

JUNEAU HOMELESS COALITION

Juneau Homeless Coalition Meeting Minutes

August 16, 2012

11:30-1:00 PM

Tlingit-Haida Regional Housing Authority

I. Roll Call/Introductions

Dan Austin called the meeting to order at 11:30AM.

II. Approval of Minutes

June 21, 2012

Scott Ciambor made a motion to approve the June meeting minutes, and was seconded by Sandi Kohtz.

III. Action Items

A. Steering Committee Election

Five interested members, Laura Lucas, Sandi Kohtz, Kiel Renick, Joanne Wiita, and Ruth Danner were on the ballot for the Steering Committee. Only Sandi and Joanne were present (Ruth attended late). Sandi stated that she wanted to step up in case other members were not willing or interested to run for a position. She also said that, as Rainforest Recovery's program director, she has seen a large population of the homeless come through the facility and wants to do more to help. Joanne said the co-chairs and the coordinator asked if she would be interested in representing the Native community. Joanne would be willing to step into that role and felt that she could mentor another individual who might be better suited to represent the Native population after her term. For those who were not in attendance, Dan spoke on their behalf. Dan has spent time working with Kiel for St. Vincent de Paul and Glory Hole projects, and that he was an energetic, passionate individual. He said that Kiel had mentioned that his service could only be for a year, however that would not seem to be an issue as seats serve a one-year term. Dan talked about Laura Lucas and her dedication as an individual member. She has played a leading part each year with planning, designing, and all other aspects of the "Out of the Rain" calendars. She has also actively participated in other events like Project Homeless Connect. Speaking on Ruth's behalf, Dan stated that Ruth was very dedicated as a JHC member and as a member on the Assembly. Having that direct link from the Assembly has been a great resource to the JHC. Ballots were passed out and each member could vote for one treasurer and one member-at-large. After the meeting, ballots were tallied. The new elects are Joanne as treasurer and Kiel as member-at large.

IV. Discussion Items:

A. Housing First/Permanent Supportive Housing & Youth Shelter Update

Scott and Nancy Burke gave some background on the development of an out-of-state site visit to learn more about a Housing First Permanent Supportive Housing project. After the Vulnerability Index was completed in March, the City looked to the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority to explore potential solutions for the lack of housing for the chronic inebriate population in Juneau. The Trust partnered with other organizations to establish a working group, including the Glory Hole, Ruth Danner, THRHA, Front Street Clinic, AMHTA, SEARHC, JAMHI, and SAIL. They have met over the course of the spring and summer to discuss ideas and whether a Housing First concept might work in Juneau.

The group summarized the Vulnerability Index survey and made plans for a Trust-sponsored visit to a Housing First Permanent Supportive Housing project in Duluth, Minnesota. Invitations went out to potential community stakeholders of the project, who serve in roles that were important in establishing Housing First Permanent Supportive Housing in other communities. On August 27-31, eleven representatives from the City, the Juneau Police Department, JAMHI, Rainforest Recovery, Tlingit & Haida Regional Housing Authority, Alaska Mental Health Board & Advisory Board on

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Alcohol and Drug Abuse, and Bartlett Regional Hospital, will visit New San Marco Apartments in Duluth, meet with policy makers and county officials, and will also visit a Housing First project in Minneapolis. After the site visit, stakeholders will determine whether a Housing First model would be a good fit for our community. An outreach piece will be completed to educate the public on the benefits of a Housing First project.

Northern Lights United Church Youth Shelter

In response to an overwhelming number of homeless youth in our community, the Northern Lights United Church (NLUC) has partnered with the Glory Hole and Yakoosge Daakahidi Alternative High School to establish a small youth shelter. Discussion of the need for a youth shelter started between the three organizations this past winter. According to Yakoosge staff, at one point in time last spring, 72 out of 180 students were identified as homeless. These students were couch surfing at the homes of friends or relatives, or were simply camping out in the elements. With little or no resources, it was clear that this population needed a consistent and stable place to sleep at night.

The mission of the NLUC Shelter is to provide the Juneau School District's young adults experiencing homelessness a safe place to stay. This pilot program will serve Yakoosge enrolled students, ages 18-24, who will be referred by Yakoosge staff. NLUC is located within walking distance of the high school and other resources. The shelter's check-in and check-out times coincide with the start of school in the morning and with Zach Gordon Youth Center's closure in the evening so that students can have a structured, safe environment throughout the entire day.

NLUC was awarded \$10,000 from the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority to convert space in the church to accommodate up to 16 students. Renovations completed in time for the start of school include new lockers, separate sleeping space for young men and women, and a showering facility. Two shelter coordinators and many volunteers are ready to open the doors to provide a safe, warm, and inviting place for students.

B. Thane Campground

CBJ Land Manager, Heather Marlow wasn't able to attend the meeting but wanted to discuss the Thane Campground and the City's request for assistance. Jessy talked with Heather prior to the meeting and provided information about the campground. The Thane Campground was opened by the City in the mid 1990's, and is a seasonal campground open roughly from May to September for 20+ sites. The campground has a food cache, to keep food safe from bears, port-o-potties, garbage service, and tent platforms. The purpose of the campground was to give working poor and homeless a place to go, instead of squatting on public and private land. Over the years, CBJ has tried to implement several different methods on how to best operate the campground:

- Originally, CBJ worked with the United Way, who provided a caretaker for day-to-day management, which lasted about two years before the United Way decided they were not suited to manage the site.
- CBJ tried working with several clients from the campground, which did not provide the best management practices for other campground clients.
- The last two years, CBJ has operated the campground with their employees. CBJ's management has improved the overall function of the campground, but is a significant employee cost and the services that take place are beyond their job descriptions and level of expertise.

What Heather and the City are looking for is a housing/social service provider to partner with the City to operate the campground. Some of the duties would be to check campers in and out, collect fees, dispose of trash, and enforce the rules. Caretaker could keep fees as compensation. Heather said she is not looking to solve this in the immediate future, but wanted to get some input and ideas from the JHC and to be able to have a solution for the next season.

Jessy asked for a discussion among the Coalition to be able to provide some feedback and new ideas to CBJ. Some suggested ideas were to have an Ameri-Corps volunteer position or SAGA create a 5-month seasonal position to manage and implement some type of program enhancement to the campground. Other ideas were to have

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organizations like Gastineau Human Services or SAGA work to improve the trail to the site, or to build a stairway for easier access to the camp — for both clients and management. A suggestion of working with Trust beneficiaries lead to discussion of funding proposals to the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and other potential stakeholders or organizations. Increasing the presence at the camp, the importance of collecting data on the clients who occupy the camp, and understanding the clients needs, were identified as crucial steps for permanent supportive housing.

C. JYS Mobile Crisis Unit closure

Gus Marx discussed the closure of Juneau Youth Services' Mobile Crisis Unit. Funding deficiencies came to attention several months ago, and was the ultimate reason for its closure. The Mobile Crisis Unit was operating for at least 15 years. The grant application did well in the last cycle but lost federal funding, however, JYS still had some City funding but was forced to scale back the hours of operation to 12 hours a week. The van drove around at night and brought kids home or to the emergency shelter. In some situations, mediations with parents were set up to try to solve the issues between the youth runaways and parents. Gus said with the lack of funding it wasn't feasible to keep the Mobile Crisis Unit running and hopes that in the future they can find funding to re-implement it or find another solution for runaway youth.

D. Project Homeless Connect/Point in Time Count

Jessy reported that the date for Project Homeless Connect will be Monday, January 28, 2013. Both Centennial Hall and the Juneau Arts and Culture Center are reserved. Although the event sounds far in the future, planning needs to start now. Jessy listed the seven-committee positions including: Publicity, Data Collection, Venue Logistics, Volunteer, Healthcare Services (medical and dental), Food, Personal Attention (haircuts), and Tangible Goods/Donations. Past leads have included Jorden Nigro, who agreed to again be the lead for Personal Attention, Ellen Moore, who also agreed to be the lead again for coordinating Healthcare Services with new RN Catherine Boice, and Scott Ciambor agreed to lead the Data Collection. Jessy will follow up with Mariya and the Glory Hole about leading the Food Committee, Allen Hullet of Gastineau Human Services to lead Venue logistics, and will seek out leads for the other committees.

E. Report from National Conference

Margaret O'Neal and Scott Ciambor attended the National Conference on Ending Homelessness in D.C. in July with over 1,500 other representatives from state and federal agencies and non-profit organizations from around the country. Margaret was really impressed with the organization and professionalism of the conference. She followed an outreach & advocacy track, while Scott focused on youth and family tracks. She has information on speakers, if the JHC is interested in bringing one up to Juneau. Also, one of the workshops she attended highlighted the Homeless Bill of Rights passed by the state of Rhode Island, which declares an "equal right to jobs, housing, services, and public space for all inhabitants, whether they have a home or not." This is something the JHC could push on the Alaska legislature. Her major "take aways" from the conference were:

- Project and program funding won't be automatically renewed. In the past, many organizations were used to guaranteed funding by reapplying each year, but that system is disappearing and will be replaced by a community-based assessment of programs, called the "Continuum of Care." The Continuum of Care will be composed of community stakeholders, which includes police, political delegates, medical professionals, business groups, and housing, health care, and social service providers, who will evaluate effectiveness of programs and services. Objective standards will be set to measure effectiveness and transparency among agencies will be crucial for effective evaluation in the near future.
- Homelessness prevention programs are less effective than funding for rapid re-housing of people who suddenly become homeless, many of whom do not need other or ongoing assistance.

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- Housing First programs for chronically homeless people affected by mental illness and addiction dramatically reduce a community's financial burden, and over half the nation's Housing First programs are provided in scattered site housing (purchasing or building a dedicated facility is not required if appropriate rentals are available)

Scott talked about what he learned following youth and family tracks at the conference. He expressed that it is hard to define youth homelessness —and that there are a minuscule amount of services available. At the conference, they explored new initiatives: to conduct better youth homeless counts and create a system-wide data platform. He shared his experience meeting with Alaska's three delegates on "Capitol Hill Day." He and the Alaska group (comprised of state coalition members and other community coalition representatives from around the state) advocated for both state and local issues. All of the delegates recognized that housing is a huge issue throughout the entire state. Senator Murkowski expressed that Alaska residents don't realize the need within the state. She suggested that local and state coalitions broadcast the housing, health, and social service needs and how many people are homeless. The meeting on Capitol Hill emphasized the need to bring a consistent message through all the state coalitions. Jordan proposed that Alaska Coalition on Housing and Homelessness provide all the state coalitions with consistent message so we can educate on local, state, national level.

The Alaska Coalition on Housing and Homelessness's Annual Conference is October 10-12. Online at www.akcoalition.com you can view the agenda and scholarship process and application.

Requested to be on next agenda:

- Amy Hiley would like to talk about AHFC end of preference system
- Name change for coalition

Scott motioned to adjourn the meeting. Jordan second. Dan adjourned the meeting at 1:00pm.

V. Informational Items & reminders

- A. 2013 Membership Dues – Pay them!
- B. Alaska Coalition on Housing & Homelessness Annual Conference: Oct 10-12, Anchorage

Next Meeting:

Thursday, September 20, 2012 11:30am-1:00pm, THRHA.