

OHS Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

March 21, 2024

St Joseph Commons

9 a.m.

Members present: Karen Anderson, Dr. Michael Seidman, Barb Karam, Chris Knestrick, Gillian Prater Lee, Kris Harsh, Yvonne Conwell (Levine Ross), Starr Sizemore, Christian Anderson, Karen McHenry, Linda Uveges, Fred Berry (Megan Scheck), Mike Bernot, Beth Graham, Angela Glassco, Elaine Gimmel, Mike Sering, Raymond Mills, Loh

Members absent: Dorivette Nolan, Mary McNamara, Paul Mosher, Marcia Zashin, Kirsti Mouncey

Others present: Mia Buffington, Gillian Prater-Lee, Michaela De Alexandro, Shawna Gurley, Nikki Eggert, Christie Sozio, Jennifer Harrison, Ed Abshire, Laurel Martinson, David Gretick, Natasha Wynn, Ed Gernerchak, Kait McNeeley, Michael Hahn, Beau Hill, Ebony Clayton, & Candace Robinson

1. Welcome and open remarks
 - a. Elaine Gimmel, Tri-Chair called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. and proceeded with roll call to establish quorum. Elaine acknowledged those who signed in and noted that the sign-in sheet was being circulated for those arriving late and for guests to sign in as well.
 - d. Elaine informed everyone that Howard Burchman and Tom Albanese were joining via teams, with Howard already present online.
2. Decision Issues
 - a. Elaine led the board in the Approval of Advisory Board Minutes 1/16/2024.
 - i. Mike Bernot motioned to approve the minutes.
 - ii. Beth Graham seconded.
 - iii. All were in favor with no oppositions or abstentions. Motion carries.
 - b. Elaine addressed the Advisory Board membership and that we have three applicants for the OHS board that need to vote on the slate. These seats are for a three-year term starting January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2026.
 - i. Beau Hill Executive Director at The Salvation Army Harbor Light Complex, for the Homeless Service Provider Alliance seat
 - ii. Peter Schindler's time expired, and the Governance Committee is recommending Jeanna Davis, President, and CEO of FairHill Partners, for an at-large seat.
 - iii. Ed Abshire is going to replace Paul Mosher for the designated seat for Job and Family Services.
 1. Motion to approve from Chris Knestrick
 2. Barb Karam seconded. No further discussion, all were in favor with no opposition or abstentions. Motion carries.
 - c. Elaine asked for a vote on recommending a change to amend the bylaws, specifically Article V Section 1, regarding: The Advisory Board shall elect three

co-chairpersons from among its members: with one co-chairperson representing a non-CoC funded organization. We want to add that one of the three co-chairs' seats would be designated for young adult aged 18 to 24.

- i. Chris Knestrick motioned to approve.
 - ii. Karen Anderson seconded.
 - iii. All were in favor with no oppositions or abstentions. Motion carries.
 - d. Elaine reminded members about attendance expectations and mentioned that failing to attend three consecutive meetings without a designated proxy could lead to removal from the board.
 - e. Howard presented on 2024 NOFO Performance Standards & CoC Priorities:
The 2024 performance standards propose minimal changes from the previous year to maintain consistency and effectiveness. One measure on the length of time from referral to housing placement was eliminated due to the challenging housing market. New measures for cost-effectiveness, agency staff, and board diversity with lived experience, and representation of underrepresented populations were added, albeit with minimal points to start evaluation in these areas. The remaining criteria, such as high needs population, consumer surveys, and system performance measures, stayed unchanged.
 - i. In terms of priorities for 2024, it was proposed to carry forward previous applications for new projects not funded in the prior year and to allow new proposals for additional Rapid Rehousing projects to address the need to expand this capacity in the CoC.
 1. Barb Karam motioned to approve the proposed performance standards.
Linda Uvegas seconded. All were in favor with no oppositions or abstentions. Motion carries.

3. 2023 NOFO Debrief

- a. Howard Burchman discussed the outcomes and scoring of the 2023 competition, where the Cleveland CoC scored 180.5 points (the highest score in the country was about 185 points), being above the national weighted mean score of 163. The CoC received bonus projects funding, and although some points were lost due to the point-in-time count and other issues, we plan to appeal a particular DV bonus project which was not funded despite scoring above the funded threshold.

4. Cuyahoga Continuum Strategic Action Plan – 1 Year Review – Melissa Sirak and Matt White

- a. 1 Year Overview and Implementation Framework
 - i. Matt White from Housing Innovations facilitated the strategic planning process for the Cuyahoga Continuum of Care (CoC). During the meeting, he highlighted the achievements and advancements made in the past year as well as the goals and core pillars of the strategic action plan. The plan's aggressive goal is to reduce homelessness in Cleveland/Cuyahoga County by 25% over a five-year period. The five core pillar areas include:
 1. Stem the inflow of homelessness – reduce the number of people who are experiencing or fall into homelessness.
 2. Supporting crisis housing and shelter infrastructure to ensure brief and

client-centered experiences.

3. Accelerating exits from homelessness via expanded rehousing efforts, especially rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing.

4. Supporting self-sufficiency after exiting homelessness, through benefits and income support.

5. Building collective capacity for programmatic excellence, data management, and administrative support.

ii. The Program Policy Committee established practice standards for emergency shelter for rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing (PSH). The program will standardize both the practice or the delivery of service and the experience of participants in programs. Those practice standards that were established by the Program Policy Committee are expected to be a living document. So based on the experience of living or operating under those standards, we will learn a lot about what needs to be adjusted, amended, enhanced or new standards that might need to be added. The standards will continually be updated and refreshed on a regular basis to ensure that that emergency shelter and the experience of people in emergency shelter is one we are constantly looking to improve.

iii. The Program Policy Committee now has a strategic plan to end unsheltered homelessness. The strategic plan talks about how we will engage people in a human centered, trauma informed way, people who are outside and engage them in the kinds of interventions that will help to resolve their unsheltered homelessness. For some people, which might involve emergency shelter as an interim step. And for others, they will go directly from an unsheltered status into housing. And we have outlined a whole array of different housing options that are aligned with challenges and barriers that people living outside experience. Also, the city thought that that strategic plan was valuable and bold enough, that the PPC received investment support from the city. This represents incredibly positive progress.

b. CE Redesign

i. An evaluation was completed to review the coordinated entry process with goals to better leverage resources, align with system goals, manage all operations centrally in HMIS, and define roles and functions clearly.

ii. Matt discussed data showing the proportion of exits from emergency shelters and where individuals are moving afterward, indicating the need to redesign the coordinated entry system to better serve clients and connect them to housing.

iii. The DCT Pilot Program is an initiative focused on providing direct cash transfers to individuals or families experiencing homelessness to assist them in finding or maintaining housing, primarily by facilitating exits to friends, family, or other stable living situations. It operates with a target allocation for singles and families, offering one-time financial assistance to help reduce shelter stays and support transitions to more permanent housing solutions. The program

has shown promising results, with a high percentage of participants not returning to shelters within the observed follow-up periods, suggesting effectiveness in preventing recurrent homelessness.

- c. 2020 Lakeside and Direct Cash Transfer
 - i. 2020 Lakeside Redesign – The county purchased and renovated the building next to 2100 Lakeside. The groundbreaking was two weeks ago, and we started operating the men’s overflow last week into the new building. Construction will begin on Monday to connect the two buildings, which will take about a month to complete. In the future we plan with ARPA dollars to renovate 2100 Lakeside.
 - ii. The Direct Cash Transfer (DCT) program had demonstrated success, with individuals using one-time cash assistance to secure housing and avoid returning to shelters.
- d. Norma Herr Renovations – Elaine Gimmel
 - i. EDEN acquired Norma Herr in 2003 and it has undergone renovations in 2010 and 2014.
 - ii. The current redevelopment plan includes non-congregate and semi-congregate units, with most units having individual bathrooms and doors.
 - iii. The redevelopment has been in process since 2021, and we have been working with the YWCA, Cuyahoga County, and city of Cleveland to obtain the funds through the challenges with funding and construction costs.
 - iv. We are currently under construction at Payne Avenue. An elevator is being built, and there will be one in each building. The lobby and exterior work are also being done.
 - v. Half the guests and YWCA staff will need to be relocated to a temporary swing space to comply with federal URA regulations.
 - vi. 2710 Walton Avenue will serve as the swing space while Norma Herr is being rehabbed.
 - vii. The total development costs are \$24 million.
 - viii. Our goals are to provide:
 - 1. Provide a quality dignified and safe property.
 - 2. Introduce trauma informed design – safety, privacy, colors, and more.
 - 3. Provide a secure, larger area for guests.
 - 4. Secure necessary funding
 - 5. Complete the total project in a 24–30-month timeline.
 - ix. Lou expressed thanks on hearing that there would no longer be bunk beds. A further request was made that to accommodate women of all heights and sizes, that standard height toilets are included in the plans as well as ADA height ones.
- e. Young Adult Supportive Housing Development – Elaine Gimmel
 - i. A project involving CHN, EDEN, The Centers, Enterprise, A Place for Me, REACH, Sisters of Charity and OHS is underway to provide housing for 50 young adults aged 18 to 24.
 - 1. This \$18 million project focuses on creating a supportive environment for young adults experiencing homelessness or with disabilities. Features

include a basketball court, learning kitchen, and outdoor play areas, computer lab, fitness room, storage, and garden boxes.

- f. Senior PSH Building – Elaine Gimmel
 - i. This project, involving CHN, EDEN, Benjamin Rose, VA, Enterprise and OHS is costing \$19.9 million, aims to provide one-bedroom apartments for older adults (62 & older), with 25 units set aside for homeless veterans. EDEN will manage the property, while Benjamin Rose and the VA will offer on-site services. The development seeks to improve senior living with wellness rooms for medical services, community areas, computer labs, and outdoor patios.
 - g. YHDP & REACH Priorities – Ebony and Chris
 - i. Reaching for New Heights Plan outlines Cuyahoga County’s aim to prevent and end youth and young adult homelessness.
 - 1. A \$3.9 million grant was received from HUD to administer the two pilot projects: the Transitional Housing-Rapid Rehousing (TH-RRH) program and the Navigation program. Both will be led by Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry.
 - ii. REACH Priorities include continued implementation of ICP, expanding outreach activities, focus on our goal of recruiting five board members this year and to maintain eight board members total, and engaging in community service activities.
 - h. PSH Evaluation & Income & Stability Work - Tom Albanese and Rebecca Kushner
 - i. The PSH portfolio is being assessed to standardize services, improve system performance, and align with CoC standards, with a goal to establish agreed-upon project plans and performance metrics by July 1st or sooner.
 - ii. Rebecca discussed the Income Instability Work and Workforce Integration Pilot, which includes source certification, capacity building and parts that will inform and be part of the overall rollout of the pilot.
 - 1. If you are interested in this work, there will be an email from Melissa regarding a session in April that will go into much more detail.
5. Initiative Reports – emailed
- a. Ending Veteran Homelessness (EVH)
 - b. RRH
 - c. Ending Youth Homelessness (EYH)
 - d. Unsheltered Report
6. Announcements
- a. Front Steps informed us that due to their increase in staff and residents, the parking lot will no longer be available to visitors. There is street parking on Queen as well as the lot at Nestle which we are allowed to use.
 - b. Melissa concluded with internal updates for OHS. Nick Butina was congratulated on his promotion, which will lead to enhanced data analytics and board committee involvement. Freda Hawkins was introduced as the new Fiscal Officer.

Also, jobs have been posted for an HMIS Administrator as well as a second Social Program Administrator to expand service capabilities.