

**HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
July 9, 2019
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Rockville City Hall**

Members Present:

Nancy Sushinsky, Caregiver Member	Emily Pearce, At-large Member
Laurie Gira, Caregiver Member	Leon Suskin, At-large Member
Deborah Moore, Consumer Member	Krishna Kumar, At-large Member

Members Absent:

Andrew Buchholz, At-large Member	Jen Lafferty, At-large Member
Stacey Erd, Caregiver Member	Mark Pascu, At-large Member
Ciriaco Gonzales, At-large Member, Chair	

Mayor and Council Liaison Present: Councilmember Beryl Feinberg

Staff Present: Carlos Aparicio, Community Service Manager
Allison Hoy, Community Services Program Analyst

RE: Call Meeting to Order

Carlos Aparicio, Community Service Manager, called the meeting to order at 6:40 pm because the Chair and Co-Chair were not present.

RE: Introduction of Allison (Ali) Hoy, Community Services Program Analyst

Allison Hoy, Community Services Program Analyst, introduced herself to the Human Services Advisory Commission members. She shared her environmental and quantitative analysis background and her transition into community services work.

RE: Community Forum

No discussion

RE: Community Services Division Report

Carlos Aparicio, Community Service Manager, provided the following announcements:

- The Community Services Program Analyst is currently working on reporting, including the Human Services Advisory Commission monthly reports. Carlos asked for comments on the June monthly report, but none were made.
- A Linkages to Learning Recognition Ceremony was held on June 12th, attended by County Councilmember Gabe Albornoz and Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich. Members of the Linkages to Learning community were honored with “Volunteer of the Year” awards. One of the honorees, Dianne Fasolina, City of Rockville staff member, volunteers at Maryvale Elementary – a City of Rockville run Linkages to Learning site.

- With the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) recently released, Carlos informed the members that the City of Rockville is working with county counterparts to get the application process started.
- The Community Services Division’s summer programs have begun, including:
 - Police Camp, a 10-day Linkages to Learning program recently completed at the David Schull Community Center; comprised of 12 campers and 18 kids who participate in the Linkages to Learning program during the school year. Michael Prather, Montgomery County Police Community Services Officer, organizes activities that allow the kids to connect and have positive experiences with local police. This year, a former Redskins football player came to meet the kids.
 - The Latino Youth Development Program has begun its summer soccer camps. The program focuses on soccer training and conditioning as well as other physical activities. The kids also participate in a community volunteer project and gain student service learning (SSL) hours. This year, Mariella Correal, the Community Services Outreach Worker, has asked Niambi Powell, the Community Services Referral Coordinator, to provide the kids with a financial literacy workshop.
- Niambi Powell, the Community Services Referral Coordinator, has been working at the Interfaith Works Women's Center, Stepping Stones and with the MD Homeless Youth Program to provide financial literacy information. The next step for the Referral Coordinator is providing permanent supportive housing clients financial literacy workshops and working with families in the community to discuss the benefits of working while living in public housing.

RE: Approve June 11, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Debbie Moore, consumer representative, moved that the minutes be approved as drafted, and, Leon Suskin, at-large member, seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

RE: Caregiver Funding Task Force Report

The Caregiver Funding Task Force Report is complete, and the details of the report will be presented at the Mayor and Council meeting on July 15th. Mark Pascu, At-large Member of the Human Services Advisory Commission and Chair of the Caregiver Funding Task Force was unable to attend this month’s Human Services Advisory Commission meeting to present the report recommendations its members. Carlos Aparicio displayed the final presentation for the committee members and spoke about hard work by the members of the Caregiver Task Force that went into drafting the report. Carlos was able to take questions on the report but would like the Caregiver Funding Task Force to answer said questions at a later date.

Comments on the Caregiver Funding Task Force Report included:

- Emily Pearce, At-large Member, opened the discussion by asking if this new process would be put into place in 2020 or 2021? Carlos Aparicio responded that it is up to Mayor and Council on how much of the report recommendations to adopt and on what timeline. He estimated that the creation of a new grant management system would likely take three to nine months, if chosen for adoption. He mentioned that there would be a lot

of discussion points and that more would be clear after the Caregiver Funding Task Force presents the report findings to Mayor and Council on July 15, 2019.

- Emily Pearce also pointed out that the Caregiver Funding Task Force Report relies on the Human Services Advisory Commission to set annual priorities from the needs assessments. Carlos stated that if there is a two-year grant cycle, then needs assessment process can be done every two years.
- Nancy Sushinsky, Caregiver Member, asked how a blind grant system would work; a suggestion mentioned in the report. Laurie Gira, Caregiver Member, also asked if local jurisdictions like City of Gaithersburg and Fairfax use this system. Carlos replied that this is a concept from the federal level where they redact identifying information like the organization name and location in order to remove potential bias. The commission discussed whether this method would work on a local level, and many agreed that this might be challenging because of the smaller number of service providers in Rockville versus the scope of Federal Government grants.
- Laurie wondered if multi-year awarded grantees will potentially become a budget line item for the City of Rockville. Carlos responded that it is not discussed within the report.
- Deborah Moore, Consumer Member, brought up how the political climate can skew the grants process and how this report appears to be attempting to reduce this in the process. Councilmember Beryl Feinberg highlights that the report seems to indicate that Mayor and Council will not make specific funding recommendations, which is a huge departure from the current process. Councilmember Feinberg then asked if this would give the city manager the ultimate decision power instead of Mayor and Council. Carlos responded that the report recommendations somewhat mirror the Gaithersburg model, in which the Grants Review Panel would have final say in which groups would get funding. Councilmember added how this recommendation would make it so that the Mayor and Council would be basically appropriate funds, but not to specific organizations because City Manager, Mayor and Council will have no final say.
- Laurie Gira, Caregiver Member, asked if the Caregiver Grants Panel members have been historically well-versed in human services. Carlos discussed possibility of bringing in subject matter experts approved by mayor and council. He also noted that the recruitment process for the Panel is recommended to begin in October, but he recommends it beginning in August because the process may be slow. The City Clerk leads recruitment efforts but use other channels to spread awareness of the recruitment process. Nancy Sushinsky, Caregiver Member, and Councilmember Feinberg both asked if people on boards of non-profits were allowed on the panel. Carlos responded by saying those guidelines would need to be discussed along with more specifics on procedures.
- Carlos ended the discussion by saying he will make a statement during the Mayor and Council meeting that the Human Services Advisory Commission has reviewed the Caregiver Funding Task Force Report but did not yet provide recommendations.

Due to the extensive conversation on this topic, Laurie Gira asked the group if the commission should hold an August meeting to discuss this topic further. The group agreed that it might be difficult to gather a quorum. Councilmember Beryl Feinberg concluded that it would likely depend on how the presentation of the Caregiver Funding Task Force Report is received at the Mayor and Council meeting on July 15th.

RE: Caregiver Site Visit Reports: Hope Housing

Emily Pearce, At-large Member, began by stating how impressed she was with the program and how they are addressing homelessness. She added that the caseworkers and staff are very engaged and involved in supporting their clients. She commented that she began her visit by seeing the administrative offices and then viewed one of the houses that had been renovated and opened three to four months ago. She states that the women living in the home expressed that they were very happy. The program serves 20 people in Rockville. Carlos Aparicio interjected with story about Hope Housing used to have their fourth house in Gaithersburg, but that a woman bought a house and renovated it for the purposes of permanent housing services in Rockville. Emily continued by sharing that one of the houses has been fitted into an aging friendly living space for a group of seniors that are living in the home. Carlos shared that one of the women he spoke to expressed that she was very happy living in the house and liked the access to bus transport but was disappointed with the lack of bus service in the evenings. Krishna Kumar, At-large Member, asked how long these clients stay in the housing units and Carlos responded that Hope Housing provides permanent supportive housing for those who have disabilities or have experienced chronic homelessness.

Councilmember Beryl Feinberg asked about Hope Housing's funding avenues. Carlos responded that they receive funding from the City of Rockville, Montgomery County Health and Human Services, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and various foundations. Leon Suskin, At-large Member, asked if Hope House expressed any of the challenges of this model of addressing homelessness. Emily responded that the placement of new clients can be tricky because of personality clashes and that they try to provide the best placement for any new clients. Carlos said that if there is a potential need to rehouse someone, that Hope Housing would need to find a new option or refer them within five days to another housing option.

RE: Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless, Homebuilders Men's Emergency Shelter update

Carlos Aparicio, Community Service Manager, gave an update on a matter that was brought up in the last Human Services Advisory Commission meeting, upon request from Councilmember Beryl Feinberg. Based on his communication with outside agencies, Carlos summarized that the issue began when rumblings began from nearby methane gas processing and administrative employees of the Homebuilders Men's Emergency Shelter were beginning to feel ill from said rumblings. As a result, the administrative staff moved to the building across the street. In mid-May, the Men's Emergency Shelter residents reported feeling sick from the rumbling, so they were moved to the overflow facility. In the short-term, Montgomery County Health and Human Services assisted the shelter with the basic needs for getting the overflow facility fully operational. Carlos said that county staff is working on finding a long-term solution and would be bringing out occupational safety experts to check on the site. Carlos expressed his hope that this issue be resolved before the winter season because the new facility is not large enough to handle the number of winter residents the Homebuilders Men's Emergency Shelter typically serves.

Nancy Sushinsky, Caregiver Member, commented that the overflow facility has been improved as a result of this move, but asked about potential issues with the groundwater. Carlos mentioned

that the groundwater was a separate issue from the dump excavation, but that consultants are being brought in to check on this.

Councilmember Beryl Feinberg has requested that Carlos share another update at the next Human Services Advisory Commission meeting.

RE: Old Business

- **Montgomery Cares Advocacy Update**

Laurie Gira, Caregiver Member, informed the Human Services Advisory Commission that the Montgomery Cares eligibility changes went into effect on July 1, 2019 even though there is still some “back and forth” regarding when and how Office of Eligibility Services (OESS) employees will be trained to work within the healthcare facilities to check client eligibility for healthcare services. Leon Suskin, At-large Member, commented that the OESS employee at his clinic is being shared with another clinic. Laurie mentioned that there is a buffer period of three healthcare facility visits per patient allowed without switching to a Qualified Health Plan. Individual clinics may soon have to make decisions on reimbursement issues of patients that are no longer eligible for Montgomery Cares, but do not switch to a Qualified Health Plan. Deborah (Debbie) Moore, Consumer Member, asked if there is any possibility in the future of Montgomery Cares procedures to return to prior processes, to which Laurie replied would be unlikely.

Carlos Aparicio, Community Service Manager, mentioned that he can reach out to Linda McMillan, a Montgomery County Senior Legislative Analyst, for an update from the county so that the Human Services Advisory Commission may determine options and vote on what further action to take. Laurie Gira, Caregiver Member, made a motion for Carlos to pursue this action. Deborah Moore, Consumer Representative, seconded this motion. There was unanimous approval from the commission members.

RE: Other Items

- **Community Action Commission seeks new members**

Nancy Sushinsky, Caregiver Member, announced that the Community Action Commission has members leaving and would like to push for more diversity in its incoming members. She asked that Human Services Advisory Commission members reach out to their networks for people from Gaithersburg to apply.

- **Caregiver Funding Task Force formation**

Emily Pearce, At-large Member, asked if there was a complaint that caused the Caregiver Funding Task Force to be formed. Carlos Aparicio, Community Service Manager, explained how the Mayor and Council directed staff to provide a briefing on the grants program based on a memo they received that outlined challenges with the program. Councilmember Beryl Feinberg included it had been 10 years since grant process was reviewed and Mayor and Council concluded that they needed to look for best practices in this process.

Emily Pearce summarized that the Caregiver Funding Task Force was formed to find best practices that consider about fiscal responsibility and what is the “best fit for Rockville”, to

encourage new grantee funding opportunities, and to avoid singular decision-making process and empower the grant review panel.

Carlos added how his attendance in Nonprofit Montgomery trainings had demonstrated that the City of Rockville is aligned with many of the practices being taught, but we could do better – which is why we want to make changes.

Carlos added how he would bring the commission more information to the next meeting. This may include a discussion on the recommendations made by the Task Force as well as an implementation strategy from staff.

RE: Plan Agenda for September 10, 2019 Meeting

- Caregiver Funding Task Force report & recommendations
- Caregiver Site Visits
- Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless, Homebuilders Men's Emergency Shelter update

RE: Adjourn

Deborah Moore, Consumer Representative, moved that the meeting be adjourned and Emily Pearce, At-large Member, seconded the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:28 PM.