

Homeless Coordinating Council Meeting Minutes
November 21, 2024
12:00-1:00 pm

Hybrid Meeting. In-person: Community Foundation C3 Building

Present: Supervisor Matt McCoy, Supervisor Robert Brownell, Kristi Knous, Mary Sellers, Councilmember Chris Coleman, Councilwoman Susan Judkins, Mayor Russ Trimble

Guests: Angie Dethlefs-Trettin, Melissa O'Neil, Lorna Garcia, Emma Cruthirds, Malcom Hankins, Hope Metheny, Matt White, Amber Lewis, Scott Sanders, Micah Julius, Mohamed Hassan, Emily Osweiler, Joe Stevens, Dutch Geisinger, Lori Jensen, Jeremy Orcutt, Jori Hldri, Deirdre Henriquez, Eric Kool, Cynthia Latcham, Joy Esposito, Councilmember Mike Simonson, Julie Eberbach, August Geisinger, Eric Kool, Kasper Kittredge, Joy Ihle, Luke Lynch, Dannie Patrick, Leon Negen

Staff: Angie Arthur, Jim Cain

1. **Welcome – Chris Coleman, Chair**
Coleman recognized and welcomed everyone to the meeting shortly after noon.

2. **Approval of August 27, 2024 Minutes – Voting Item**
Brownell moved to approve the August 27, 2024 minutes. McCoy seconded. All in favor. Motion carries.

3. **Update on Notice of Funding Opportunities**

Angie Arthur, Homeward Executive Director reported on three funding opportunities

- CoC Program Application
 - i. This year HUD instituted a two-year application process.
 - ii. Application was submitted on October 26th.
 - iii. The application totaling \$6,410,648 (9 renewal projects totaling \$3,214,616; - 6 YHDP renewal projects totaling \$972,719; 2 new PSH projects totaling \$1,937,123; and the Planning Grant totaling \$286,190)
- CoC Builds Application
 - i. Application was submitted today for \$5 million. Partnership between the City of Des Moines and Greater Des Moines Supportive Housing. The project would convert the downtown Holiday Inn into 160 units of supportive housing, of which 35 units would be funded with the CoC Builds funds.
 - ii. CoC Builds grant is extremely competitive. The funding announcement is expected in the first quarter of 2025.
- Day 1 Families Fund Grant
 - i. Homeward is one of 40 entities nationwide who received a grant. Homeward's grant is for \$425,000 over five years. Funds will be distributed between Catholic Charities' Family Shelter, Centralized Intake, and New Directions Shelter with a focus

specifically on families. The intent is to rapidly resolve homelessness and move families to permanent housing.

4. Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness – Matt White, Housing Innovations

Design and Structure Update – Strategic planning process is officially launched. A leadership team is providing guidance to the process. To date, the team analyzed gaps in the homelessness delivery system.

White is in the community engagement phase. This week he is meeting with stakeholders including healthcare/hospital system; downtown businesses, single adult and family providers; persons with lived experience (i.e., single adults, families and youth), behavioral health system staff and affordable housing developers. In December, he will continue to engage thought leaders.

White reviewed the Des Moines/Polk County Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness outline. Objective 3 specifically calls out “End Unsheltered Homelessness” noting it is a concern not only of downtown businesses and public officials but of unsheltered people experiencing homelessness and providers.

White noted the System Performance Measures (SPM) are ones agreed upon by our federal partners (i.e., HUD, HHS and VA) and used by communities around the country. Councilman Coleman observed that while there has been success with some of the SPM with the general homelessness population, we’ve seemed to fail in some related to people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. White responded that SPM can be expanded, for example the inclusion of unsheltered status in all the SPM.

Supervisor Brownell noted family numbers have tripled in the last couple of years and asked if there was a way to involuntarily commit persons unsheltered who need substance abuse or mental health treatment. White responded that families could be added to the SPM and that he’d had a conversation with behavioral health stakeholders earlier in the day about involuntary commitments. White added this is being tried in other communities, but it has to be done in a very thoughtful way to be mindful of personal liberty.

Supervisor McCoy referenced data from CISS he has seen that tracks those who qualify for treatment but there are not sufficient beds to access treatment. McCoy also asked if it wouldn’t be helpful to acknowledge the complexity of the medical conditions unsheltered individuals are experiencing.

Councilman Coleman asked White if he could articulate how Des Moines/Polk County looks different/our best assets compared to other areas he has worked in? White mentioned 3 cities:

- Los Angeles – The scale of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness is crushing and they’ve taken a permissive approach to allowing people to suffer

with substance abuse and mental health issues on the street. White stated he doesn't see this as matching the vision of Des Moines/Polk County.

- Detroit – Enormous challenges due to the loss of population and tax base. Available housing doesn't meet code. City, county and CoC Lead Agency struggled to align efforts around a common vision. White stated he sees the Des Moines/Polk County area having a willingness to transcend differences and come up with a common vision.
- Dallas – The city has a very large unsheltered population. The business community and public officials came together. They recruited landlords and fundraised to operate housing case management to rehouse anyone removed from a camp in a public space. White noted that this seemed to be a good fit for what Des Moines wants to do.

Following the community engagement phase, White will create a refined list of recommendations. These recommendations will have the greatest impact, will be the most feasible, and align best with community strategies. A final product will be presented in March 2025.

Arthur added there will be two public input meetings when White returns in December.

- December 11th, 8:30am-9:30am at the C3 Center
- December 19th, 5:30pm-6:30pm at the C3 Center.

5. Review Dashboard with Community Information

Kasper Kittredge highlighted trends in the Community Dashboard data, found here www.homewardiowa.org/informationandstatistics/datadashboard, for the most recent quarter. Kittredge noted the data reflects people experiencing homelessness enrolled in programs through HMIS. People experiencing homelessness who are not engaging in outreach or other homeless programs are not reflected in the dashboard data.

- Number of people experiencing homelessness – there is an 11% increase from the previous quarter. In prior years, there has only been a 3-5% difference between the same two quarters.
- The number of people entering the system during the most recent quarter is greater than the number exiting the system.
- There is a disproportionate number of non-white people being served compared to the overall non-white population of Polk County.
- Larger number of people are exiting to homeless situations from a homeless program. A 60% increase compared to the previous quarter.
- Larger gap in people exiting to homelessness vs to permanent housing than last quarter.

Supervisor McCoy: I'm hearing there is a spike in families. Kittredge: The dashboard doesn't currently reflect people experiencing homelessness by household type. I can add a breakout by household type to the dashboard.

Arthur noted that Centralized Intake recently reported an all-time high of 148 families on the family shelter waiting list. They also report a continued increase in unsheltered families. Supervisor Brownell mentioned that more unsheltered families are temporarily residing in a hotel. Quarter to quarter, the number of hotel nights increased from 106 to 700. Supervisor McCoy noted this represents \$300,000 in new spending by Polk County who cover the cost of the hotel stays.

Kittredge was asked about unsheltered data on the dashboard. He responded that the information doesn't exist now, but he could provide the information at the next meeting. Kittredge noted unsheltered data tracking is complex due to people entering a homeless program, exiting to unsheltered homelessness and then reentering through shelter. Councilman Coleman asked if that type of pattern can result in someone being counted twice. Kittredge stated a person's most recent enrollment in a homeless program is what's reflected in the data, therefore data is unduplicated.

6. Chair and Vice Chair Report

Councilman Coleman identified several people in the audience and invited them to share a program update.

Polk County Life Services Center – Joy Esposito reported that St. Vincent de Paul is operating the Sobering Center. So far, they have served 5 individuals in the first week. Anyone can walk in for services. The DMPD and EMS will transport people under the influence to the Sobering Center instead of the ER or jail. CISS – Melissa O'Neal reported that the number of people using the shelter has increased with the recent drop in temperature. This winter during Weather Amnesty, CISS will be capping the number of people they can serve in shelter at 325 people. Greater Des Moines Supportive Housing – Emily Osweiler reported they have an option to buy the downtown Holiday Inn on Sixth Ave through January 31, 2025. They are in the due diligence phase, talking with neighbors, and building their funding deck to purchase and rehab the structure. Emily expressed gratitude to the City of Des Moines for supporting GDMSH's CoC Builds application for \$5 million dollars to go toward renovation. JOPPA – Joe Stevens reported that they have purchased 21 acres on the southside of Des Moines for a tiny home village. They have refiled to rezone the land to build permanent housing. The project would serve 50 chronically homeless individuals living on the street. JOPPA's winter heating program for people experiencing unsheltered homelessness will begin December 7th. They plan to distribute 200-250 heaters.

7. Final Questions, Thoughts, and Next Steps – 5 minutes

Next Meeting Date – February 20, 2025

Meeting ended at 1:10 PM