

**HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
September 10, 2019  
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.  
Rockville City Hall**

**Members Present:**

Jen Lafferty, At-large Member  
Emily Pearce, At-large Member  
Leon Suskin, At-large Member

Laurie Gira, Caregiver Member  
Deborah Moore, Consumer Member

**Members Absent:**

Nancy Sushinsky, Caregiver Member  
Stacey Erd, Caregiver Member

Andrew Buchholz, At-large Member  
Mark Pascu, At-large Member

**Staff Present:**

Carlos Aparicio, Community Service Manager  
Allison (Ali) Hoy, Community Services Program Analyst

**RE: Call Meeting to Order**

Carlos Aparicio, Community Service Manager, called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm because the Chair and Co-Chair were not present. He notified members of the Human Services Advisory Commission (Commission) that two members had resigned. Ciriaco Gonzales, At-large Member and Chair, resigned and needs to be replaced as chair during the next meeting. Krishna Kumar, At-large Member, resigned to continue serving on the Senior Citizens Commission.

**RE: Community Forum**

Judy Rudolph, a member of the Pedestrian Advocacy Committee, introduced herself to the Commission and spoke of her recent experience moving from a single-family residence to a rental apartment in Rockville Town Center. She wanted to observe the Commission meeting and highlight accessibility issues that could be related to the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA). Judy spoke about observing poor wheelchair access in the downtown areas and that the addition of scooters has become a hazard for disabled pedestrians. Emily Pearce, At-large Member, thanked Judy for coming to speak about this issue and expressed the Commissions interest in discussing this matter in future meetings. Carlos Aparicio suggested speaking with Janet Kelly, City of Rockville's ADA coordinator. Carlos also informed the group of the City of Rockville's ongoing ADA compliance efforts after a study on the subject was completed a few years ago. As a result, the City has been updating facilities and City parking lots. He also informed the group that Rockville Town Center is not City of Rockville operated, per se, so there may be limited say over the area. Carlos said he will contact Janet Kelly and copy Ms. Rudolph.

**RE: Approval of Minutes from July 9, 2019**

Laurie Gira, Caregiver Member, moved that the minutes be approved as drafted, and, Emily Pearce, At-large Member, seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**RE: Caregiver Task Force Report & Recommendations**

The Caregiver Funding Task Force (Task Force) Report was presented to Mayor and Council at the July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019 meeting. Mark Pascu, At-large Member and Chair of the Task Force was unable to attend this month's meeting, so Carlos briefly summarized Mark's previous comments on the Task Force report. In summary, the report recommends a shift in influence from Mayor and Council to the Application Review Panel through changes in the Human Services grant process workflow and roles.

**RE: Caregiver Task Force Report, Staff Recommended Implementation Plan**

After the Task Force's presentation on July 15<sup>th</sup>, Mayor and Council directed City staff to research an electronic application and reporting system and return to the body with an implementation strategy for the recommendations outlined in the report. Carlos Aparicio shared details of the staff proposed, two-year, phased, implementation plan with members of the Commission. The plan includes discussion of 14 recommendations from the Task Force Report.

The 14 Task Force recommendations were discussed in the following order:

1. Applications must be complete and submitted by the deadline to be considered
2. Funds should continue to be allocated in the Community Services Division's budget (awards are grants, not RFPs)
3. Offer flexibility about requiring Rockville client names in reports
4. Eligibility and selection criteria
5. Twice-yearly reporting
6. Grants paid in two installments
7. Two-year grant cycle
8. Simplify the application and instructions
9. Electronic Application and Reporting System
10. Narrow Focus of Service Areas
11. Needs Assessment
12. Proceed with the adopted panel selection process
13. Roles and Responsibilities
14. Human Services Grant Process Flow

Key takeaways from the discussion of these recommendations were:

- Carlos spoke about the research staff have completed regarding the cost of an electronic application and reporting system, including meeting with local jurisdictions that have switched to an electronic application system.
  - Laurie commented that the recommended electronic application and reporting system would help set automatic application deadlines and ease administrative burdens for the Caregiver applicants.
- Carlos highlighted other ways in which the Community Services Division will ease administrative burdens and provide flexibility to Caregiver applicants, including:
  - No longer requiring the Board President to sign applications. Instead, staff propose providing a document to be signed by the Board President and Executive Director that gives authority to the grant writer.
  - Staff will offer additional technical assistance sessions, so more applications will be completed on time, more quickly and with higher quality.
  - Staff will provide programs with flexibility in the reporting of clients' names and allow for the reporting of the first two initials of the first and last names of Rockville clients.
- Regarding grant applicant eligibility and selection criteria, Deborah (Debbie) Moore, Consumer Member, asked about specific language in the report, which states one

eligibility requirement is “the nonprofit has satisfactorily completed previous Rockville grants (unless the applicant is new to the process).” Deborah wanted to know the protocol for non-profits that may have performed unsatisfactorily in the past but have since proven to be a successful nonprofit, social service provider. Jen Lafferty, At-large Member, recommended that a time limit be placed on looking at past performance of a nonprofit as a factor for application eligibility.

- Carlos shared that the Community Services staff only provide three years’ worth of past performance data to the Application Review Panel.
- Regarding needs assessments, staff propose amending the recommendation to allow for other reports and assessments to be utilized based on changing needs in the community, updates to stated documents, and to allow newly developed assessments to be utilized.
  - Leon Suskin, At-large Member, agreed and commented that needs assessments listed in the report have no focus on disability or affordable housing issues.
- Regarding the Task Force report’s recommended roles and responsibilities for those involved in the Human Services grant process, many of the Commission members had concerns with specific language in the report. The report states “The grant review process has to include experts serving on the Application Review Panel. An expert is a person with strong educational and/or professional background of the field the grant is submitted in (e.g. homelessness, health care).”
  - Jen Lafferty raised concerns about requiring subject matter experts on the panel because this may end up narrowing the service areas that the Application Review Panel provides funding due to subconscious bias toward subject of expertise. Laurie also expressed concern that some service areas could be at a disadvantage if there are no subject matter experts of that service area on the Panel.
  - The members of the Commission agreed there should be broad participation on the Panel and not only subject matter experts.
  - Emily Pearce advocated that there should also be a consumer member on the Panel to ensure diversity among panel membership. She emphasized that this is an accessibility and social justice issue and that a consumer member can make the review process stronger by providing diverse feedback. Deborah Moore concurred with Emily’s recommendation.
  - Carlos says that he hopes that Panel Applicants will include people that are not necessarily subject matter experts but have expressed interests in grants. Ultimately it will be up to the Mayor and Council, but Carlos added that he would provide this feedback to help with representation on future panels.
  - Carlos believes that the panel application process should begin very early, and that should include five candidates with a few alternates.
- Carlos discussed steps that would need to be taken to form the Application Review Panel. He met with the City Attorney and was informed that a resolution needs to be drafted and a charter created because of the recommended budget authority given to this group. The charter approval process will also include a public Mayor and Council vote and public hearings.
  - Jen Lafferty asked if a scoring sheet was included in the Task Force report or if it would need to be drafted. Carlos replied that one will have to be drafted.

- Leon Suskin asked if the electronic application and review system would use auto-scoring and negate group panel meetings during the review process. Carlos replied that there would be both auto-scoring of individual panel scores and a group meeting in person to gather a consensus for grant funding amounts.
- Leon mentioned that he liked the “blinded review” language included in the Task Force report. A question of whether the Human Services Advisory Commission would be eliminated from panel eligibility because they have intimate knowledge of the Caregivers. Leon proposed that Commission may want to remain independent from panel, while Debbie argues that they should only be required to be independent if all other Boards and Commissions function in the same way. Jen expressed concern that the “blinded review” could remove the qualitative component of applications in attempts to remove any bias.
- Laurie Gira brought up that nonprofits like the personal touch of testifying to Mayor and Council and she proposed that there should be an interview component in the application review process where Caregiver’s can come in and answer questions that the Application Review Panel may have.
- Carlos informed the Commission that there are two Task Force report recommendations that staff would not be currently recommending (twice-yearly reporting and grants paid in two-installments). This is based on previous Mayor and Council direction.
  - Having spoken to Caregivers, they do not seem to think quarterly reports are cumbersome and some must do monthly reports for other funding avenues.

**RE: Community Services Division Report**

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

- The following Community Services Division’s summer programs have concluded:
  - Police Camp, a 10-day Linkages to Learning program 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.
  - The Latino Youth Development Program soccer camps focused on soccer training and conditioning and other physical activities. The kids earned student service learning (SSL) hours by participating in a community volunteer project. SSL hours can be difficult to earn for kids with a lack of transportation access.
  - The Summer Enrichment Program that provides mentoring, educational activities, mindfulness, and physical activity to students to prevent the “summer slide” that occurs during the summer months. There were volunteers from the mentoring program that Kate Bouwkamp, the Community Services Program Coordinator, runs during the school year.
- Carlos and Ali Hoy, the Community Services Program Analyst, have been fostering more municipal collaboration and communication by meeting with local jurisdictions (City of Gaithersburg and Takoma Park) about electronic application and reporting systems.
- Carlos and Ama Kyere, the Youth and Family Counselor, attended meetings at Rockville and Richard Montgomery High School to inform the School Resource Counselors and Principals of the new scope of services provided. They also offered a youth financial

management class to be taught by Niambi Powell, the Community Services Referral Coordinator.

- Niambi Powell has been working with Blockchain Frontiers Foundation (a group that received state funding to update weatherization of homes). Niambi completed three applications and leveraged \$8,000 in funds to get an additional \$15,000 in upgrades to Rockville residents' homes to help save on energy costs.
- The Community Services Division has been working on Holiday Drive preparations, including meeting with members of the Montgomery County Department of Health & Human Services and Montgomery County Holiday Giving Project Coalition to discuss the Montgomery County Holiday Giving database.

### **RE: Report on Introductory Visit to Cornerstone Montgomery**

During the month of August, Ali Hoy, Community Services Program Analyst, and Carlos Aparicio, Community Service Manager, visited Cornerstone Montgomery's Outpatient Mental Health Clinic in Rockville. The visit included a tour of the facility and discussion on reporting output and outcomes to measure the program's success. The Clinic provides mental health, psychiatric and therapeutic treatment services to clients. Between three Montgomery County locations, they have a capacity of over 1,650 individuals annually.

Ali shared that Cornerstone Montgomery purchased 2 Taft Court in 2017 to co-locate with the Interfaith Works Women's Center (a year-round emergency shelter for women), and CCI Health and Wellness (who provide primary and dental health services). The co-located space is a model that hopes to decrease interruptions of services for the shelter clients because they have nearby access to services without worrying about transportation issues.

Some interesting features of the facility include:

- A portable language device that connects with a live, on screen translator in over 100 languages (capable of connecting with a translator on-call for common languages and scheduling in advance if a client with a language barrier has scheduled an appointment).
- Noise emitting devices outside the office doors to protect client privacy.
- An art room with graphic design capabilities. The art is displayed and for sale in the offices and they also connect artists with local shows or galleries to display their work.

Debbie asked for more information about the interactions between Interfaith Works and the two on-site health centers. Carlos replied that agency staff noted a greater compliance with goals for shelter residents. They also added how this model allows warm referral handoffs when transitioning clients from the shelter to the health center because they are co-located.

Leon asked a question about a lack of documentation as a possible barrier to services. Carlos replied that "Healthcare for the Homeless" allows for health and behavioral services for homeless, regardless of documentation. He also noted that the Outpatient Mental Health Clinic accepts Medicaid, but also accepts those without insurance.

### **RE: Human Services Advisory Commission Chair Selection Discussion**

Carlos Aparicio outlined the process of voting for a new Commission Chair. During the next meeting, those who would like to be considered as Chair, will each give a short speech about why they want the job and then step out of the room while the other Commission members vote. The Chair must be an At-large or Consumer representative.

**RE: Old Business**

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

Carlos Aparicio gave an update that the Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless is working with Montgomery County to find a suitable replacement location to home the Homebuilders Men's Emergency Shelter. They were working with the Department of Health and Human Services and General Services to resolve the issue before the winter season because the current facility is not large enough to handle the number of winter residents the Homebuilders Men's Emergency Shelter typically serves. Carlos mentioned the potential challenges regarding code compliance (providing showers and a suitable kitchen) and zoning issues. Decisions will need to be made soon because the winter season is beginning in a few weeks.

**RE: Other Items**

- Rockville Goes Purple

Rockville has displayed purple lights around town to raise awareness for National Recovery Month in September. Rockville is partnering with the Knight Foundation for the first time to co-host the Race4Recovery 5K in Rockville Town Square on Sunday, Sept. 29. Kirk Knight is a man who lost his son to a heroin overdose. The purpose of the foundation and race is to raise awareness for opioid abuse and break the stigma surrounding addiction.

- Multiple Sclerosis – Nonprofit Fair

Carlos oversaw a City of Rockville booth at the EMMES providers fair held in Rockville Town Center. He thought they did a great job with a good turnout and heard positive feedback from the organizations who participated.

- Human Services Advisory Commission vacancies

Debbie Moore advocated for another consumer member to join the Commission. She pointed out that consumer members meet many of the Commissions qualifications, such as understanding the social services provided and being a Rockville resident, but that the consumer members have the lowest representation among the Commission. Carlos said he will send a note to the Montgomery County Volunteer Center and the City Clerk's office that states that while general participation in the application process is always sought after, the Commission members want to emphasize greater consumer member participation in filling these vacancies.

**RE: Plan Agenda for October 8, 2019 Meeting**

- Site visits (Community Reach of Montgomery, Stepping Stones)
- Vote on a new Human Services Advisory Commission Chair
- Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless, Homebuilders Men's Emergency Shelter update

**RE: Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 PM.