

JUNEAU HOMELESS COALITION

Juneau Homeless Coalition Meeting Minutes

September 20, 2012

11:30-1:00 PM

Tlingit-Haida Regional Housing Authority

I. **Roll Call/Introductions**

Mandy Cole called the meeting to order at 11:35 am.

II. **Approval of Minutes**

August 16, 2012

Joanne Wiita made a motion to approve the minutes. Jordan Nigro seconded the motion.

III. **Discussion Items:**

A. **Treasury Report / Member Information & Dues Form**

Treasurer, Joanne Wiita, gave a report on JHC's finances. Eighteen members have paid their FY2013 dues. From dues (to date), JHC has \$1,650 and received \$5,898 from United Way for a pass thru grant for 2012 Project Homeless Connect. The only expenditure to date is a \$500 deposit on Centennial Hall for Project Homeless Connect. The total funds are \$7,048.90. Jessy asked all members to fill out the top portion of the Member Information & Dues Form for up-to-date contact information.

B. **Public Market**

Jessy reported that the steering committee had discussed not participating in the Public Market for several reasons: In the past, JHC has needed the sales of the calendars to raise money and have used the calendars as an advocacy piece. This year, the Coalition is sitting pretty well financially and agreed that they would have to think of a new advocacy piece, in place of the calendar. Several months ago, there was an idea to partner with the Glory Hole and share a more expensive booth in the main ballroom. The idea was that the Glory Hole would sell wrapped baked goods and JHC would provide information with some small JHC items. In discussions with Mariya and the rest of the Steering Committee, they thought it would be more beneficial at this point to put energy into Project Homeless Connect. JHC has filled out the paperwork for a booth – and although the original idea was to share an expensive booth, JHC was assigned an inexpensive booth in the Juneau Arts and Culture Center.

The topic was opened up for discussion. Jordan Nigro and Laura Lucas, who were involved with creating the calendar, were in high favor of having a booth at the public market for several reasons. Jordan said that, although calendar sales did not raise a lot of money, the connection and outreach to the community was very positive and they used the event to recruit volunteers for Project Homeless Connect. Laura also highlighted that the amount of people at the Public Market made it a great opportunity to talk with the community—especially young people. The decision to keep the booth was put to a vote. The majority of members were in favor of keeping the booth. Ruth Danner will organize the volunteer shift schedule for the booth. Laura will help with signage and design. Mandy added that JHC would be open to partnering with other groups or organizations from the community at the Market.

JUNEAU HOMELESS COALITION

C. **Project Homeless Connect**

Monday, Jan. 28, Centennial Hall, from 9am-3pm is the date for Project Homeless Connect. The Juneau Project Homeless Connect website is updated. Visit www.jedc.org/project-homeless-connect. There are new service provider, health care service provider, and donations forms up on the site. Right now there are currently PDF's but Jessie is working on webforms, so everything can be filled online and go to the correct committee lead. Committee lead and contact information is also updated on the site:

Publicity – Kiel Renick, *Glory Hole*

Intake Survey/Data – Scott Ciambor, *AMHB*

Service Providers – Shari Partin, *Alaska Housing Development Corp.*

Health Care Providers – J. Ellen Moore & Catharine Boice, *Juneau Public Health*

Volunteers – Vicki Wilcox, *Juneau Public Health*

Personal Attention – Jordan Nigro, *SAIL*

Donations/Tangible Goods – Wayne Stevens, *United Way*

Facility Logistics – Allen Hulett, *GHS*

Food – Mariya, *Glory Hole*

On the day of the event, all organizations will have a booth, but members are encouraged to also get involved with a specific committee. Even one or two members helping out a lead will make a difference. Jessie passed around a sign-up sheet for those interested in helping out committee leads. Joanne suggested reaching out to Early Scholars – a high school program for Alaska Natives, to see if they would like to help and also suggested presenting at the A&B Hall about PHC.

D. **End of AHFC Preference System – Amy Hiley**

Guest presenter, Amy Hiley, Juneau Manager of Alaska Housing Finance Corporation talked about her role, the end of AHFC's preference system, and gave an overview of all AHFC's programs. She has been with AHFC for twenty-three years, and has worked in a variety of positions but currently oversees the rental assistance programs as the Southeast Regional Manager.

AHFC has two rental assistance programs in Juneau: 207 public housing units and 62 units called Mountain View. They also provide rental assistance to private sector housing and assist 335-375 people in Juneau. Amy said to keep in mind that AHFC only makes up about 16% of public housing in Juneau. They also have a few Section 8 projects. AHFC's definition of "family" is any single person under 62 years old, who is not disabled. This is important to define as it allows single persons to qualify for family housing.

The Preference System was based on critical need for housing. Those with the highest number of points equaled those with the greatest need. Twenty points were the highest number of points one could accrue. Some examples for point assignment:

- 50% of income spent on housing = 14 points
- Veterans, disabled, over age 62 = 2 points
- Terminally ill = 3-4 points

This preference system was complicated to manage and verify, and was the main reason for ending it. The system was open to fraud and abuse, as it did not have the ability to verify situations of each client. AHFC is still working through the Preference System. Those who applied before July 2012 are still eligible to receive assistance based on the preference system. Those who applied after July 2012 are not eligible for the preference system. There are 67 households still on the preference system list.

JUNEAU HOMELESS COALITION

AHFC is looking at how they can serve households in a different manner. A pilot program to help families who were receiving a preference, called Empowering Choice Housing Program, has \$1.3 million to help 250 families per year. This program is receiving \$1 million in federal funding and AHFC hopes funding will continue. Amy noted that the time limit on assistance is three years. People need to understand this assistance is not a lifetime housing situation. Clients need to utilize both AHFC's housing and other services to get into permanent housing.

AHFC also has a prison re-entry program. There are currently 10-12 households being assisted in Juneau. This program is for clients who need to be supervised. Referrals come from parole officers and a team of individuals decide if a potential client is a good risk to support. The clients have to have been on probation for at least one year. The shared supervision and management has been the greatest success of this program. Another program is for youth aging out of foster care, which is a 1-2 year program.

Amy discussed who was eligible for public housing and vouchers. Those with an 80% annual median income (AMI) or below, qualify for public housing programs. Those with a 50% annual median income (AMI) qualify for vouchers. Tamara Rowcroft asked if one-bedroom units were the hardest to find. With the voucher program, finding a two-bedroom unit for two people is the biggest need. There are 157 people waitlisted for two bedroom units.

In 2008, AHFC became a "Moving to Work" agency — a designation for high performing housing agencies who can change policies and procedures to change the economic status of clients and help them be financially viable. Some of the benefits of this designation include the ability to receive block funding and AHFC does not have to verify assets up to \$10,000.

Jen La Roe asked if there was potential for other designated groups (i.e.: chronically homeless, mentally ill, etc.) to receive specifically awarded vouchers, such as the domestic violence voucher program? If so, is that something the homeless coalition could advocate for?

Amy said the Empowering Choice Housing Program (vouchers for persons displaced due to domestic violence) is a demonstration of what can be done. Clearly it aligns with the Governor's stance against domestic violence. She does not know of any specific plans to create similar types of programs for other populations at this time. Many years ago AHFC received from HUD, and continues to utilize vouchers set-aside for persons with disabilities. AHFC is also working with Department of Corrections and the Department of Health and Social Services, Office of Children's Services to utilize HOME funds available through our Planning Department to offer Voucher-like assistance to parolees and youth graduating out of foster care. AHFC leaders want to hear from all representatives serving common clients and potential clients regarding community-housing needs.

A question about new-reserved vouchers for special groups was asked, specifically, "do we still have the same number of regular sec. 8 vouchers? Or, do new special vouchers come out of the same limited number?" There is \$1.2 million of state funding, which has to be approved by the legislature and a \$1 million match, from the regular voucher pool. So funding is not being taken away, but in fact a bigger pot of money. With this funding, AHFC will be serving 250 families. AHFC is working on additional changes in the next year and there will be chances for public comment in the future.

E. Coalition Name Change

The topic to change the name of the Coalition has been brought up and a name change will be voted on at the next meeting. Several name suggestions are:

- Juneau Coalition to End Homelessness

JUNEAU HOMELESS COALITION

- Juneau Committee to End Homelessness

F. **Respite Care Program**

Will be discussed next meeting.

G. **Report from Minnesota Trip**

Scott made an announcement that the Alaska Coalition on Housing and Homelessness is recruiting for state-wide board members.

The Trust has been involved with the 100,000 Homes Campaign—including the Vulnerability Index, and provided funding for a group of stakeholders to travel to Minnesota to look at a couple Housing First facilities in August. This included the City Manager, JAMHI, THRHA, Rainforest Recovery, JPD, AMHB/ABADA, AMHTA. They visited the New San Marco Apartments in Duluth, and Anishinabe Wakiagun facility in Minneapolis.

Some key things emerged from the trip, including a reemphasis on what a Housing First model is – it serves first and foremost as a permanent housing model. This **direct placement** into permanent housing is the first of five features in the Housing First philosophy. Other features include:

- **Harm Reduction model:** The goal is to first house those most in need and then second, help them to obtain other services to receive help and reduce harmful consequences. These services would be encouraged but not required.
- **Assertive Outreach:** Find who would fit with this model—chronically homeless, substance abusers, and then encourage the use of the shelter and services. This population has been identified in Juneau by the Vulnerability Index Survey.
- **Case Management:** Continued effort to make sure housing stability is maintained. San Marco in Duluth had two residential managers, two case managers, and had an RN on staff part time.
- **Community Integration:** It's crucial to make this type of project a focal point for the community and have it become a community project, bringing other resources into the facility. This includes health care and service providers, as well as activities.

The San Marco Apartments in Duluth and Anishinabe facility in Minneapolis are both successful models but are different projects:

San Marco: There are one bedroom apartments on one side of the facility, and on other side are Section 8 units. Scott said it was interesting to hear some clients' stories about moving (or "graduating") from one side to the other. Clients felt comfortable and safe with staff. There were worries about turn over in staff, but staff were really happy working in this environment where a sense of community was strong—the lead manager was like a principal at a school and management style of the staff felt like resident assistants at a college dorm. Also, both clients and staff provide good support to new people. There is a screening process because of the sense of community. The staff utilized the screening method because it was best for residents and the "community." Police originally thought having a facility was going to be a disaster, but were amazed how the case-load vanished.

Anishinabe: This facility has forty-five units, solely for people right off the street. There is an agreement to pay rent—50% of their income. Most residents receive vouchers and social security benefits. This model was stricter and not as hands on. However, it is still really successful in a little different way and residents enjoyed living there.

JUNEAU HOMELESS COALITION

The question, "Who on the list from Juneau was skeptical about a Housing First model?" Scott said that the group had met two weeks prior to trip and there were some concerns about staffing, as there have been issues with retaining staff for some health care services here in Juneau. Another pre-concern was, "is this housing piece not pushing towards sobriety?" The Housing First philosophy is harm reduction, so by housing the chronic homeless population first, providing some stability in their lives will motivate and provide them steps to receive help and utilize other services.

Scott talked about some steps moving forward, such as creating a communication plan to educate the community about Housing First and how it is a successful model in other communities similar to Juneau and in other parts of Alaska. The site visit reinforced that this type of project is a community project. There were many stories of how a safe place was life changing for those who lived in the Housing First facilities. JHC could be a good advocate for a Housing First facility in Juneau.

V. Informational Items & reminders

- A. 2013 Membership Dues – Pay them!
- B. Scholarships for AKCH2 Annual Conference due Sep. 24
- C. HOME Opportunity Program – "Intent to Apply" Form due Sep. 27
- D. Supportive Services for Veteran Families – Letter of Intent due Sep. 28
- E. NAMI Symposium on Wellness – Oct. 8, 5:00-8:30pm, Centennial Hall
- F. Alaska Coalition on Housing & Homelessness Annual Conference (ACH2) - Oct. 10-12

Next Meeting:

Thursday, October 25, 2012 11:30am-1:00pm, THRHA.