

**HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

January 10, 2023

6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Virtual Meeting via Cisco Webex

Members Present:

Tal Shahar, At Large Member	Leah White, At Large Member
Nancy Sushinsky, Caregiver Member	Ricky Mui, At-large Member
Deborah Moore, Consumer Member	Amanda Schwartz, At Large Member and Chair
Wesley Hicken, At Large Member	Stacey Gold, Caregiver Member
Leon Suskin, Caregiver Member	

Members Absent: none

Mayor and Council Liaison: Councilmember Mark Pierzchala

Staff Present: Frederika Granger, Community Services Manager

RE: Call Meeting to Order

Meeting was called to order at 6:40pm by Amanda Schwartz, Chair

RE: Community Forum

No guests

RE: Approval of Minutes from December 13, 2022

Minutes approved unanimously

RE: Community Services Report

Ms. Granger shared that the Department of Housing and Community Development is extremely busy with first full Holiday Drive since 2019. 619 families were served at Thanksgiving and 1200 children were served for December. Monetary and in-kind contributions were \$40,000 each. Expenses were covered. The Latino Youth Development Program students earned SSL hours helping with the Thanksgiving drive and the December toy shop. There is no way that we could do this without their help. Many volunteers helped as well. Major donors will be recognized by the Mayor and Council. All the services are doing well. Counselors continue to see great need for their services. The middle school boys Latino Youth Development Group has started. The Latina girls group starting soon as a lunch bunch at first. The Mentoring Program will expand into 6th grade at Wood MS with a lunch bunch to start as well, with same timeline. Linkages to Learning at Maryvale ES had Shady Grove Medical Center as a major donor for their Family Sponsorship program. REAP referrals as well as utility and energy efficiency referrals are increasing. due to the County's work with Covid rent relief decreasing.

- It was asked if behavioral incidents have increased in the schools and impact the need for mental health services to which Ms. Granger said yes and that that is why the County put in place the Bridges to Wellness in the high schools. That the City, with County funding and City funding, is in elementary and middle schools in the City is an asset. The needs assessment will give a full report.
- With regard to the Holiday Drive, were donations fewer? Yes and no. Overall the donations were very good but less than during the pandemic, and the need increased. However, the City has donations saved from past years of the Holiday Drive.

RE: City of Rockville FY23 Budget and ARPA Updates

- Bank On Rockville outreach has begun. Presentations on the program and on financial literacy have started.
- The Human Services Needs Assessment is with procurement. The goal is to have it completed by the selected vendor by Fall 2023.
- FY24 request from Community Services will be for additional funding for temporary part time staff for raises and more time for the expanded programming in Mentoring and Latino Youth Development programs, a mental health specialist who would provide SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral for Treatment/Services) as well as outreach and education, FTE to replace what current Housing Manager did before her new role, which is manage self-sufficiency programs. However, due to inflation Budget and Finance report that expenses for the City have impacted the ability to expand.

RE: Caregiver Grants FY23 Update

All are doing well. First quarter reports were good. Second quarter reports will come soon.

RE: Caregiver Grants Program Process for FY24

Review panel is set. Will review in January and recommendations to City Manager week of Feb 6th. Mr. Hicken and MR. Mui have offered to be the HSAC reviewers. There are two more, from HRC and Senior Commission.

- Ms. Schwartz recommended that Ms. Granger, in her research for scope of service for application review for FY24 Caregiver Grant Applications to talk to Dave Gottesman, the new Assistant City Manager who came from the County and is a data expert.
- Why not increase funding for Caregiver Grant Program since need has increased. CM Pierzchala raised the 1% of General Fund idea for what is allocated for this program every year. HSAC members will testify for adequate funding for Caregiver Grant Program. Ms. Granger shared that it will likely receive an increase based on Consumer Price Index but that the \$60,000 extra it received last year due to pandemic will not be included. Amount is \$713,530 plus CPI increase likely.

RE: Homelessness Roundtable Discussion – (Nancy Sushinsky, Stacey Gold, Leon Suskin, Deborah Moore)

Ms. Moore shared first about her experience when she lost her apt. in July of 2013 after having had major surgery and rehab. She went to the Wilkins Ave Shelter for eight months where she had a good experience and was then able to move to where she is now in supportive housing. She

shared that what is needed is education on empathy—what it means to be displaced. The pandemic has helped people understand better. Also, to understand that displacement is a traumatic experience. Deborah shared that she is a living example that, with the support she needed, she is able to live a productive, pleasing, pleasant life.

Ms. Gold shared about the All In Federal Strategic Plan. Two areas that Ms. Moore mentioned are part of this: 1) harmful public narratives; 2) trauma around losing one's home and, that one may come to shelter have had trauma before losing their home. Need trauma informed services.

Mr. Mui shared that he was displaced for only 12 hours when in Japan and felt fear then.

Mr. Suskin asked Ms. Moore, of all the interactions she had in her experience of displacement, what was most important moment, to which Ms. Moore shared that it was when one of the volunteers was making fried chicken and how much that made her feel at home, could walk away from the trauma for a minute, and continued to give her hope.

Ms. Schwartz shared that some communities are family to one another. And, that some individuals, typically those who suffer with mental illness, choose not to be off the streets. She also shared that there is a continuum of experiences.

Mr. Shahar shared that he likes to term, displaced, that it reminds him of the term, refugee. Politics or economics makes one feel internally displaced. He asked how many families are homeless in Rockville and what is the residence of someone with no address.

Ms. Sushinsky shared about the County's efforts to end homelessness, a goal for 2025. They say that they ended veteran homelessness. They use the metric, functional zero, which means that there are no more homeless people per month than there are people placed in housing. Ms. Sushinsky also spoke about the annual count in time that takes place in January, to get a real count of those in shelters and on the streets. Volunteers help, are trained. Good chance to get people linked to services.

Councilmember Pierzchala shared that he has walked every street in Rockville and has seen several Lean To Type shelters. He shared that affordable housing has historically been a difficult topic in politics.

Ms. Schwartz shared that the McKinney Vento data shows how many displaced children there are so that funding may be directed towards their education.

All agreed that the way someone is assessed, without bias, makes a huge difference.

Mr. Suskin shared about how residency is defined among displaced people in Rockville as people often come to shelters with nothing to show past residences.

1. Different procedures in different jurisdictions. Documents that can show previous residence are used to determine where the funding comes from to serve that person.

2. Who is homeless? If child is homeless, does whole family get served? Case managers and middle managers are faced with this often. A multi-generational approach would say that, yes, the whole family gets housed.

What can HSAC do to address education on empathy towards those who are displaced and to address affordable housing? CM Pierzchala encouraged testimony at Mayor and Council meetings. Could testify to add to Caregiver Grant Program in which there are a few shelter programs and services for displaced people. Promoting more affordable housing is difficult because people don't like overcrowded schools and traffic, per CM Pierzchala. The Restoration Center, with some proposed services to be provided to prevent those in need of mental health and substance use services from going to emergency rooms. Need for public transportation for it. Many residents are resistant to this. Recipients of services could testify. Caregiver agencies could testify. Can HSAC study success with resistance in other areas?

RE: Testimony to M&C

HSAC could encourage Caregivers and their clients to testify. HSAC could facilitate signing up 2-3 Caregivers/clients per meeting to testify. Could testify to support Restoration Center.

- 1/30/23 Nancy and Stacey, new initiative
- February 6 Leon Suskin (Mental Health?)
- February 27 work session
- March 6 Budget Hearing
- March 13 work session
- March 20 work session
- March 27
- April 17 Budget Hearing

RE: Future HSAC meetings and Recruitment

- Ms. Granger to send out poll about changing day and time of meeting.
- Next meeting will be virtual.
- Ms. Granger has asked City Clerk to encourage Mayor to soon nominate for appointment Camille Knolls for now vacant at-large slot.

RE: Federal Legislation Advocacy (All Members)

Keep in mind that Federal Budget could change at anytime to prevent shutdown and due to budget negotiations. New governor for MD.

RE: Other Items

- What other roundtables to members want to have?
 - April – City policy on refugees
- Salute to NonProfits: Members want a Human Services “Fair/Salute” at Farmers’ Market. ACTION ITEM: Ms. Granger will draft a list of providers for next meeting.

RE: Agenda items for next meeting, February 14, 2023, Virtual

- Usual report items: Community Services, Caregivers, HSAC goals, testimony update
- Vacancies

- Budget updates
- Testimony
- Future meetings
- Federal Legislation
- Roundtable presentations

RE: Adjourn

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn; unanimous vote to adjourn at 8:30pm