



INTERAGENCY COMMISSION ON HOMELESSNESS

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Housing for all = A Stronger Montgomery

Bi-Monthly Commission Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 27, 2019 | 3-6p

Rockville Memorial Library, 1st Fl Conference Rm, 21 Maryland Avenue, Rockville 20850

Members (Present or Represented)

Bohorquez, M. (Rep. Jonathan Brice)
Buckland, Victoria
Chesney, Amanda
Glass, Evan
Goetzinger, Timothy
Goldman, Jeff
Harris, Amanda
Hong, Christine (Rep. Shane Rock)

Johnson, Ebony (Vice Chair)

Kauffman, Louise
Jochum, Kendra (Rep. Robert Green)
London, Sharan

Pinero, Roberto (Chair)

Roynestad, Brian
Seidel, Stan
Sinclair-Smith, Susan

Members (Excused)

Schuchman, Abe

Members (Absent)

Crowel, Raymond
Miller, Eneshal
Newton, Bridget
Spann, Stacy
Zucker, Craig

Guests

Belk, Ralph D.
Ezrin, Debbie
Fasanelli, Antonia
George, Melissa
Grinnell, Jennifer
Krakaur, Haifa
Lucio, Emily
Mendez, John
Okhomina, Omore
Phillips, Mary
Pierre, Rachel
Pina, Diana
Respress, Christy
Schiller, Jen
Swan, Fred
Wellington, Janice

Staff

Adhanom, Rozina
Ball, Kim
Black, Sara
Huggins, Gloria
Jones, LaTrecia
Sierra, Sharon
Soni, Nili

Welcome | Introductions: Roberto Pinero and Ebony Johnson

Roberto Pinero convened the meeting and introduced *Ebony Johnson*. *Robert* and *Ebony* are new public members and have been appointed chair and vice chair of the Interagency Commission on Homelessness (ICH). *Roberto* expressed that he is honored to serve as chair and shared that he looks forward to meeting and learning from all of the members. *Roberto's* passion is affordable housing and he worked on the Housing Board with the Housing Opportunities Commission for many years.

Roberto commented that the Community-wide meeting held on February 7 was informative and highlighted the accomplishments of the ICH and Montgomery County's Continuum of Care (CoC). The achievements of reaching functional zero for Veterans and being close to ending chronic homelessness is something to be celebrated. However, people had concerns about the lack of affordable housing and improving wraparound services for those who are housed. *Fred Swan* (HOC) and *Sharan London* (ICH member representing the County Executive's Office) will help by working on strategic planning and examining what things we are doing that should continue and what things we need to change especially with the new administration.

On a personal note, *Roberto* shared that he is proud to be from a small town in the middle of the island of Puerto Rico. He was raised by his mother and grandmother. Their family had their struggles which included losing their home when he was 12 years old and receiving support from the government. He was never homeless, but his family came close.

Ebony Johnson works at the Housing Urban Development (HUD) and is serving as a public member on the ICH. *Ebony* shared that she is a survivor of domestic violence and fled Prince George's County to

Montgomery County (MC) to be safe. She is a new County resident and homeowner. Her passion is youth, the underserved and survivors of domestic violence. She expressed that it is important to ensure our youth are housed, set up for success in the future and everyone has access to affordable housing. Ebony's goal is to visit every ICH committee to get to know the members and understand the issues surrounding homelessness in MC. Roberto and Ebony will be meeting with legislators in the community. Ebony invited the commissioners to contact Roberto and herself so they can know the ICH members' needs.

Evan Glass shared that he is pleased to join the ICH in his capacity as at-large member of the County Council. He is the point person or lead on Homelessness and Vulnerable Communities. There is a great need in the 1.1 million population and 500 square miles of MC for services to people in need and to make MC good to everyone. Evan's goal is to visit all the Non-profit agencies and facilities that are serving homeless population and extended the invitation to anyone that he has not yet visited to contact his office. In the last three months, there have been a series of meetings on racial equity. Talks and work will continue to ensure that all residents of MC receives the basic human services they need.

Victoria Buckland is the Acting Director for the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Vickie's regular responsibilities is the Department's Chief Operating Officer. Vickie shared that DHHS has a wide array of services and programming. One of the most difficult and deep-end work is around housing and it takes everyone around the table partnering together to help those experiencing homelessness into better circumstances. Services to End and Prevent Homelessness (SEPH) is always there to help.

Amanda Harris Chief of SEPH thanked Roberto, Ebony and Evan. She commented that it is good to have new energy on the ICH that will expand on the amazing successes that have been achieved. Amanda expressed that if any community can end homelessness, it is Montgomery County.

Louise Kauffman represents the Mayor of the City of Gaithersburg. Louise is the Housing and Community Development Chief of the City and she runs the City's Affordable Housing Program, Homeownership Assistance Loan Program and Victim Prevention Program.

Margarita Bohorquez represented Dr. Jonathan Brice of Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) and she is the Supervisor of International Admissions and Residency Program and also the homeless liaison for the MC school district. MCPS currently has about 1,300 students experiencing homelessness from K-12. MCPS's goal is to works with these young people to help them reach success.

Kendra Jochum represented Director Robert Green of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and is the Reentry Services Manager for the jails in MC. The justice-involved population has very diverse needs. The Pre-Release, Pre-Trial and the Reentry Services Unit facilitates collaborative activities to provide offender opportunities for successful transition from incarceration to the community

Timothy Goetzinger is the Acting Director of the Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) and he expressed that he was happy to be at the ICH table to contribute. Timothy's regular responsibilities is the Chief of DHCA's Finance and Administration.

Brian Roynestad is a Captain with the Sheriff's Office and represents Sheriff Darren Popkin. Prior to Brian's reassignment 7 months ago to the Family Justice Center-Family Services Division, he spent 7 years in charge to the Civil and Criminal Division which is the division that executes of eviction notices.

Sharan London is a new member of the ICH representing the Office of the County Executive. She is retired from ICF where she led the homelessness and supportive housing team, providing training and

technical assistance to the HUD's Office of Special Needs Assistance. Sharan joined ICF after 15 years as the Executive Director of the Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless (MCCH).

Christine Hong, Director of the Interfaith Works Homeless Services Department, is representing Shane Rock, Executive Director, as his proxy. Interfaith Works serves low-income individuals and families including those experiencing homelessness through 14 programs geared toward serving people in poverty. Eight programs out of the 14 serve those who are homeless with a continuum of services from in-reach at Progress Place, emergency shelter, one transitional shelter and 4 permanent supportive housing programs.

Jeff Goldman works with the Primary Care Coalition and his primary responsibility is managing Nexxus Montgomery which is a collaborative organization of the 6 hospitals in MC. Nexxus Montgomery partners with community organization to target population to improve health and reduce hospitalizations. The homeless population is a focus of Nexxus Montgomery because housing is a part of the umbrella of social services and supports people need to lead a healthy life.

Amanda Chesney is the Executive Director of Housing and Homeless Services with Catholic Charities of DC. Catholic Charities provides 30 programs within this region (Washington DC, Montgomery, Prince George's, Saint Maryland's, Calvert, and Charles counties). Amanda sits on the ICH of DC. Her passions are to build and forge good partnerships to end homelessness overall and ensure high-quality services for clients throughout the region.

Stan Seidel serves on the Maryland Veterans' Commission and was asked by the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs to sit on the ICH. Stan has worked with homeless Veterans since 1986 and in his career, he has seen good and not so good programs. Stan expressed that he hopes his experience will assist the ICH in their work with Veterans experiencing homelessness.

Susie Sinclair-Smith is the Executive Director for the MCCH and the President of their affiliate Coalition Homes that develops and manages permanent supportive housing. MCCH runs the main emergency shelter and serve about 700 men each year. The Coalition has housed 450 households (800 individuals) exiting to permanent supportive housing. Coalition Homes owns about 140 units of permanent supportive housing. Susie started her work with the homeless population in Washington DC in 1985. Susie shared that her experience of suffering with panic attacks and anxiety from her youth has helped her to understand the struggles and the needs of people experiencing homelessness. She was grateful for the support of her family. People experiencing homelessness also need the necessary support and resources.

Approval of the September 12, 2018 Minutes: Roberto Pinero and Ebony Johnson

Approval of the minutes of September 12 tabled. The minutes/meeting notes will be sent out by emailed with a request for electronic approval.

Update on Initiatives and Recommendation on Prioritization – Chapman Todd and Nili Soni

Four years ago, the Continuum of Care (CoC) started their focus on the **goal** to create a homeless services system to provides permanent housing for Veterans and chronically homeless individuals. The **core value** to achieve the goal is the use of the "Housing First" model to rapidly connect individuals and families with permanent housing without preconditions such as sobriety or treatment compliance, and then provide support serves as necessary to keep people housed. The "**data driven**" approach was also implemented to identify Veterans who are homeless and chronically homeless individuals and families (through a by-name list) across multiple service systems and match housing placements to the clients' specific need.

Functional Zero for Veterans means getting to a sustainable system that can respond when a Veteran becomes homeless, so the inflow matches the outflow. MC, monthly Functional Zero number for Veterans is six or fewer. At the end of January 2019, MC housed 144 veterans. MC has been nationally recognized as one of the first jurisdiction in the Country that has effectively ended Veteran homelessness.

What is HUD’s definition of chronic homelessness?

1. Have a disability, and
2. Live on the street, a save haven, or in an emergency shelter; or
3. Lives in an institutional care for few than 90 days and immediately beforehand have been living on the streets, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter; and
4. Have been homeless continuously for at least 12 months or on at least 4 separate occasions (7+ days) in the last 3 years where the combined occasions must total at least 12 months.

In 2016, chronic homelessness became the focus and the Inside (Not Outside) initiative was launched. The by-name list indicated that there were 276 chronically homeless individuals in the County.

Functional Zero for the Chronically Homeless is a HUD directed set number, for MC to effectively end chronic homelessness, there can be no more than three unhoused chronically homeless individuals or families at any time. For 10 years, communities across the nation have been pushing to end chronic homelessness. To date, only three communities have been able to effectively end chronic homelessness (Lancaster, PA; Rockford, IL and Bergen County, NJ).

How many people has MC housed? To date, MC has housed 406 individuals. In 2016, there were determined to be only three families who met the definition of chronic homelessness and they were housed immediately. Most of the individuals (360) were placed in Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) which is a combination of rental subsidies with social services that are matched up with the needs of the individual.

How are people prioritized? By the measurement tool called the VI-SPDAT (Vulnerability Index-Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool) or the SPDAT (Full-Service Prioritization Decision Tool). The score on the VI-SPDAT or SPDAT will determine the level of service need for PSH or Rapid Re-housing.

Level of Vulnerability	Priority	VI-SPDAT Score	Full SPDAT Score
Very High	1	16+	50+
High	2	14-15	45-49
Medium	3	13	40-44
Low	4	9-12	38-39
Rapid Rehousing		4-8	20-37

What we have learned? Looking back on the 406 individuals that have been housed, most scored as less acute or less in need of services (Scored: Medium to Low Vulnerability).

Current number of chronically homeless individuals in the MC: To date, there are **11** unhoused clients who have been determined as chronically homeless.

Current number of clients in the Coordinated Entry System (CES): There are **more than 400** unhoused clients on the CES list who do not currently meet the definition for chronic homelessness. Of the 400, only **84** scored have acute vulnerability (Scored: Very High, High or Medium).

Proposal of a New Prioritization Policy:

The CES policy and procedure will be revised to reflect changes to who is prioritized for PSH as follows: Homeless individuals and families –

- with a disability and high service needs severity of service needs will be determined by the VI-SPDAT and/or SPDAT and the Acuity Scale;
- with long period of continuous or episodic homelessness;
- coming from places not meant for human habitation (such as emergency shelter, streets, safe havens, etc.).

Notes: At each of these steps, those that meet the definition of chronic homelessness could be prioritized above those who do not meet the definition.

After a lengthy discussion, the following points were highlighted:

- The shift in prioritization does not mean that we will not be housing individuals and families who are chronically homeless. This shift will build on the system and will prevent people from becoming chronically homeless by housing those who score as vulnerable.
- Approval was sought from ICH to shift the focus to vulnerability (from only chronic) and then spend the next year evaluating and improving the new CES. At the end of the year, the improved coordinated entry policy and procedure would be brought before the ICH for review and approval.
- There was expressed a concern about funding. When applying for HUD funding under the NOFA, a data point is identifying the number of chronically homelessness. This shift to vulnerable may impact the consolidated application to HUD.
- **Response to concern about a loss of funding:** The language on the HUD consolidated application states specifically “chronically homeless or other vulnerable populations” it does not say only chronic. HUD is looking at improved system performance; whether or not a community has a system that works and is housing people. In the past year, MC has seen improvement in 4 of the 7 performance measures (i.e. reducing length of time homeless, decreasing the Point-in-time numbers, maintaining housing retention, etc.). HUD does not emphasize housing specific populations but improved system performance.

Antonio Fasanelli from the Homeless Representative Payee commented that she sits on the CoC Review Board in Baltimore and has reviewed our prioritization. Antonio recommended that the vote be postponed until the next ICH meeting because in her opinion Commissioners were unclear of the implications of this change on the HUD collaborative applicant application. She said, “the chronically homeless figure for MC is very important for funding to the County.”

MOTION: Jeff Goldman moved to vote to create a new prioritization policy as stated above in the section **Proposal of New Prioritization Policy**. After one year of prioritizing vulnerable homelessness for PSH, the CES will be evaluated and a revised policy will be presented to the ICH. Sharan London seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Amanda Harris emphasized that this shift in prioritization is the result of consultation and vetting with USICH, HUD, and Community Solutions to ensure we are aligned with our Federal partners.

Why the proposed shift? Amanda Harris shared that the reason for the recommended shift in prioritization is because of limited Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) resources. PSH is the most expensive housing initiative. We want to ensure that people receiving PSH are those with the greatest service needs. It was assumed that those who met the HUD definition of chronic had the greatest needs, but it has been seen that most of the people identifying as chronic are scoring lower on the VI-SPDAT and/or SPDAT and the Acuity Scale. So, people are receiving PSH who have lower service needs than others. The shift in prioritization will allow people who are chronic, but scoring lower, to be referred to

Rapid Re-housing instead of PSH. People on the vulnerable list with greater service needs, even though not chronic, will be housed in PSHs.

Data Updates: Nili Soni shared that there will be regular electronic updates sent reporting the individuals and families who have been housed from the chronic and the vulnerable lists.

Interagency Commission on Homelessness Restructure: Amanda Chesney and Jeff Goldman

MEMBERS OF WORKGROUP

Amanda Chesney	Louise Kauffmann
Jill Fox, Coordinator and Facilitator	Eneshal Miller
Jeff Goldman	Shane Rock
Amanda Harris	Susie Sinclair Smith
	Nili Soni

The Restructure Committee spent 20 hours in face-to-face discussions in addition to reading examples of Governance Charters from other jurisdictions to capture some difficult processes. The objective was to examine the ICH business processes, how to have timely and effective meetings, how to manage conflicts of interest, and our code of conduct. The intention today is to:

- Vote on the Statement of Ethics, Code of Conduct and the Conflict of Interest Policy, and
- Endorse the Governance Charter, which will then go to the entire CoC for approval

The proposed restructure changes were developed by looking at other jurisdictions, HUD regulations and the standards for every CoC. The Committee reviewed examples of governance charters, codes of conduct, and wording of statutes from New York State, Wisconsin, Seattle, and Michigan and incorporated intentional language to capture some difficult processes. The task was very mind intensive and comprehensive for the group with varying levels of understanding. Our consultant helped to educate and guide the discussions. Hopefully, all had an opportunity to review the full packet and give feedback.

MOTION: Ebony Johnson moved that the ICH approve the **MC ICH Statement of Ethics, Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedure** as written. Motion was seconded and approved unanimously by all 15 Commissioners present.

Proposed new Committee Structures:

- The addition of an Intergovernmental Advisory Committee which will serve to recruit and nominate county and local ICH members.
- Each committee must have an ICH representative. The ICH rep is not required to be the Chair or Co-Chair.
- New committees' structure will be as follows:
 - Communications
 - Governance (consist of the ICH Commissioners on each Committee)
 - Intergovernmental Advisory (recruit and nominate new member)
 - Outcomes and Improvement (monitor based on standards and outcomes, previously Performance Review Committee)
 - HMIS Subcommittee
 - Partnerships and Funding
 - Allocation Subcommittee
 - People's
 - Strategy Planning
 - System Coordination (previously Operations Committee)
 - Coordinated Entry System Subcommittee

Amanda Chesney asked that the ICH endorse the changes and the work that the restructure committee has done.

Stan Siedel expressed disapproval with the change that a representative from Veterans Services will not be a required member of the Commission.

The reason for the proposed changes to the ICH membership is to provide flexibility. The proposal is that the 25 ICH membership not be exclusive and have wider representation. The flexibility will allow the membership to align with the changing ICH initiatives so that relevant partners are at the table (i.e. family and youth providers). The flexibility will also allow for others in the community to be educated and engaged in the work that the ICH is accomplishing. This change will take place as terms expire over the next three years.

Committee membership is open to everyone and all groups can and will be represented.

Roberto emphasized that this is a proposal and has to be accepted by the Council.

MOTION: Ebony moved to endorse the new committee structure and the proposal to change the legislation regarding the ICH membership to allow for flexibility and wider representation. The motion was seconded and 14-1 voted to endorse the structure and proposed changes. The changes will be sent to the Council for approval.

MOTION: Roberto moved to endorse the revised Governance Charter. The motion was seconded and voted 15-0 to endorse the revised charter. The Charter also be forwarded to the CoC membership for approval.

Update on Strategy and Planning Committee – Fred Swan

MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE

Ralph Beck (Family Services)

Amanda Chesney (Single Services)

Amanda Harris (DHHS)

Stephanie Killian (DHCA)

Sharan London (Co-Chair)

Linda McMillan (Council)

Meredith Myers (Education & Workforce/Family Services)

Diana Pina (Prevention)

Roberto Pinero (ICH)

Jennifer Schiller (Single Services)

Nili Soni (ICH Staff)

Fred Swan (Co-Chair)

Pam Taylor (Community Member)

Elijah Wheeler (Youth Services)

The committee will be meeting next week and will begin the work on developing a new strategic plan and annual plan between now and June. A survey will be forwarded to gather feedback from the community and basic elements of the plan. Additional ICH workgroups will be contacted to flesh out more detailed components of the plan. The goal is by the end of June to have a new strategic plan and annual plan that will correspond for the upcoming fiscal year. All were encouraged to come out to the workgroups and participate.

NOFA (Notice of Funding Availability) – Amanda Harris

Last year 2018, HUD/CoC competition awarded \$2.1 Billion (Montgomery County received an award of \$8.7 million, which was an increase). The highlights where we got 9 renewal projects, 21 new units through Pathways to Housing, and an increase in our planning grant. The planning grant funding affords us the opportunity to do the strategic planning, determine the best way to allocate resources, review data and conduct trainings to build capacity for providers. We lost funding for Safe Haven which is a loss of 20 low-barrier shelters for people with significant behavioral health issues.

Susie Sinclair-Smith of MCCH who operated the Safe Haven program expressed the concern that Safe Havens was a catch-all program for people who cannot get into residential rehab. There is a need to engage to determine other systems how to house people with behavioral health issues who cannot live safely and independently.

Amanda responded that transitional housing programs are being reviewed (i.e. Catholic Charities) to look at ways to reduce the barriers and make people who do not want to live in big congregate shelter settings more comfortable. In addition, people need permanent housing with very structured environments without a lot of rules and this does not exist.

The NOFA process:

- DHHS is the collaborative applicant and has the job of submitting the application, designing the collaborative process for the development of the application and approval of submitting.
- The Performance Review Committee(now the Outcomes and Improvement Committee) provides information on the performance of our programs and projects.
- The Allocation Subcommittee determines what the score sheet looks like, how to evaluate the project and writes them and that is what gets submitted to HUD.
- Ranking of our projects. There are 2 Tiers:
 - Tier 1 is 94% or 96% of our total HUD funding (we are relative sure we will get this funding)
 - Tier 2 is the funding that is not secure. Evaluated based on consolidated application and individuals' projects.

In the past, DHHS formed and staffed the Allocation Committee. In an effort to be as transparent as possible, this year we will have the ICH identify and endorse the members of the Allocation Subcommittee. Some members of the ICH will be unable to serve on the committee because their agencies receive HUD funding but all will have an opportunity to select the membership. We will be forwarding an electronic list of recommended committee members for you to vote.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Stan Siedel encouraged the group to write to Senator Peters the authorizer of House Bill 672 which will provide local grants for homeless veterans and survivors of domestic violence. Testimonies on the Bill will be given on March 6. Nili responded that the notification was sent to the Intergovernmental Office to see where the Councilmembers stands on House Bill 672. Antonia Fasanelli added that the Bill will provide permanent housing vouchers for persons who are veterans and survivors of domestic violence who are homeless.

Christine Hong expressed concern regarding the proposed new Prioritization Policy. The providers need more guidelines as to how clients will be prioritized in the way that is equitable. The use of HMIS as a means to prioritize clients will not capture everyone. Many clients are not in HMIS because they choose not to engage. Christine emphasized that the input of providers in policy changes is very important especially as it relates how the guidelines will directly impact the people we serve.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Susie Sinclair-Smith announced that MCCH is having its annual HOME Conference on March 25. The conference is an opportunity to discuss practices and services. There will be a Federal policy roundtable, state partners will be present and there will be workshops on immigrations and serving LGBTQ youth.

Ebony suggested the creation of a way for the public to submit questions and/or topics for discussion in advance of the ICH meeting. This would create transparency and give ICH members an opportunity to

prepare and address the concerns of those we serve. This could be in the form of a website or by email. Time will be allocated on the agency for the public to ask questions and voice concerns.