

Central Florida Commission on Homelessness

Prevention Committee Meeting Minutes August 25, 2008 (8:30 a.m.) Heart of Florida United Way Dr. Nelson Ying Center, Orlando, FL

Members Present:

Executive Director, Raymond Larsen; Larry Olness; Vicki Kilroy; Carol Wick; Donna Wyche; Karen Broussard and Lt. Deanne Adams

Members Absent: Chairman Gary Earl; Cathy Butler-Brown; John Cooper and Paul Hoyer

Guests: Orange County Corrections Dept.: Lee Isbell, Manager, Inmate Programming & Support Division and Wilbert Danner, Supervisor, Inmate Program

I. Welcome and Introductions

In Chairman Gary Earl's excused absence, Executive Director, Ray Larsen introduced Lee Isbell and Wilbert Danner and welcomed all in attendance. Larsen called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m.

II. Approval of Minutes of Meeting August 4, 2008

Minutes were not discussed during this meeting.

III. Steps to be addressed underneath identified categories: Data; Employment, Education, Advocacy and Transitional Plan

- Data: Larsen commented that the region has several databases that are not linked....making it difficult to follow the pathways of individuals or families once they become homeless. One of the Committee's goal is to try to link information on jails, foster care, domestic violence, hospitals, mental health institutes, substance abuse institutes, etc., to develop a protocol to share as a community to try to work with these institutions to hook people up to resources so they are not threatened or become homeless once they are released from these systems.

Larry Olness/2-1-1 agreed to assist in gathering database information and identifying individuals presenting early warnings of becoming homeless.

Larsen informed that the Healthcare Committee will tackle on getting discharge data on hospitals, mental and substance abuse institutes. The Prevention Committee will focus on gathering data on what is happening at the jails, foster care and domestic violence centers and put together a group to work with the community to engage on helping folks being released from these institutions.

- Employment: Larsen informed that a group to work on the employment aspect will be identified during next meeting.
- Education: Larsen informed that one of the Commission's goals is to educate the community on all aspects concerning our homeless people to see how the community can respond and help. This is an area that also needs to be worked on.
- Advocacy: There are a number of funding issues and barriers to communications in between different organizations working to serve the homeless. Other policies and procedures may need to be developed going forward.

All committees have identified that the faith-based communities is doing a lot for the homeless, but we don't have a good connection with them. Bill Warren from Disney is helping the Commission pull together about 30 of the larger based providers to perhaps have a workgroup with them and have a better coordination of services.

- Transitional Plan: to be discussed in future meeting.

IV. Comments/brief- Orange County Corrections Dept.

Lee Isbell briefed the Committee on what the jails are doing in trying to build a structure to better prepare the inmates to get back to the community. A huge portion of their funds has been assigned to develop a re-entry program/strategy. In their attempt to provide better transitional services, Isbell said that at times they've had to also rely on faith based organizations. Nonetheless, Corrections Dept. has been having problems identifying inmates that are not participating in transitional programs and get them to do so. Wilbert Danner commented that a monthly Providers Network meeting is scheduled to identify providers who can assist them in transitioning the inmates back into the community.

Isbell mentioned that Goodwill Industries has partnered with the Corrections Dept. and established a job site/club inside the jails where inmates can join the club and successfully find job placements. Isbell also mentioned that Corrections Dept. and the City of Orlando have partnered to soon embark in a new vocational program consisting on having ex-offenders work on the city's new venues project.

Donna Wyche inquired about how Corrections Dept. identifies when they have homeless situations, and if they have any discharge policy. Isbell responded..."It is very difficult to know when we have a homeless situation because many do not report it due to many reasons, such as, not wanting anybody to know where they live or will live, etc.; besides the fact that so many release orders come through the court that release times come around all day....making this a challenge." As for having a discharge policy, we have mechanisms, specific policies and lines of release", Danner said.

Larsen commented that there are 10% of inmates coming out and our goal is to make possible that their families, as well as the inmates do not become homeless. We need to put specific policies together on how do we want inmates treated upon release from jails. Larsen asked Isbell and Danner to notify him of any potential contact to partner with to create a policy.

Karen Broussard inquired if anything is being done to acknowledge what happens to the families of inmates. Danner responded...."Inmates participating in our re-entry programs consent for their families to be contacted to work with. They are contacted by case managers".

Broussard asked if there are other places in the country we can look for as a model. Isbell responded.... "We have some resources from other counties, but then again.... the Judiciary is working with very limited resources."

Lee Isbell and Wilbert Danner offered to participate or assist as needed in any of the Committee meetings. Larsen thanked both for their input in this meeting.

V. Commission Committees updates:

Larsen provided the following updates on the Finance and Healthcare Committees:

- Finance:
The Finance Committee is working on doing a better job of identifying the resources that are coming to serving the homeless; what's the nature of those funds and where are they going to. Committee has been working on tracking resources in order to do some cost analysis to identify efficiencies, and is also in the position where they are organizing themselves to generate resources from the public/private and foundation communities.
- Healthcare:
There's a call for a regional board---the Healthcare Committee has decided to serve as that for the time being as they believe there are some infrastructure work to be done. This Committee came to the conclusion that right now the issue around healthcare service is more of a coordination issue. Committee will try to pull together an inventory of what the healthcare services/usage is, and then begin to identify the issues around that.

VI. Others business:

Larsen shared a New York Editorial (***New York behind the Curve***) with the Committee and commented that NY is focusing on the need to shift resources to prevention and end their homeless situation to 2/3 in the next 5 years.

Larsen mentioned that he recently met with Michael Frumkin, Dean of UCF College of Health & Public Affairs and whose expertise is on service delivery systems. Dean Frumkin has invited Larsen to speak to the leaders of all the different programs within the college, with the notion of enlisting students to assist as staff in some of the committees.

Larsen informed that there is a 3 year grant opportunity from HUD (Rapid Re-housing). It is his understanding that the only agency that can apply for this grant is the Coalition for the Homelessness Central Florida. The Coalition for the Homelessness has looked at the grant, and at the moment has identified some challenges to them being able to apply.

Broussard informed that the Jewish Family Services of Greater Orlando, with primary funding from the Dr. Phillips Foundation; the Sentinel Foundation, private donors and others, is doing an expansion of their Stabilization Program with two initial programs (Christian Services Center downtown and Community Service Center on the east side of Orlando). This roll out is going to happen on Oct. 1, 2008. JFS will also be focusing on 10 Parramore clients for this program.

Broussard also mentioned that Parramore Kidz Zone has allocated a portion of their dollars for emergency support for their neighborhood folks to come into this program. The Stability Program expansion has been planned to serve approximately 72 families this year.

VII. Next meeting schedule

Committee agreed to be contacted to coordinate future meeting date.

VIII. Adjournment

There being no further business before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 10:05a.m. Executive Director, Ray Larsen thanked all for their participation.