

**Homeless Coordinating Council  
Meeting Minutes  
February 20, 2025**

**Present:** Mary Sellers, Bob Andeweg, Angie Connolly, Kristi Knous, Chris Coleman, Susan Judkins, Susan Skeries, Matt McCoy, Ted Weaver

**Guests:** Jim Hagberg, Father Michael Amadeo, Joe Stevens, Amber Lewis, Jenna Schuck, Dannie Patrick, Emily Osweiler, Heather Wachendorf, Jacki Stevens, Tom Hillmatka

**Staff:** Angie Arthur, Amy Croll

**Welcome**

Coleman welcomed the group to the meeting and asked for a motion. Matt McCoy moved the November 2024 minutes. Mary Sellers seconded the motion. Susan Skeries abstains. All other approves. Motion passes.

**Funding update**

Angie Arthur presented on the current CoC funding. Last year, we had a \$5.6M allocation and for this year, Polk County was awarded \$7M in the 2024 CoC competition. The current federal administration has frozen those funds. This funding is necessary for our community, impacting Permanent Supportive Housing, Rapid Rehousing, Centralized Intake, and other funded programs. Individuals need to reach out to their congressional delegation to release these funds. HCC recommends we jointly circulate a letter with the names of the elected officials to be signed by all entities. The letter should be descriptive and specific related to the impact of the freeze on the community. Homeward staff will provide a letter. **Action item:** Circulate an approved letter for joint signing from each city.

**Strategic Plan to Reduce Homelessness**

Coleman introduced Matt White. Matt reviewed the history of the strategic planning process, the goals of an effective homelessness response system, the focus areas for activating system improvements, and system performance measures.

White reviewed the decision matrix related to homelessness system activities related to the coordination of a community-wide strategy to address homelessness. The strategic plan requires discussion on how to align the roles of entities and who needs to have accountability for the community to be successful in achieving its goals.

The decision matrix is a representation of how we operate today with the top component being aligned with what is expected by HUD and the Hearth Act and is managed by the Homeward Board. Matt McCoy asked if this is how it's always defined by HUD. The CoC is required to recruit the right people to the table. The CoC board is required to manage the HUD programming and expectations, but it is only one of the funding streams required to support the homelessness system for the larger community.

A community funder doesn't necessarily go to the CoC board to do their investment in homelessness. The current structure creates a system where investments are siloed and community levers are not always deployed strategically.

The bottom half of the matrix demonstrates strong interest in seeing a community plan moves forward. Everyone is responsible for its success, but no one is accountable for its success. It's appropriate and strategic to be at this point in the planning process.

To move forward, we must have a structure that is accountable to a broad group of stakeholders. Several options were considered with a reconfigured HCC that is structured as an interagency council with leadership from a variety of entities that has accountability being the most favorable. White commented that Homeward would need to be redefined in its work and resources would need to be allocated to staff that work.

Success will be dependent on the buy-in from the elected officials, the business community and funders to move forward. There was consensus that expansion of Homeless Coordinating Council for accountability and oversight is necessary for success. The business community and the faith partners would help support accountability. Success requires much more than the HUD funding to make this happen.

Matt White highlighted the HUD structure does not allow for flexibility and creativity for system management. Homeward is an effective organization, but only has 3 staff. In most communities, it's a well-resourced entity that has significant staff. Operationally, there are data management elements that are distributed throughout the community. There may be a Funders Council that shifts investment decisions that are happening in silos and bringing those decisions/funds together to one table rather than a distributed model across more partners. Homeward could do this, but it would require staff support to make that happen. We have a problem that is solvable, but we can't get in our own way. We need flexibility with a plan that brings more people to the table.

HCC members highlighted the need for geographic representation to address the focus areas in the plan. The inflow and solutions are not specific to Des Moines as every community is seeing an increase in homelessness.

### **Update from Primary Health Care**

Jenna Schuck from Primary Health Care provided an update on the street outreach expansion. First, we have a larger team from one to four street outreach workers. PHC has focused on building a coalition with downtown businesses. We'll be more present in the skywalks and on 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue. We have an external facing email and phone number that can now be accessed. Street outreach can help mitigate residential issues. Robust data is a consistent challenge of outreach and there is now a dedicated team to manage data. This includes reasons people aren't going to shelter, housing barriers, challenges in getting to the next steps, and the gaps to progress. There are resources now in a flex fund that allows for rapid resolution of small needs that allow individuals to be successful. There is also a

PHC presence with the neighborhood enforcement division to be able to engage street outreach before law enforcement.

The purpose of centralized intake is to remove the burden from the client of finding out what they are eligible for. Jenna highlighted that until we have more affordable housing and housing stock, outreach is not going to eliminate homelessness. We must have resources, but we'll be better to help ensure safety, shelter, etc. Jenna states we know what our barriers are to getting people to the table, and now we have more capacity to help get those players to the table.

Jenna invited everyone to come to Primary Health Care to better understand what Homeless Shelter Services is and what happens in that space. Susan Skeries suggested PHC do a road show presentation to councils.

### **Joppa**

Jim Hagberg, Joppa board member, presented on the JOPPA Village. Residents will have to pay rent by working or by providing services in the village. Joppa will have four staff in the Village. A community building will have a variety of services. This is a replication of the Community First! Village in Austin, TX.

Qualifications for living in the Village: Must have been living in the Des Moines area for more than a year. Must meet the chronically homeless definition of HUD. Everyone must pay rent, follow all laws, do not disturb the peace or well-being of neighbors, and must follow village rules and keep their homes/space beautiful. All residents will have a written transportation plan customized to their specific needs.

The initial phase is for 50 unsheltered people. Joppa will build the public road and infrastructure as a requirement of rezoning. There is no expectation of city funding. Des Moines made a staff recommendation to rezone. The funding for the purchase of the land is complete but does not include the infrastructure funding. Joppe has site control, but the fundraising campaign does not extend beyond council approval. Engineering will begin once the project can go into implementation. The goal is to get the site work done by winter 2025 with a goal of housing folks by 2026/2027 winter. The first phase is rezoning, community building, and stormwater detention for the 54 units, four of which are for staff.

HCC members welcomed the partnership between Centralized Intake and Joppa to fill the 50 units. A concern is that this village is going to meet only people who can meet the expectations and guidelines, including working. Who goes into the village will be contingent upon the selection process and the standards and expectations of the village. The Joppa village will pay individuals a dignified wage of \$15/hr for 2 hours contracts at a time. This creates ownership. Income may also be SSI or SSDI.

No additional questions or comments were raised.  
Coleman adjourned the meeting at 1:30 pm