

**HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

March 15, 2023

6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Virtual Meeting via Cisco Webex

Members Present:

Tal Shahar, At Large Member

Nancy Sushinsky, Caregiver Member

Deborah Moore, Consumer Member

Wesley Hicken, At Large Member

Leon Suskin, Caregiver Member

Leah White, At Large Member

Ricky Mui, At-large Member

Amanda Schwartz, At Large Member and
Chair

Jessica Peterson, Consumer Member

Members Absent: Stacey Gold, Caregiver
Member

Mayor and Council Liaison: Councilmember Mark Pierzchala, attended briefly

Staff Present: Frederika Granger, Community Services Manager

RE: Call Meeting to Order

Meeting was called to order at 6:35pm by Amanda Schwartz, Chair

RE: Community Forum: No guests

RE: Approval of Minutes from February 14, 2023

Minutes approved unanimously

RE: SAMU Presentation on Refugee Assistance, Amy Hammond

6/22/22 opened in MCty. April til then, used church in Takoma Park. Needed more formal way. Early on met with people on floor of Union Station.

Process

Buses have slowed down but still coming. Due to administration. Come by bus, directly from southern border and then help to get to DC. Have others behind them to give tips to, i.e. MC and DC welcoming. Come in by referral, i.e. to homeless shelter then to SAMU. Most are Spanish speaking.

Welcome Center in DC in two different church communities. Will do intake process vetted with both jurisdictions. Will help coordinate travel elsewhere if they want. Otherwise, to respite center. FEMA pays for only 60% of travel. Respite center: place to sleep, eat, get clothing, extras – i.e. two hour ESL class (someone who had come on a bus), pastoral care, public benefits information. Sometimes sponsor denies them or is not ready for them. SAMU provides three

days of respite. In MC referred to some programs for housing and case management. Goal is to help migrants with specialized services.

6385 referred, 25,000 meals, 2,350 placed. Volunteers come into help.

Plans for clients

Strict parameters for funding from FEMA, it is reimbursement, so lots of in-kind donations sought.

Things that cannot be funded

- Backpacks that included Spanish learning materials – kids not in school for at least a month.
- Resource drives
 - Backpacks with summer activity packs – no after school programming so need activities.
 - Beautification of respite center out of respect to clients who have been through immense trauma (book, We Are Not From Here)
- Challenges, because only three days of respite
 - Prenatal care (asked Gabriel Project)-Go to urgent care, not solution
 - Out of Covid tests because have not finances to purchase.

Questions

- Bused at behest of state or federal agencies, but other organizations involved, so someone like SAMU actually puts people on bus. Still one weekly bus from Arizona – sent with medical accompany and admin so know make up of bus by the time it gets here. From Texas, don't know who will get.
- How can HSAC help – faith organizations to adopt families; inform that this is still happening to recruit help; volunteer recruitment or volunteer, in-kind and financial support. Now gov't funded while busses. Migration will not end.
- Help for students and families – Bien Venidos
- Need space for clothing pantry and other such services
- How does SAMU recruit volunteers HSAC gave suggestions. MC, MC Volunteer site, DC Fray, Rockville Reports and website, MC Social and Volunteering Club, UMD
- Have to be vetted as a volunteer before working at site.
- Donna Perry is POC for maternity care in MC Primary Care Coalition
- Volunteer Clinic run by volunteer doctors, med students; space donated after hours, i.e. Johns Hopkins, UMD, Howard University. SAMU is currently working with team at Georgetown Univ for a push in service, i.e. there when busses arrive.
- Refugee/migrant. Refugee don't have a choice, migrant choose usually for economic reasons, persecution based on a variety of things, been threatened and come to apply for asylum. To apply for asylum, have to have refugee status. That can be decided at the border and given provisional entry with an A number. SAMU and other places like it are tracking this. SAMU is a model for other centers, i.e. in Denver where 3,000-4,000 to be served.
- Amanda – Amy can share with Mayor and Council via testimony what you are seeing and doing. HSAC members can give testimony as well.

RE: Community Services Report

The ROCKIDZ youth mentoring program continued to have high mentee attendance (87%) with 31 mentees. Therapeutic recreation has been added to the beginning of the program time which has made the mentees more available to learn during their enrichment time with their mentors. Program Coordinator established collaboration with McLean Bible Church resulting in one new mentor. A mentoring program will start at Earle B. Wood MS on Wednesday, March 22nd. An interest meeting was held in early March. Part of the programming will include a three-session therapeutic art program with VisArts, who received a grant from Greater Washington Community Foundation for this.

With only three Earle B. Wood MS students attending and only three parents who attended interest meeting, the Latino Youth Development Program Coordinator held another interest meeting with the help of school staff and is now working with the assistant principal, ESOL Counselor and Parent Community Coordinator to assist with getting parents to sign permission forms so that the students may play soccer. Middle school students will not play in the Spring SAMS Soccer League but will practice and scrimmage with the high school students. Julius West MS students will join Earle B. Wood late March. All students will have soccer camp in the summer and join the SAM Soccer League in the fall.

The Youth and Family Counselor (YFC) and the Youth and Family Counseling Specialist (YFCS) saw a combined total of 52 individual clients for 133 sessions. The Counseling Team continues to maintain regular sessions at dedicated schools and has continued to receive referrals at a higher rate than this time the previous year. Meadow Hall ES has been added for a half day, currently with three students being seen. The YFC reports that she has had several students referred who are at high risk for which the Crisis Center and Child Welfare were called. When there are referrals with high risk, YFC works with school counselor to access what is needed for the students and families.

Linkages to Learning continues at Maryvale ES with a full mental health caseload and a 3rd grade therapeutic group on emotion regulation. As well there is a 5th grade lunch bunch, Edutainment group after school focusing this semester on the Art in STEAM, a parent enrichment group (topics covered are parent view, summer camps, internet safety, economic stability), and, the Family Case Manager has a full caseload helping families. 49 families receive Smart Sacks. LTL will participate in the school's game night.

REAP, HEAP and Bridge programs have had an uptick in need due to the County's Covid rent relief ending. Staff foresees a continued increase, especially now that the Covid supplement to SNAP has ended and rents continue to increase.

Bank on Rockville has seven families participating. Staff will hold an informational meeting at Twinbrook ES which may result in more families participating.

- It was asked why activities are gender specific, to which Ms. Granger shared that it has always been that way for LYDP due to the risk of boys not succeeding in school and going the route of gangs. There is a girls group now to which Dr. Peterson pointed out that research shows that Latina girls hesitate to interact with boys and therefore do not pursue STEM. To help change that LYDP could be coed. Ms. Granger shared that staff is looking into it and at serving all populations in all programming.

- It was asked if there is any programming during spring break to which Ms. Granger said no due to the school buildings being closed for several days during spring break. Ms. Granger shared that they could collaborate with Rec and Parks to be sure the students in our programming are in programming during spring break.

RE: City of Rockville FY23 and FY24 Budgets and ARPA Updates

- Bank On Rockville outreach is going well.
- The Human Services Needs Assessment RFP is out, with a pre-bid meeting on March 21st and the expectation to have the assessment report completed by November. This way, the results can inform the City budget and the Caregiver Grant Program as well as city programming.
- Housing and Community Development’s request for additional staff did not make it into proposed budget. City budget is overwhelmed with inflation costs. Community Services will do the best it can with what it has.

RE: Caregiver Grants FY23 Update

Several site visits have occurred. The common theme is the need for mental health services for chronically mentally ill and a safe place for those in shelters who struggle with mental health issues and are not ready for treatment or medication. In the past there have been safe havens for those who suffer with mental illness but are not ready for care but, as transitional housing, they were no longer funded when county discontinued transitional housing. Another concern raised at shelters is the need for more information (acuity) for Rapid Rehousing clients to be sure they do not go to housing to later find that they need supportive housing instead. What staff get from clients is often not enough information to make an informed decision especially since the client is in the shelter less than 30 days. Ms. Moore shared her sadness that a longtime nurse at Mobile Med, Kathleen, is retiring. For outpatient, there is the need for behavioral health services and there is tremendous outreach to clients to get them to come in for preventative care. The IW Clothing Center is doing well. The Food Hub there has a grocery store so to speak at which clients can come and choose food. It was busy during site visit. It was raised that there is a need for collaboration among providers and that there be a resource guide available to all. Ms. Granger shared that she will have the Caregiver Coalition.

RE: Caregiver Grants Program Process for FY24

The recommended funding for 18 programs is in the City Manager’s proposed budget. Hearings are occurring now. Ms. Granger shared that she had heard from some caregivers that they want to testify. Hopefully, next grant cycle will be two years. There will also likely be Opioid Litigation funding available and it will likely be distributed via a grant process. Apparently, the funding could be distributed over 18 years due to fact that settlements will happen with several opioid manufacturers over the years. Ms. Granger shared the link, naco.org, at which the scope of service for which funding is to be used is shared.

RE: Testimony to M&C

Ms. Moore (virtually), Ms. Gold and Ms. Sushinsky (in person) testified on March 6th. A list of possible testimonies, per Ms. Schwartz, includes SAMU refugee services, Mobile Integrated Emergency Health Services, need for more mental health services, mental illness’ impact on shelters, staff shortages in

human services. HSAC has encouraged Caregivers and their clients to testify. Could testify to support Restoration Center.

- TBD Mr. Suskin (mental health, esp in shelters)
- March 20 Budget Work Session
- March 27 Community Forum
- April 17 Budget Hearing – Ms. Schwartz and Ms. Peterson
- April 24 Community Forum
- May 1 Budget Work Session
- May 8 Budget Adopted

RE: Volunteer Website Demonstration

Ms. Granger will show the City Volunteer website at next meeting

RE: Roundtable Discussions

Ms. Ayelit Giladi, a child psychologist, will present from Israel on her curriculum for teachers on teaching students positive behavior as many do not know what are positive and appropriate interactions, being surrounded by negative behavior in their families and communities. This is an effort to prevent students from becoming offenders in some way, i.e. bullying, sexual harassment.

RE: Federal Legislation Advocacy (All Members)

The President’s budget is out. Departments that were heavily funded last year are asking for less this year and visa versa. Wes Moore’s service year project is still being considered at state level. The 270 expansion plan contractor pulled out so there are no longer plans for it.

RE: Other Items

- Salute to NonProfits: Members want a Human Services “Fair/Salute” at Farmers’ Market. ACTION ITEM: Ms. Granger has drafted a list of providers and will continue working on this. It could be held much like a health fair with blood pressure checks etc. and could be held in the Town Square.
- Caregiver Coalition: ACTION ITEM: In the interest of collaboration among caregivers, Ms. Granger will work on this as well with a possible first meeting in May or June.
- Resource Guide: there is a need for all caregivers to have a resource guide.
 - ACTION ITEM: Ms. Granger will work on this – there are some – need to make sure they are current.

RE: Agenda items for next meeting, February 14, 2023, Virtual

- Usual report items: Forum, Minutes, Community Services, Caregivers, budget update, testimony update, Federal Legislation
- Ayelit Giladi presentation
- Volunteer website
- Roundtable presentation for May

RE: Adjourn

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn; unanimous vote to adjourn at 8:30pm