



INTERAGENCY COMMISSION ON HOMELESSNESS

Housing for all = A Stronger Montgomery

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/homelessness

HousingForAll@montgomerycountymd.gov

Bi-Monthly Commission Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 4, 2020 | 3-6p

Rockville Memorial Library, 1st Fl Conference Rm, 21 Maryland Avenue, Rockville 20850

Members

(Present or Represented)

Buckland, Vickie (Rep. Raymond Crowel)

Bohorquez, Margarita (Rep. Reuben, Ruschelle)

Chesney, Amanda

Glass, Evan

Goldman, Jeff (Chair)

Habte, Asmara G.

Harris, Amanda

Hong, Christine (Rep. Shane Rock)

Jochum, Kendra (Rep. Angela Talley)

Johnson, Ebony (Vice Chair)

Nigam Aseem

Roynestad, Brian

Seidel, Stan

Sinclair-Smith, Susan

Members (Excused)

London, Sharan

Members (Absent)

Kauffman, Louise

Miller, Eneshal

Spann, Stacy

Zucker, Craig

Public Presenters

Connealy, Patrick

Koosed, Brian

Lowe, Lisa

Guests

Allen, Tiffany

Bolourian, Neda

Bowman, Betsy

Braney, Ashley

Carranza, Valeria

Curd, Alexandra

Demarais, Frank

Guzman, Katherine

Hegel, Connor

Huvelle, Justin

Kempner-Wink, Andrea

Kanneh, D.

Krakar, Haifa

Kramer, Cathy

Lincoln, Charles

Maples, Beverly Sue

Mayo, Cliff

Mekonnen, Dawri

Mendez, John

Phillips, Mary

Sandow, Dara

Stemler, Henry

Thanasingh, Priscilla

Weiner, Reva

Wellington, Janice

Zapata, Cynthia

DHHS Staff

Adhanom, Rozina

Ball, Kim

Branda, Ilana

Huggins, Gloria

Welcome | Introductions | Approval of the Minutes: Ebony Johnson

The November 13, 2019 meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Comments: Read his entire testimony by clicking

[Brian Koosed of the Montgomery County Victim Services Advisory Board](#) commented on where the VSAB and the ICH can coordinate to improve County policy and reduce homelessness.

[Lisa Lowe a community member](#) with lived experience commented on creating accountability in the homeless shelters. Lisa stressed to need to provide services for women, seniors, LBTGQ residents and people with disabilities.

Ebony Johnson commended Lisa for agreeing to participate in the People’s Committee, a new committee comprised of people with lived experience. Lisa expressed gratitude that this Committee is being formed to give people who have experienced homelessness a voice at the table.

Patrick Connealy is a Social Worker of the Montgomery County Access to Behavioral Health advocated for providing dietary options for residents in shelter. There is a need for nutritious food that won’t be damaging to medical conditions, like diabetes and heart disease, for example. Patrick is a case manager in the shelters and

knows that some clients who are trying to follow dietary guidelines according to their conditions choose not to eat many of the foods provided because they know the food is not good for them. There is a need to have more food options.

Susie Sinclair-Smith, Executive Director of the Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless (MCCH) agreed to talk with Patrick to see how they can work together to figure out how to include Vegan meals for the residents of the MCCH.

Implementing the Strategic Plan: Amanda Harris

The ICH launched our strategic plan to end homelessness in January. Strategies have been assigned to specific Committees.

Amanda asked Commissioners: How do you see yourself fitting into this plan? What is your role? How can the Committees update you on the progress? What do you need from the Committees to feel informed, and that we are heading in a good direction?

Stan Seidel: Adding another meeting to discuss the strategic plan other than the full commission meeting would be helpful. The full commission meetings have busy agendas and it is difficult to give the strategic plan the required focus. A separate check-in meeting would help to learn the progress of the plan and whether the objectives are being met.

Amanda Chesney: It would be helpful to have each Committee provide an update or report of their monthly meetings. A snapshot of their work—agenda, action items, accomplishments.

Jeff Goldman: Reiterated that providing a progress report or a quick touch base of the Committee’s assigned strategies including what is getting in the way would be useful. What are the barriers and where we can help? This will help us know how to change tactics to achieve the strategies.

Vickie Buckland: It is important that the full Commission has an eye on all the groups to ensure they are pulling in the same direction. We do not want the groups to diverge from goals. This body needs to ensure that people are talking and there is a “pull to the center” to keep the goals together.

Ebony Johnson: Two key points to keep in the forefront are racial disparities and education and outreach. It is important to focus on the statistics to ensure that providers are inclusive to all in the community. Perhaps, holding forums to have community conversation to make sure that everyone is treated fairly. Education and outreach are important to ensure that people know how to get what they need, for example providers need to know the process to apply for grants to help fund their programs.

Amanda Harris: The two issues of racial disparities and building affordable housing solutions that are part of the strategic plan do not fit nicely into our existing committee structure. The Strategy and Planning Committee would like to create two workgroups to address these issues what would report back to the Strategy and Planning Committee.

Aseem Nigam: To capture the committees work and to share resources there needs to be dashboards to examine metrics of what the committees are accomplishing and what are the overlaps between the committees. *Amanda Harris* shared that DHHS is the thread between the committee. Someone on the SEPH team staffs the committee and report back to the ICH.

ACTION: Amanda Chesney moved to create two workgroups to examine racial disparities and building affordable housing solutions to report to the Strategy and Planning Committee. Motion carried unanimously.

ICH Restructure Update: Evan Glass and Amanda Harris

Evan Glass shared his experience during the Point-in-time Count in January. This experience underscores the importance of the work we are doing. Evan expressed thanks to the staff of SEPH and the providers for their advocacy to ensure the social safety nets are strong and in place in our community to help people experiencing homelessness.

The current legislation picks up on this groundwork over the last two years to strengthen these safety nets. Evan gave special thanks to the ICH members who helped draft the legislation: Amanda Chesney, Jeff Goldman, Amanda Harris, Louise Kauffmann, Shane Rock, and Susie Sinclair-Smith.

Highlights of the Legislation:

- Quantifies the County's goal to end homelessness and reach functional zero.
- Builds on what the County has accomplished in reaching functional zero for veterans and for those experiencing chronic homelessness.
- Updates ICH membership requirements emphasizing community and private sector participation.
- Updates our commitment from the 100,000 homes-campaign to a Housing First Model.

The legislation was unanimously co-sponsored by the Montgomery County Council. The HHS committee will hold a session on April 3 to discuss the legislation. The session is open to the public, streamed for viewing and will be available on YouTube on April 25. Evan welcomes the support of the public and homeless providers.

Evan Glass shared that the Council of Government (COG), the regional body to help coordinate policy for approximately 50 jurisdictions, has decided that 2020 is the year the Council will deal with the issue of homelessness. The COG is chaired by D.C. Councilmember Brianne Nadeau who is also the chair of the D.C. Committee on Human Services. Evan visited the new Washington D.C. short-term homeless shelter right in the shadow of the nation's capitol and the Walter Reed facility on Georgia Avenue that is being transformed to serve those experiencing homelessness. On March 13, Councilmembers Glass invited Councilmember Nadeau and other regional partners to tour MCCH Seneca Heights facility to show the diversity of housing types and models in the region. The invitation was extended to all to join the group on March 13. This is an opportunity to see the MCCH facility and hear from regional partners. The goal is to regionally work together to make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring.

Membership Updates:

Amanda Harris highlighted the changes in the new legislation around membership outlined in the PowerPoint Presentations Slides 7-12. To recruit and fill the membership vacancies for the categories of the homeless services system, private sector, and general public an Interim Nomination Committee is needed. In the future, nominations and recruitment will be the responsibility of the soon-to-be-formed Governance Committee.

Motions:

- Vickie Buckland moved that a nomination committee be established under the ICH to fill a temporary role to recruit and fill positions for both the private and public sector members and that the committee be made up of at least 3 people until the Governance Committee is formed. Ebony Johnson seconded the motion.
- Evan Glass motioned that the ICH support or approve of a Nomination Commission with members to be selected by the co-chairs. Those interested in serving on the Nomination Committee should submit their names to Amanda and the co-chairs who will make sure there is diversity of thought and sector. Amanda Chesney seconded the motion. Both motions were carried unanimously.

Committees Updates:

Amanda shared an update of the Committees structure to date:

Committee	Established Regularly Meeting	Comments / Status	Meeting Schedule	Chairs
Strategy and Planning	Yes		TBD	
Systems Coordination	Yes		2nd Monday of the month	Amanda Harris Susie Sinclair-Smith
Outcomes and Improvement	Yes	Need at least one ICH member	3rd Thursday of the month	Catherine Wellman, DHHS Cliff Mayo, MCCH
Communications	Lapsed temporarily	Previously active but changes in leadership impacted participation	2nd Monday of the month	
Funding and Partnerships	No	Recruitment started; first meeting scheduled	TBD	
People's Governance	No	Proposed start date in March	TBD	
	No	Not yet formed due to lack of Commissioner representation on every committee and changes in membership.	TBD	
Intergovernmental Advisory	No	Not yet formed due to pending legislative changes to membership	TBD	

Committee Reports:

[Outcomes and Improvement Committee Report](#): Cliff Mayo and Catherine Wellman

Cliff Mayo shared that the Committee has been meeting monthly for the last year and has accomplished the 4 system performance measures established in July 2018:

1. Decrease number of people experiencing homelessness on any given night by 10% (judged by PIT count)
2. Decrease average length of homelessness by 8% (length of time in street outreach or shelter)
3. Increase the number of housing placed in permanent housing in our crisis programs (40% of all exits)
4. Maintain the housing retention within our CoC programs (no more to 16% of people exiting homelessness for permanent housing would return to homelessness within 2 years)

Cliff shared that the CoC has met or decreased greatly all the goals proposed in 2018 and has exceeded in decreasing people experiencing homelessness by 23% judged by the PIT count.

A new Outcomes and Improvement Committee recommendations has been established for the upcoming federal fiscal year (October 1, 2019-September 30, 2020). Please see the attached memo [HERE](#). Establishing goals will communicate the vision and ensure all stakeholders in the CoC are working toward common results.

Highlights of the performance goals:

- Goals are aligned with the Strategic Plan by matching goals with System Performance Measures
- Problem-solving/shelter diversion approach for families and individuals will be tracked in HMIS

Ongoing Business:

- Re-established the HMIS Subcommittee
 - Creating a scoresheet for the providers that covers these performance goals
- Working with the Allocation Committee
 - Incorporating the HUD competition scoring measures items into that scoresheet

Systems Coordination Committee: Amanda Harris and Susie Sinclair-Smith

Susie Sinclair-Smith reported that the purpose of the System Coordination Committee is to bring together the mainstream systems of care and break down barriers to help those experiencing homelessness. The Committee is focusing on the Strategy 4 of the Strategic Plan – Shift the continuum of care from siloed services to coordinated services. Agencies across the CoC work in alignment, with clarity on roles, complementary services and ease of sharing information and feedback.

Activities of the Committee include:

- Implementing strategies around data systems, sharing, access, and measuring
- Ways to collocate access to mainstream services (i.e., Homeless Resource Day, Interfaith Works and MCCH emergency shelters)
- Overseeing the Coordinated Entry System—a HUD required system to prioritize people for placement in various housing options
- Looking at different commissions (seniors, domestic violence, etc.) and determining which commission we may send a representative to serve on to information share

Amanda shared that the Coordination Entry Sub-committee will soon be looking for members.

Margarita Bohorquez representing MCPS shared that currently the school system has 1,300 students reporting as homeless. MCPS is very interested in collaborating with the System Coordination Committee.

Allocation Committee: Jeff Goldman and Ebony Johnson

The Committee concluded last year's process by holding final reviews with each of the organizations who submitted applications to give feedback and discuss the allocation process. Most of the applicants participated in the sessions and expressed appreciation for overview on the process. The NOFA for this year is anticipated sometime in June or July. The Committee is trying to improve the process and informing the applicants on who to contact for technical assistance.

Decriminalization Ad hoc Committee Report: Katherine Guzman and Alexandra Curd

Background of the Decriminalization Ad hoc Committee: Five men residing at the MCCH men's shelter formed a committee called "Coalition 180" to discuss issues facing people experiencing homelessness. Out of their concerns and suggestions, the Ad hoc was the Committee was established last year to develop recommendations to outline policies Montgomery County can implement to continue its leadership by reducing criminalization of homelessness. A summary of the Committee's recommendations that were shared with the County Executive click [HERE](#).

Next steps:

- Scheduling a meeting with the County Executive to discuss how to proceed with the recommendation.
- Collecting data and determine the specific number of citations given for nuisance crimes to homeless persons.
- Expanding community education to businesses, law enforcement, etc.
- Exploring how some of this work around decriminalization could be folded into the work of the other committees.
- Exploring a second chance felony program to encourage landlords rent to people who are experiencing homelessness

Review Performance and Progress on Goals: Amanda Harris

- Zero 2016—There were 6 Veterans identified as chronically homeless at the end of January. The County is maintaining functional zero because of our providers, the CES, and ongoing resources including the HUD VASH vouchers.

- Inside (Not Outside) – In October 2016, there were 274 individuals experiencing homelessness. We now consistently hover around 11 individuals.
- Families w-children – We are making good progress on housing the 57 families identified as homeless at the start of the initiative. Over the past year, 15 households become homeless and 17 households exit our system. The reduction is 2 households a month, so in 28 months we should reach zero without additional resources. Receiving additional resources will help to increase our outflow to more than 2 families a month.
- Length of time homeless for families is trending down from 122 days to 64 days.
- Exits to permanent housings has increased from FY19 50% to FY20 62%.
- Adults only population—Currently, there are 402 individuals experiencing homelessness in the County with an average of 60 people entering the system each month (56 newly homeless, 4 people returning to homelessness). The outflow is 23 exits from the system (17 permanently housed and 6 exiting for other reasons).
- Currently, there are 37 new people entering the homeless system each month. At his monthly rate, at the end of 2023 (the date we hope to end homelessness) there will be almost 2,200 single adults only experiencing homelessness in the County.
 - The good news is with our strategic plan in place we can figure our strategies to avoid this outcome from both ends of the system (inflow and outflow):
 - Looking at how to resolve the issue homelessness before people enter the system (i.e. financial assistance, eviction prevention/diversion, conflict resolution, subsidies to the families, etc.)
 - Increase the number of people we are housing each month (rapid rehousing, shortening the number length of time between housing placements, lease up events to connect people to landlords).

Announcements: All

- *Charles Lincoln* stated that the landlord “meet and greet” opportunities are appreciated by people experiencing homelessness.
- *Christine Hong* shared that DC to incentivize landlords was to give landlord an extra month’s rent.
- *Amanda Harris* reported that we are close to secure funding from Kaiser to implement a risk management which will be a landlord insurance fund which will help get landlords on board.
- *Susie Sinclair-Smith* asked for a meeting with Public Health and Homeless Services to collaborate and exchanging information around the health emergency crisis would be helpful.
- *Ilana Branda* announced the Free CoC Leadership 6-month Program (starting mid-October). This will include in-persons, virtual meetings, and one-on-one leadership coaching. Application is online.
- *Charles Lincoln* requested health classes to educate shelter resident on personal hygiene.

Adjournment

Next meeting: Wednesday, May 20