

MINUTES
Housing and Human Services Advisory Board
Thursday, May 14, 2020
6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

This was a digital meeting. Members of the public could participate electronically in the meeting or by telephone. Call in number: 888 788 0099. Zoom link:
<https://a2gov.zoom.us/j/91975125449?pwd=cnpCWnZLWmtiSFllUmxsL2dZR3lNUT09>

Members Present: Amanda Carlisle, Anna Erickson, Greg Pratt, Nora Wright, Anna Foster, Zach Ackerman, Anne Bannister, Rosemary Sarri, Paul Sher, Eleanor Pollack, David Blanchard, James Daniel (for first portion of the meeting)

Members Absent: Josh Whinston,

Staff Present: Teresa Gillotti, David Beck

Public Present: Glenn Nelson, Marty Slagter

I. Convene Meeting:

G. Pratt, chair, convened meeting at 6:32 pm

II. Public Comment

G. Nelson shared four points in regards to the City Council's proposed budget discussion for fiscal year 2021 and how they are being redirected. He urged the HHSAB to use influence to persuade City Council Members to relieve insecurities, pain, suffering, and trauma which disproportionately affects highest hit population, especially during this time of COVID.

III. Approval of Agenda

E. Pollack moved to approve agenda; A. Foster seconded. Motion passed unanimously

IV. Approval of Minutes for May & July

A. Carlisle moved to approve minutes; A. Foster seconded. E. Polack abstains due to absence in past meetings. Motion passed unanimously

V. Business

a. COVID-19 Response Presentation

T. Gillotti presented on the OCED COVID Responses. In regards to preparations before the shutdown, the Foster Grandparents Program (FGP) secured funding to support stipends, and the Senior Nutrition Program (SNP) made sure that meals were being ordered and

prepared. The Homelessness System worked on screening protocols and staff preparedness for homelessness providers. For communications, a website was created to show COVID data in Washtenaw county and to communicate openings, closings, and policy.

For response activities, the homeless system went through screening protocols, created a list serve of COC funded providers to share information, and expanded shelters. Shelter has been originally coordinated between 3 churches, one shelter, and ½ of a hotel, but is now done through a shelter, a hotel, and a church.

G. Pratt: So we're still using the hotel?

T. Gillotti: Yes, there are about 106 rooms being used.

Family/youth homelessness planning currently hasn't seen a surge, but may see increase in two to three months as the summer rolls in and as previous data has shown. There has also more effort taken by the Washtenaw Housing Alliance and other organizations in strategizing to find more permanent housing.

In the emergency food systems, the response activities consisted of working through current challenges such as the food supply chain, as there was a loss of regular donators. However, Food Gatherers distributed more food in April than any month in history. Food pantries served around 40% more food and Food Gatherers spent 4.5 times more in food costs for April.

A. Foster: I remember that there was a policy for any students with free or reduced lunches became immediately eligible for food stamps. Was that in Michigan or was it a national initiative?

T. Gillotti: That was in the state of Michigan.

The Senior Nutrition Program converted their senior cafes to become to-go only and are delivering boxed lunches and groceries. They have also been able to get more funding through the State and AAA1-B. There are still ongoing needs in access to food, issues of loneliness and depression, and staying healthy.

Barrier Busters direct assistance has had coordination between nine active agencies including Jewish Family Services, Peace Neighborhood, and other organizations, in the county and have been training many people.

A. Foster: Are the Washtenaw County courts still not accepting filings for evictions?

T. Gillotti: We had a meeting with the courts, and they can put eviction moratoriums in place.

G. Pratt: I know that the county is down to essential services, one of which is Community Mental Health (CMH). What is being done especially in this time of COVID? It has been difficult contacting them. Are they going to go back to full staffing?

T. Gillotti: The director of CMH is hoping to return to full staffing and planning on increasing actions on June 1.

For housing protections, we have had conversations on Tuesdays and thought that eviction moratoriums would be extended to match the stay-at-home order, but there hasn't been any confirmed action yet. We have also talked with different organizations about mortgage support.

A. Foster: We previously discussed the ordinances in San Jose with language that directed city legal in how they might require landlords to work with tenants to discuss rent payment option. Is that something we're pushing for?

T. Gillotti: We will double check.

A. Carlisle: Council Members looked into working on possibly re-directing property taxes, but found that they couldn't legally do that. However, there may be possibility in waiving late payment penalty fees for summer property tax bills.

T. Gillotti: Other responses by OCED include the Summer Business Relief Fund, the Census, and communication strategies. The Summer Business Relief Fund raised a million dollars to help small businesses and non-profits. There was a very generous donation from the Song Foundation and as of April 30, 426 companies received grants for aid.

The Census is still going on, and we have continued a Facebook ad campaign. We have also included some ads in coupon book mailings and have distributed flyers. We have about 70% response rate in the county.

We are distributing flyers to spread information and raise awareness for COVID testing, various forms of support, and other resources. We are also trying to translate fliers as well.

As for next steps, in the homelessness system, they will continue their broader systems work in their goals of permanent housing. They are also looking to fully establish a contingency plan related to when and how to return to congregate sheltering. Barrier Busters will be expanding access by allowing for more non-traditional Barrier Busters who can make requests for community members. Coordinated Funding will be requesting more flexibility in funding and looking to shift from funding programs to operations support in a COVID-19 climate. Lastly, OCED is planning to have all staff working remotely as of June 1, 2020.

Board discusses the presentation

- b. Support for communication of key information on essential supports

T. Gillotti refers to fliers attached to meeting packet and asked board to assist in sharing them.

- c. Updates

Council Member Z. Ackerman shares actions and updates from City Council from March – May. Actions include, but not limited to:

- Approved a resolution for an anti-discrimination clause for housing
- \$200,000 in funding to close gaps to prevent eviction
- Approval to move forward with conducting community engagement around affordable housing development options for 353 S Main
- Approved a resolution to waive late fees for August and half of September for the summer property bill taxes
- \$250,000 to promote and assist in safe social distancing measures

VI. City Council Member Update

A. Bannister: I believe Councilmember Ackerman covered most of the updates. We have also budgeted \$100,000 for 2021 and 2022 for eviction protection. I am also glad to hear about the work that Food Gatherers has done and am trying to help promote additional services like composting.

VII. General Updates

G. Pratt: There will be more homeless people camping as days get warmer. As we identify where people camp, it would be good for us to think through how we can assist them, such hand sanitizing stations and porta potties.

A. Foster: In the past, we recommended a resolution for City Council to earmark funding marked for climate action for affordable housing sites. After updating some of the language, can we resend the resolution again for 2020?

A. Carlisle moved to resend the 2018 HHSAB Climate Resolution to City Council for 2020; A. Foster seconded. Motion passed unanimously

VIII. Public Comment

N/A

IX. Adjournment

G. Pratt, chair, adjourned meeting at 8:03 pm. G. Pratt moved to approve agenda; E. Pollack seconded. Motion passed unanimously

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