

Homeless Coordinating Council Meeting
Thursday, January 27, 2022 12:00-1:00 pm
Via Zoom

Council Member Attendance: Robert Bronwell, Russ Trimble, Bob Andeweg, Susan Judkins, Indira Scheumaker, Mary Sellers, Greg Hudson Dean O'Connor, Frank Cownie, Joseph Jones, Josh Mandelbaum, Angela Connolly, and Scott Duer.

Guests: Abbey Barrow, Angie Arthur, Cynthia Latcham, Scott Sanders, Holly Henderson, Carrie Moreno, Gary Wickering, Cody Deveraux, Marge Ramsey, Shelby Ridley, Melissa O'Neil, Matt McCoy, Nikki Thompson, Diana Vu, Eric Kool, Rachel Woodhouse, Jorie Hidri, Luke Lynch, Chris Johansen, Vic Facto, Julie Eberbach, Dutch Geisinger, Angie Dethlefs-Trettin, Joe Stevens, Patrick Schacherer, Joy Ihle, and Jill Padgett.

1. Welcome – Josh Mandelbaum

- a. The winter is a difficult time for people experiencing homelessness. Thank you to the providers and community partners for working through weather, COVID, and staffing challenges
- b. We want to continue providing services and working more efficiently as a community—this group will be crucial leaders
- c. Welcome to our new Homeless Coordinating Council members: Scott Duer from Altoona, Indira Shuemaker from Des Moines, and Greg Hudson from West Des Moines.

i. Approval of October 28, 2021 Minutes – Voting Item

- a. Motion by Frank Cownie, second by Mary Sellers. Motion approved.

ii. General Report on Community Numbers

- a. This group would like to evaluate community homelessness numbers more regularly
- b. Angie Arthur shared that she reached out to providers to gather numbers as of January 26th
- c. The majority of folks currently on waitlists are doubled up/staying with family or friends
- d. The transitional housing number should be changed to 49
- e. Will include Emergency Housing Vouchers in next meeting
- f. Point-in-Time Count (PIT) data is not yet available as the count finished up today
 - i. Gary Wickering shared that ICA will be working to de-duplicate numbers
 - ii. There might be lower numbers this year due to people using hotels and motels
 - iii. Will also provide shelter numbers
- g. Russ Trimble asked about the waiting list for Section 8- Where are folks staying who are on the waiting list?

- i. Mostly in unaffordable housing situations or in other housing programs
- h. Let Josh and Angie know if there is data that would be helpful to review in the future
 - i. Indira Scheumaker shared that a potential future data point would be how many people are unhoused, but choose not to enter shelter

iii. **Cold Weather Event Update**

- a. With the extreme cold weather and continued cold weather events, our community needs to review the different resources that we have available and how they are being utilized

- b. Dutch Geisinger, Deputy Director at Polk County Emergency Management shared that they want feedback from the community to revise the cold weather plan in the future
 - i. The County's plan was last updated in 2019 and covers shelter strategies, emergency situations, evacuations centers, and extreme weather
 - ii. For extreme heat or cold, weather amnesty policy is activated 48 hours prior to the temperature index hitting 10 degrees or 90 degrees.
 - iii. DART is a key partner in providing free transportation to warming centers
 - iv. Angie will send out the current ESF 6 plan for members to review
 - v. Will host stakeholder meetings with the community
 - 1. Would be good to get direction from people with lived experience—Dutch will check if that's happened in the past

- c. Des Moines City Council took action to continue weather amnesty, use hotels/motels, and to pause enforcements on encampments
 - i. They also directed this council to have larger conversation about cold weather and homelessness and provide recommendations
 - ii. Could seek out best practices from other Midwest communities and update our weather amnesty plans
 - iii. Need to examine barriers to providing shelter
 - 1. Including people not wanting or leave pets or possessions
 - 2. Potentially more street outreach resources needed

- d. Josh Mandelbaum recommended creating a subgroup to discuss weather policies, facilitated by Homeward
 - i. Polk County Emergency Management, Indira Scheumaker, Susan Judkins, Cynthia Latcham, Bob Brownell all interested in participating in the subgroup
 - ii. It's important for the subgroup to have clarity on its objectives
 - 1. Don't want to lose access to hotel options
 - 2. Need housing and supportive services together
 - 3. Let's review and fill in gaps in the current plan
 - iii. The largest reason people experience homelessness is the lack of affordable housing.

1. Need to address that as a root cause as well as the barriers to shelter
- iv. Need for Permanent Supportive Housing and support for people with mental health and substance use needs
 1. Hotels have been a great addition, but have seen increased property damages
- v. Need to bring people with lived experience to the table
- vi. Have first subgroup meeting in a few weeks in conjunction with the Polk County Emergency Management process

iv. Community Data – Housing and Rent Burden

- a. At the October Homeless Coordinating Council meeting, members expressed interest in data specific to housing and rent burden for their community.
- b. Angie Arthur shared some initial data for specific communities and on a county level.
- c. Can reach out to the Polk County Housing Trust Fund for more data
- d. The community has a deficit of units available to low income folks
- e. Seeing a lot of increases in rent across the board
- f. Though HUD increased the Fair Market Rent measure by \$50, minimum wage means that housing is unaffordable

v. Landlord Mitigation (if time permits)

Ran out of time—let's discuss at the April meeting

vi. Final Questions, Thoughts, and Next Steps

- a. Angela Connolly motions to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Susan Judkins. Motion carries
- b. Next Meeting Date – April 28, 2022