



District 4 Citizens Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

November 28, 2023 | 5:30 p.m.
Sedgwick County 6th Floor Large Conference Room
100 N. Broadway, Ste. 630, Wichita

Board Members in Attendance: Alison Despard, Susanne Hayes, Krister Johnson, Jacob LaMunyon, Helen Rolfe, Chris Stingo, Jordan Walker, Andrew Womack

County Representatives: Commissioner Ryan Baty

1. ORDER OF BUSINESS

- a. Call to Order – Commissioner Ryan Baty
 - i. Commissioner Ryan Baty called the meeting to order at 5:30pm and took roll.
- b. Approval of Meeting Minutes – Commissioner Ryan Baty
 - i. Board voted to approve the minutes
 - ii. Susanne Hayes requested a change on page 4 of the minutes
 - iii. Commissioner Baty approved the revision.

2. PUBLIC AGENDA

- a. The public agenda allows members of the public to address the District 4 Citizens Advisory Board.
 - i. None

3. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Continuum of Care and Community Approach to Homelessness – Steve Burt, United Way HMIS Administrator
 - i. Commissioner Baty introduced Steve Burt
 - ii. Steve Burt talked a bit about himself and his background
 - iii. A Continuum of Care (COC) is a community led and administered effort to end homelessness, across the full spectrum of homelessness: unstably housed to stably housed in permanent housing.
 1. The COC can exist as a Coalition
 2. Impact ICT COC covers Sedgwick County
 - iv. The vision of any homeless response system is that homelessness should be rare, brief, and non-recurring.
 1. Functional Zero is the definition of success and means that homelessness will exist but that we have more people leaving homelessness than entering.
 - v. United Way's shelter has the goal of people leaving with a home at the end of the stay.
 1. They assess every person who enters the United Way homelessness program to determine needs and challenges to match resources
 2. Work on populations one at a time. Vets, then chronically homeless, etc.
 - a. Chronically is defined as: continuously for 12 months or a total of 12 months over the last three years.
 - b. Working on starting a youth lane.
 - vi. Every zip code in the country is covered by a COC
 - vii. Core Competencies of the COC

1. Homeless Prevention & Shelter Collaboration
2. Community Data management & Reporting
3. Housing Navigation
4. Grant Compliance and System Coordination
 - a. United Way is the steward of the HUD grant
- viii. Homeless Prevention & Shelter Collaboration
 1. Community Impact – Basic Needs, leadership for the COC, Homeless Services and Rent/Utility Assistance programs.
- ix. Community Data Management and Reporting
 1. Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) – Required of all COCs, only about 7 vendors
 2. Data cannot be shared between COCs using different vendors
 3. At the end of the day, the data from all homeless services is in the system
 4. Data looks weird because of HUD requirements
- x. Housing Navigation
 1. Coordinated Entry, the idea that we are aligning resources by name and by need
 2. All community service providers meet every week for Chronically Homeless and Veterans
- xi. Grant Compliance and Coordination
 1. Lead Agency acts as the Collaborative Applicant for the annual COC Grant and ensures the COC is compliant with HUD Guidelines and responsibilities
 2. Point in Time Count – PIT Count, required every year, United Way does every year
 3. Housing Inventory Count – HIC Count
- xii. Committees have been developed to handle different areas
- xiii. The better we do, the more outcomes we produce, the more money HUD will grant
- xiv. Questions about COC
 1. Helen Rolfe asked, what is the name of the community that is at zero?
 - a. Steve Burt answered, Bergen County, NJ there are 6 communities that have reached Functional Zero for both populations and 13-15 that have reached it for Veterans
 - b. Commissioner Baty added that Bergen County is about double the size of Sedgwick County
 2. Andrew Womack asked, who is doing Rental Assistance in the County? People say that nobody is doing it.
 - a. Steve Burt answered, the United Way is doing and provides funds to other organization to also provide it. Rapid Rehousing is Rental Assistance.
 - b. Please let the United Way know if they are directing people to a resource that doesn't answer the phone or says they can't help with the needed issue
- xv. Ending Veteran Homelessness
 1. 4 metrics developed by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness
 2. This is not functional zero
- xvi. Housing First – 4th metric for ending Veteran Homelessness
 1. we do not require someone to go into treatment before putting them in a house, research shows they will not get better if they don't have a roof over their head
 2. Commissioner Baty commented that this is a controversial conversation nationally
 3. Housing First is a required element
 4. We put them in a house and then work on their other needs
 5. COC is measured by recidivism, return to homelessness
- xvii. Benchmarks for 4 metrics
 1. Not meeting first 2 benchmarks

2. Met the metric for the 3rd for the first time this week
 3. Meeting the benchmark for the 4th metric
- xviii. Andrew Womack asked, is the Emporia House permanent housing?
1. Steve Burt answered, it is an emergency shelter and does not count as a house.
 2. Jordan Walker followed up, so those individuals are still included in this number?
 3. Steve Burt answered, yes. They are still considered homeless
- xix. United Way definition of Veteran is anyone who served regardless of discharge
1. If a person served in the National Guard but was never called to active duty, they are not considered a Veteran.
- xx. Commissioner Baty stated that we have to be able to quantify economically the impact of these programs and what is the cost of investment dollars. We can only ride the back of compassion for so long. Eventually we have to be able to tell the community what the financial cost is and what the net gain will be. High Utilizer Study - from 2017-2019 tracked 512 users of 3 services were tracked and cost over \$56 million in services. \$19 million was uncompensated.
- xxi. Commissioner Baty asked a question of the group: In your opinion, why should we care? Why should we care about those that are unhoused in this community?
1. Steve Burt stated that he doesn't know that he has a data driven answer to the compassion side. But all of them are people, some are children, and they are dying, from cold, drug ODs, etc., and this is not what Wichita is.
 2. Susanne Haynes stated: "I think we should care because the homeless people prey upon the rest of us, they steal from the stores and that means our prices go up and there are a lot of problems because of that. And it isn't fair to all the rest of us. I do have to say you were talking about how the homeless people are someone's family, and we had people in our family who are homeless and we just thought, they know the right thing to do, and we didn't help them. And they came to our house and stole from us and they hurt us, and we absolutely were not going to help them because we knew that they knew how to do things right. Later they ended their homeless state on their own, that had to be their decision to do that, and they thanked us and they said thank you for...and they are some of the most outspoken people I know saying when you see someone on the street asking for something, don't give them anything.
 - a. Steve Burt responded, we are against handing out things in parking lots and to pan handlers. We can't help them survive in the outdoors, we should be trying to get them into shelters where they can get the support they need to find housing
 - b. Commissioner Baty added, handing out stuff in parking lots is enabling the homeless situation rather than forcing them to find solutions for survival.
 3. Jordan Walker commented, I think there is a difference between compassion and sustainability. Compassion is helping them make the right decision but there will always be homelessness. Maslow's hierarchy of needs, at some point they'll either seek help or they won't. It's a financial gain to invest in sustainable solutions.
 4. Andrew Womack stated, I think it's a trickledown effect. The moment we can get this to functional zero, we're already paying for it, but what else can we solve once we get to functional zero? Let's solve this and then we can tackle the next thing. The problem is still manageable.
 5. Helen Rolfe stated, education and the direction is really viable. Now you've given me some key points to hang my hat on.
 - a. Steve Burt commented, we prefer the compassion be directed towards supporting the programs rather than giving handouts.
 - b. Alison Despard stated, they could provide transportation.

- c. Jordon Walker added, that is what my grandfather said they used to do, provide transportation.
 - d. Commissioner Baty stated that getting them to a shelter is a conduit to more help
 - i. Steve Burt stated, night by night shelters are not conduits
 - e. Jordon Walker stated, we have to recognize that we have solutions coming, but we are a few years yet. We have to take this concept and weave it into the recourses we have.
 - 6. Commissioner Baty commented, this is very difficult to approach as the County as we normally do not do homeless services. The County has inserted itself into the conversation. Trying to not own more than is necessary.
 - a. Jacob LaMunyon stated, outside of the financial part, what it is impacting is the Sedgwick County EMS, police, etc.
 - b. Commissioner Baty added, it is not only homeless people down there. There are people down there preying on the vulnerable. It is a safety issue. Need to tell the story about why this matters.
- xxii. Commissioner Baty asked, in your professional opinion, if we do nothing as a community, and just go status quo what happens?
 - 1. Steve Burt answered, nothing but growth of unsheltered. There is no other answer. The population will just continue to grow.
 - 2. Alison Despard commented, they'll push us to no resources and those barely keeping above water will be homeless again.
 - 3. Commissioner Baty commented, this is having an economic impact now. If we can move the needle here, it will have impacts in other areas.
 - 4. Krister Johnson commented, I care because I had a couple scary incidents with homeless people. We're all compassionate and want to help, but not everyone wants to be helped.
 - 5. Commissioner Baty asked, what percentage of homeless do you think don't want help?
 - a. Steve Burt answered, I think it depends on when you ask them. It's the approach. The ones who are saying I don't want your help are the ones who have been told no so many times that they are just resolved to be ok with it. It's up to us to say that isn't good enough for them. At the end of the day these folks just need to be heard.
- xxiii. Commissioner Baty commented, this is why COC is important, it coordinates all the players in the state that may not want to work together.
- xxiv. Commissioner Baty brought up the concept of criminalizing homelessness. He gets a lot of emails from people asking why the police can't do something about the encampments. The 9^h Circuit Federal Court states, unless there are enough shelter space to move people to, you can't remove them from the encampment. People have a right to have a public encampment on a public space. So there is Federal Legal precedent saying we can't move them.
 - 1. The challenge, how do we make people go to shelters without criminalizing homelessness?
 - 2. Steve Burt states, you can't. It's really a concept that you should go to a shelter. But there are service providers that have treated the homeless so poorly for so many years that the homeless don't want to go to them. It's about investing the time to build report with outreach to convince people to go to the shelters.
 - 3. Andrew Womack asked, is there a gap in our community that is not serving this community?
 - 4. Commissioner Baty answered, I don't think that there is. I think we have all the right players in the community but 1) getting them collaborated and 2) on the same page is the challenge.

5. Steve Burt added, there are some pretty big egos in play that prevents collaboration
- xxv. Commissioner Baty ended with, there are no easy solutions. It's going to be hard and a community effort. Putting a request into the Governor to put into her budget grant funding for communities to create infrastructure for these programs.

4. BOARD AGENDA

- a. Commissioner Baty brought up the programs for property tax relief. They are listed on the property tax statement.

5. ADJOURNMENT

- a. The meeting was adjourned at 7:08 p.m.

*The next Citizens Advisory Board Meeting will be **Tuesday, Jan. 30, 2024, 5:30 p.m.**, at Sedgwick County 6th Floor Large Conference Room - 100 N. Broadway, Ste. 630, Wichita.*