

## Central Florida Commission on Homelessness

### Commission Meeting Minutes November 4, 2009

#### Heart of Florida United Way Dr. Nelson Ying Center, Orlando, FL

#### Members Present:

Alex Martins, Cathy Jackson, Commissioner Robert Stuart for Mayor Buddy Dyer, Ed Timberlake, Helene Welch for Honorable Belvin Perry, Jr., Jacob Stuart, Lania Crouch for John Quiñones, Mark Brewer, Mayor Richard Crotty, Meg Crofton and Robert H. "Bob" Brown

#### Members Absent:

Commissioner Bob Dallari, Clarence Otis, Craig S. Miller, Gary Earl, John Hillenmeyer, Rasesh Thakkar, Sam Lupfer IV, Tracy Schmidt and Sister Elizabeth Worley

#### I. Welcome

- Ed Timberlake called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.
- Ed Timberlake welcomed Commissioner Stuart and thanked him for sitting on behalf of Mayor Buddy Dyer.

#### II. Managing Chair's Comments

**Ed Timberlake**

- Ed Timberlake reviewed with the Commission a quick financial.
  - July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009 – CFCH has two types of revenue (unrestricted/restricted). The total revenue is \$425,754 and for the total of expenses for the 1st year of the Commission was \$199,271. That leaves a remaining balance of \$226,483. The restricted revenue aside from two places: The Edyth Bush Foundation and City of Orlando. The City of Orlando requested to be engaged/involved in how funds are used. They are designated to a specific product/project rather than being consulted.
  - July 1, 2009 – September 30, 2009 – The total revenue is \$ 80,991 and total expenses is \$51,084.
  - The Cumulative – The remaining restricted balance is \$158,035 and the remaining unrestricted balance is \$98,355.
  - Pending 2009 Program Expenses – The restricted expenses are as follows: \$40,000 (Re-Entry Coordinator); \$40,000 (Homeless Court Case Manager) and \$10,000 (IDignity). The unrestricted expense is \$4,500 (Project Homeless Connect/Osceola County).
- Ed reported to the Commission that HSN & Commission have started a conversation regarding combining the two organizations. The two organizations' mission statements are nearly identical and both organizations address homelessness. We are in an early stages and Bakari Burns (Health Care Center for the Homeless) has formed an Exploration Committee and started working on the consolidation with the HSN Board of Directors. Robert H. "Bob" Brown (Heart of Florida United Way) will be working with his finance department to help analyze finance information of the organizations. Ed also asked Mark Brewer (Community Foundation of Central Florida) to assist since he has an intensive experience merging non-profit organizations together in the Tri-County area. Bakari Burns added that he is looking forward to the possibility. Ed ended saying that the motivation for doing this is the population we serve and the good of our community.

### III. Public Perceptions of the Homeless & What Needs to be Done

Dr. James Wright  
University of Central Florida

Ray Larsen introduced to the Commission, Dr. James Wright from the University of Central Florida. CFCH collaborated/supported with HFUW, HSN and UCF a new study by Dr. Wright. Dr. Wright has a national reputation in dealing with homeless issues and he is an asset to our community. He has completed the survey of the region (Tri-County) served by the Commission. He is here to report the results.

- Dr. Wright reported that this survey was conducted on July – August of this year by telephone. 500 adult individual households from Orange, Osceola and Seminole counties.
- The survey studied public perceptions of the homeless and what needs to be done to address the issue. The majority of the population thinks that homelessness is a major problem in Central Florida. 55% agrees that homelessness is a problem; 34% minor problem; 6% is not a problem and 5% has no opinion. 90% said that nationally, the problem is getting worse.
- Changing perceptions of the homeless – One in three says their opinion has changed; 95% have become more sympathetic; declining economy was the reason most people gave; and 40% said that they knew someone who has become homeless.
- Panhandling – 48% said panhandling is a problem in our region when 42% said it is not; 58% believe most panhandlers are also homeless when 87% agree that most homeless panhandle at least occasionally; 46% said they never give to panhandlers when 29% give something at least once a month; the median gift is about \$2.00 for those who ever give.
- The question that arises was **what is to be done?** We need to provide shelter, communicate how to volunteer, more food banks, more affordable housing and collect spare change for homeless organizations. 73% said that there is **not** enough being done to address the issue of homelessness in our community when 13% said yes and 14% said they do not know. Should the municipal/county government do more to fund homeless program? 83% said yes when 17% said no.
- The conclusions were that homelessness is a major problem; is getting worse and not enough is being done. Public perceptions of the homeless are generally sympathetic and improving over time, despite the negative coverage of the issue in the media. Panhandling is seen to be a problem and is associated in public thinking with homelessness, most people do give to panhandlers, and few do so more than a few times a year. The substantial public mandate to **stop talking** about the problem and **start doing something about it!**

### IV. Homeless Court Update

Robert Wesley  
Public Defender, 9<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit

**The Need for an Alternative Process** - Ray commented that in the 10 Year Plan one of the key populations is to identify/work with the offenders released from jail. The Regional Consortium 5 months ago, identified the barriers to work, housing and services with this population. We also agreed that the need for an alternative process was needed. Ray introduced to Robert Wesley, Public Defender 9<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit to explain more about this process.

- Mr. Wesley reported that in our community the largest Mental Health provider is the jail system. Orange County in 2007-2008 issued 53,807 thousand warrants was for non payment of court fees and failure to appear. We want to offer an alternative to people that

find themselves in a situation being arrested and taken to jail because of these late payments.

- Members of the Commission discussed the need for the alternative process presented as the Homeless Court. The Commission is ready to advocate and support community leaders for the implementation of the process.

## V. Executive Director's Report

Ray Larsen

- **Project Homeless Connect** – Ray announced that Project Homeless Connect will be held in the Osceola Heritage Park on November 6<sup>th</sup>. CFCH is sponsoring this event. Orange County will be having their Project Homeless Connect at the Downtown Recreation Center on December 4<sup>th</sup>.
- **Healthcare Committee** – Ray provided a report on the Healthcare Committee. Quantifying the visits/costs of homeless visits to the Emergency Room and Admissions into the hospital. To established one year goals/interventions for Health Navigators/Pathways to Care. Also, implement strategies to appropriately house and provide follow-up care for homeless patients.
- **IDignity** – IDignity continue to provide a critical service to the homeless and very poor people. They will be expanding events to serve more persons but costs have increased. CFCH to grant \$10,000 to IDignity to support events to provide identification to the homeless.
- **Government Roundtable** – CFCH hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> Government Roundtable to update one another on HPRP and projects/programs for homelessness in the upcoming year. The counties shared their experiences/barriers that they are encounter in this process.
- **Regional Consortium** – CFCH will be hosting a Regional Consortium on Housing for Homeless Offenders. The goal is to identify barriers/solutions to more effectively house homeless persons being released from jail.
  - The topics will be as follows:
    - Current capacity and policy for shelter and transitional housing.
    - Respite, shelter and housing for medically needed person.
    - Difficult to house populations: disqualifying crimes, women and women with children.

## VI. HSN Update

Cathy Jackson

- **2009 Continuum of Care application process**
  - \$4.6 million application to be submitted November 25, 2009
  - \$1 million in new programs
  - \$2.9 million to fund existing programs
  - \$600,000 for permanent housing “bonus”
- **New State Funding received:**
  - Homeless Housing Assistance Grant (HHAG): \$750,000
  - \$398,000 Lifestream Behavioral Center to reopen Anthony House
  - \$352,000 Grand Avenue to create 15 new permanent supportive housing beds
- **Current Outreach and Community Education Initiatives**
  - **Completed:** Sanford Veterans Stand Down on August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2009 & Orlando Veterans Stand Down on September 26, 2009
  - **Upcoming:** Project Homeless Connect - Osceola County on November 6<sup>th</sup> & Orange County on December 4<sup>th</sup>
  - Violence against homeless survey to be completed on December 2009
  - 2010 Point-In-Time Count to survey all sheltered and unsheltered homeless on January 25, 2010
  - March 2010 Census Bureau “**One Count**” partnership to count homeless

## **VII. Adjournment**

The 2010 Commission Meeting will be held on the following dates:

- February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2010
- May 5th, 2010
- August 4th, 2010
- November 3rd, 2010

There is no further business before the Commission.

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 P.M.