans at the time and six non chronic and all were put in housing program. Fiscal Year 2021 opened again December 6, 2020 and was in operations until March 31, 2021. An Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) was written, which covered all costs including staff, the Grant amount was \$147,692. To date individuals checked into the shelter; is 134 total (100 males/34 females) individuals who had a VI Assessment 75, individuals attached to housing plan 35. Non Chronic Veterans 12 are currently in a housing program with SSVF or VA.

Chairman Petrone asked if they plan on doing a count mid-year count along with the January 28th count.

Ms. Evans said yes and the reason that HUD does the count in January is because it is the coldest month of the year people will be sheltered and easy to count.

Chairman Petrone said she and other councilmembers would be glad to participate in the count.

Ms. Evans said operations at Salvation Army opens at 4:30 pm dinner served at 5:00 pm, wake up at 6:00 am breakfast is served and guest do chores before they exit at 8:00 am they are not using the family room due to Covid and it is being used as an isolation room. During winter storm operations the quests were allowed to stay the whole day. Food and Shelter operate 8:00 am to 4:00 pm they serve breakfast and lunch and they have a day shelter as well with individuals for case management. Winter storm operations opened up from 6:45 am till 7:30 pm to help fill the gap until our winter shelter opened. The City of Norman shelter was opened from 8:00 pm to 6:30 am during winter storm opened at 7:00 pm and closed 7:00 am until transportation could get them over to Food and Shelter during the day.

Funding Summary to recap, the Community Development Block Grant. Funding, \$75,000 annually for coordination of COC activities and housing startup kits. A housing startup kit is just that, when someone gets housed from the By Name List, they get \$200 in gift cards and a case manager goes shopping with them to get the much needed items they need. CDBG Cares Act funding \$296,000 provided two years of funding for two outreach staff, housing startup and warming shelter rent and COC funding to agencies.

Councilmember Hall asked what role United Way played during the storm.

Ms. Evans said they are a major partner and help fund many of our agencies throughout the continuum and let the COC know they were available if any further assistance during the winter storm was needed.

Item 1, continued

Mr. Darrel Pyle, City Manager, said we have a special community that are willing to help in crisis and I tell them to contact the United Way because they are very good at organizing volunteer efforts and getting the money back out to our COC partners who are boots on the ground

Councilmember Hall asked what is the percentage of individuals would be considered chronically homeless because they are just not interested in a housing plan.

Ms. Evans said around 20% of our overall homeless population do not want housing. We continually offer them housing plans and communicate with them and try to help them overcome their reasons for not wanting to be housed. Often time individuals are not aware of what their choices are and that they are not alone.

Councilmember Hall asked do we have enough housing for everyone.

Ms. Evans said no we do not that is one of our main conversations with COC partners and with Federal partners we will never have enough housing. It is a goal to reach an inventory that the COC feels comfortable with, based on our numbers.

Councilmember Hall said the community at large needs to understand that addressing the homeless also means addressing affordable housing.

Councilmember Nash said with the information that is being collected, can COC do projections that we might be able to help individuals from becoming homeless in the first place.

Ms. Evans said that the ESG is what COC receives for prevention the last one was only \$250,000 and that is typically low. There are several different rules and criteria that individuals have to meet so they do not become homeless and it is a struggle to get individuals to contact someone for help before becoming homeless.

Councilmember Nash said he would like to see businesses in the community give leniency to accommodate individuals that have some existing problems like mental health issues.

Ms. Evans said she would welcome any business that would partner up with COC to do that and to also get landlords to rent a home to these individuals.

Councilmember Nash asked how many of the individuals have been in prison or a conviction that follows them the rest of their life.

Ms. Evans said around 30-40% and that is from minor infraction to very serious.

Lieutenant Cary Bryant, SRO/ Officer said the Department of Correction (DOC) needs to have a "Release Plan" and follow through with it. The COC is trying to reduce recidivism as much as we can.

Chairman Petrone asked if the City has a plan to get these high risk individuals covid vaccines.

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Ms. Evans said the Norman Regional Partners are setting up in the next couple of weeks at their facilities and the warming shelter to get everyone that wants a vaccination taken care of.

Chairman Petrone said there has been talks about using the building at 718 N. Porter asked if it would be sufficient to use it for the homeless individuals.

Ms. Evans said she does not have direct knowledge of this project but believes it would be sufficient space when she toured it.

2. MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS.

Chairman Petrone said Council would like an update on The Wilmington Property.

Mr. Pyle, said staff is scheduling a meeting with Mr. Mattoon. Staff has gone over the ULI Plan which includes the detail of trail development from Alameda up Robinson along Bishop Creek. He said a portion of Bishop Creek is on Mr. Mattoon's property. Community partners and the City's Park maintenance staff are putting together a cleanup strategy for that particular piece of property to assure there is no damage to Bishop Creek or the watershed. Then the goal is to turn the property over to Dr. Carrie Evenson, Stormwater Manager, for some strategic thought on community education and project sites for engineered solutions to protect the watershed in the watershed protection zone.

Chairman Petrone asked if staff have an estimated timeline on acquisition of the property.

Mr. Pyle, said should be around April and the goal is to have it cleaned appropriately and safe in early May.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:10pm

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor