NEWPORT BEACH HOMELESS TASK FORCE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
City Council Chambers
100 Civic Center Drive, Newport Beach CA
Tuesday, October 15, 2019
4:00 PM

1)   CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:01 p.m.

2)   ROLL CALL

Homeless Task Force Committee Members:
        Mayor Pro Tem and Chair Will O'Neill
        Council Member and Vice Chair Brad Avery (excused absence)
        Council Member Joy Brenner
        Helen Cameron
        John Heffernan
        Terry Moore
        Thomas Peterson
        David Snow
        Rev. Cindy Voorhees (excused absence)
        Jean Wegener

Staff Members:
        Carol Jacobs, Assistant City Manager
        Natalie Basmaciyan, Homeless Coordinator
        Jaime Murillo, Principal Planner
        Lauren Wooding-Whitlinger, Real Property Administrator
        Anthony Yim, Homeless Liaison Officer
        Jennifer Biddle, Administrative Support Specialist

3)   CURRENT BUSINESS

> **1.   Approval of the September 17, 2019 Homeless Task Force Meeting Minutes**
>   **Recommendation:** Approve and file

Jim Mosher noted the final page of the minutes referred to Communication Brenner rather than Council Member Brenner.

Committee Member Snow moved to approve the minutes of the September 17, 2019 meeting as amended. Committee Member Moore seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following roll call vote:
Ayes: O'Neill, Brenner, Cameron, Heffernan, Moore, Peterson, Snow, Wegener
Nays: None
Abstaining: None
Absent: Avery, Voorhees

> **2.   Presentation by City of Anaheim**
>   **Recommendation:** Receive and file

Chair O'Neill announced the presentation by the City of Anaheim has been continued due to the speaker's illness.

3.   Presentation on the Costs of Homelessness
Recommendation: Receive and file

Committee Member Snow reported a study of the costs of homelessness was conducted in 2016, and a report was published in the spring of 2017. The types of housing studied are emergency shelter, transitional or bridge housing, rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing. Questionnaires were sent to municipalities, hospitals, non-governmental agencies in Orange County, and interviews of homeless people were conducted. The total cost of homelessness in 2016 was approximately $300 million. The 2017 Point-In-Time count found a homeless population of around 4,500. The most recent Point-In-Time count found an increase of approximately 2,000 homeless people, and the resulting costs are likely closer to $400 million. The largest cost cluster was healthcare at $120 million followed by housing and law enforcement. The average cost per chronically homeless person in the county was slightly more than $100,000. The average cost per non-chronically homeless person was approximately $42,000. The difference between the two was primarily healthcare costs. President George W. Bush's administration changed the focus to housing for the homeless before treatment for mental and physical health. When the homeless are housed, the cost for healthcare and law enforcement decrease drastically. The cost for non-emergency healthcare increases because regular healthcare services are provided along with housing. Seventy-one percent of homeless people who have been on the street for three years or more report having two or more health conditions.

In reply to questions, Committee Member Snow advised that municipalities' costs were comprised of law enforcement, staff time, and housing and assistance provided to the homeless. Where municipalities provide ambulance services, the costs were attributed to the municipality rather than healthcare. The costs for the County jail and County homeless court were attributed to the County, but the cost of other County services provided to the homeless were more difficult to ascertain. Costs of $6.9 million were attributed to small agencies and faith-based organizations that provide food and clothing, such as Mary's Kitchen. The study's findings are consistent with studies conducted in other California cities. Chair O'Neill related Council actions regarding housing and the difficulty of identifying City costs for homelessness. Currently, federal and state funding is focused on permanent supportive housing. For $10.6 million, Costa Mesa estimates it can provide a facility with 50 beds for the homeless and an additional 50 beds in the future. The estimated operational cost per bed at that site is $56,000.

Committee Member Cameron recalled that the cost of the Santa Ana Veterans Village was $27 million, but the City of Santa Ana contributed less than $400,000. A city's contribution to housing varies. The typical cost for one unit of permanent supportive housing is $450,000.

Committee Member Wegener indicated the average cost of permanent supportive housing in Orange County for a family is $10,000-$14,000.

Committee Member Moore explained that the $56,000 cost for the Costa Mesa facility included in-reach and outreach services and staffing. As of the day prior to the meeting, 25 people have been moved from the facility into permanent housing. The cost per bed is not the same as cost per person. Within a year, more than one person can occupy a bed and receive services so that the cost per person is less than $56,000.

Council Member Brenner noted the important fact of homeless people successfully moving into housing and not returning to the street. Temporary shelter is more expensive, but it can provide long-term savings.

Jim Mosher asked if the $51,000 cost for permanent supportive housing included services only or services and an annualized cost for construction of permanent supportive housing.

An unidentified speaker asked if people would be required to support themselves financially or be allowed to continue their current behaviors once they are moved into housing.

An unidentified speaker noted the conversation did not include the impacts of robberies on stores. The growing number of homeless people obtaining healthcare in emergency rooms impacts hospital staff and care for other patients.

Jack Rose opposed construction of a facility at 592 Superior. At $56,000 per bed, the cost per household for a 40-bed facility would be $23. The impact to neighborhoods may not be worth the trivial amount. Housing for the homeless is a budget issue.

Committee Member Snow clarified that the $51,000 cost does not include the initial cost to construct a facility, but it does include subsequent costs. Permanent supportive housing is more expensive than rapid rehousing or transitional housing because it provides services for disabilities. Rapid rehousing is intended to return people with job skills to employment. Shelters, such as the Friendship Shelter, remove homeless people from the streets for a few nights but do not provide services or long-term housing. The cost for housing varies greatly because of the assistance provided by the County, State, and Federal governments.

Committee Member Cameron related that people living in permanent supportive housing pay rent, participate in the community, and address their mental health and substance abuse issues. Hospitals in the community and the County have a new model to provide mental health services.

Chair O'Neill announced Homeless 101 will be held October 23 in the Friends Room at Central Library. Registration can be completed online at the City's website.

> **4.   Subcommittee Reports:**
> **Recommendation:** Receive and File

Chair O'Neill noted Committee Member Heffernan has not been assigned to a subcommittee. Committee Heffernan volunteered for the Housing Options and Financing subcommittee.

- **Housing Options and Financing**

Committee Member Cameron reported the City is working collaboratively with the cities of Tustin, Santa Ana, Costa Mesa, Huntington Beach, Fountain Valley, Westminster, Garden Grove, and Seal Beach, all of which form the Central Service Planning Area (SPA). The subcommittee is interviewing a broker in order to learn of locations where permanent housing may be developed. She read the cost of homelessness study's finding regarding the primary cause of homelessness. The subcommittee has discussed a centralized assessment team and shelters.

In response to inquiries, Committee Member Cameron explained that almost every unit of permanent supportive housing requires a project-based voucher. The Veterans Village requires a VASH voucher, but the funding for VASH and project-based vouchers is similar. Development of a housing project typically needs private funding resources. Utilizing funding from a community foundation increases the number of points awarded to a development's tax credit application. Funding is quite complex and varied.

- **Data Collection and Accuracy/Mental Health and Substance Abuse**

Committee Member Snow advised that the homeless population in Newport Beach totals about 54. Homeless Liaison Officer Anthony Yim believes about 90 percent of the homeless would likely agree to move into housing. The remaining 10 percent suffers severe mental illness and probably would not be willing to move into housing. Since the spring of 2018, City Net has placed 34 homeless people in temporary or permanent supportive housing. Homeless people have to be placed on a prioritization list before they can be taken to housing. The subcommittee is exploring obtaining the services of an individual qualified and available to provide an official diagnosis so that homeless people can be placed on the prioritization list.

Chair O'Neill related that 20 people are listed on the housing prioritization list (CES) and could be moved into housing if it was available. The subcommittee needs to discuss the County's public guardian program.

- **Public Relations**

Council Member Brenner indicated the subcommittee has been working with staff to improve the website and discussed an anti-panhandling ordinance.

Assistant City Manager Carol Jacobs reported the subcommittee discussed creating a sign that encourages people not to give to panhandlers. A favorite sign states "change the way you give" and provides a website address for a third party that provides homeless services. A communications specialist can create a logo and tagline for such a sign. She requested comment regarding use of the phrase "change the way you give."

Committee Member Cameron believed the priority issue should be an ordinance that addresses safety issues. Signage will not lead to the desired result. More research is needed before the Council considers signage.

Chair O'Neill explained that the signage supports a public campaign approved by the Council.

Council Member Brenner felt the language should be more specific to panhandling and safety. The language could be "panhandling hurts" and something about how to help.

Committee Member Snow suggested the language is vague, and the text is small.

Chair O'Neill preferred the approached used by the City of Scottsdale.

Assistant City Manager Jacobs advised that the subcommittee heard a suggestion to provide a business card rather than cash to panhandlers. The subcommittee felt that could lead to safety issues and did not recommend the concept to the Task Force. The subcommittee is talking about creating a social media platform and posting updates three or four times a week; creating a slogan and logo; and hosting a table at community events.

Council Member Brenner added that the intent of attending community events would be to distribute flyers that identify organizations who work with the homeless and that would complement signage.

Committee Member Cameron suggested distributing 211 and OC Links cards at community events.

An unidentified speaker related his conversation with police officers familiar with the homeless people at the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) facility and their unwillingness to move to housing. Homeless people continue to camp at the facility.

An unidentified speaker encouraged the Task Force to install signs and to try other things to discourage panhandling.

Monique Christianson offered to share the need for a qualified person to assess the homeless with clinical psychology associates at Pepperdine University. She inquired about a plan to help those who will not move into housing.

Jim Mosher suggested signs focus on help is available for the needy and where resources are available. Raising the awareness of resources through distributing the County's pocket resource cards could be beneficial. He suggested each webpage contain the date it was last revised.

An unidentified speaker supported the installation of signage focused on panhandling specifically.

Chair O'Neill clarified that 90 percent of the homeless at the OCTA facility do not want to move to shelters while 90 percent of the general homeless population does want permanent supportive housing. The police department is a solution for those who do not want housing.

Committee Member Moore indicated most homeless people are initially resistant to housing, but they often change their minds.

4) PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

An unidentified speaker shared her observations of the Friendship Shelter in the 1990s. She would gladly support housing for the homeless if the occupants are required to work and cease substance abuse.

5) COMMITTEE MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS (NON-DISCUSSION ITEMS)

None

6) BOARD/COMMITTEE/COMMISSION ANNOUNCEMENTS OR MATTERS WHICH MEMBERS WOULD LIKE PLACED ON A FUTURE AGENDA FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION, OR REPORT (NON-DISCUSSION ITEM)

Chair O'Neill requested agenda items for the City of Anaheim presentation; recommendations to Council to modify the purpose and responsibilities of the Homeless Task Force; and establishing objectives and goals for the coming year. Members of the public may send suggestions for goals and objectives to Assistant City Manager Jacobs, Homeless Coordinator Basmaciyan, or Chair O'Neill.

7) ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Newport Beach Homeless Task Force, the meeting was adjourned at 5:57 p.m.