

**Minutes**  
**Homeless Taskforce**  
**October 4, 2006**  
**United Way 245 N. Water**  
**7:00 – 8:30 am**

**Taskforce Members:**

Rev. Cheryl Jefferson Bell  Sue Castille  Gypsy Claar  Connie Dietz  Jack Focht  
 Patrick Hanrahan  Lou Heldman  Bernie Hudspeth  Bishop Michael Jackels  
 Bishop Scott Jones  Steve Martens  Janet L. Miller  Tim Norton  
 Marsha Stanyer  Mary K. Vaughn

Ex officio members:  Winston Brooks  Bill Buchanan  George Kolb

Staff:  Jenni Gluszek  Beth Oaks  Jeff Porter  Gloria Summers

**Welcome**

Jack Focht called the meeting to order at 7 a.m. Several handouts were provided and listed below. These handouts can be obtained by contacting Jenni Gluszek or Jeff Porter at 660-9393.

1. Email from Pamela Wright re: potential speakers at future meeting
2. Save Every Adam Corporation
3. Draft of proposed Wichita policy re: unlawful camping and storage of property on public land
4. Email re: representative from the National Alliance to End Homelessness
5. Kansas Statewide Homeless Coalition's Conference Agenda
6. Position paper from the Housing Trust Fund Ad Hoc Committee

**Minutes**

The minutes from the September 20 meeting were approved.

**New Business**

**Veterans Administration**

Judy Epperson, Homeless Coordinator – Veterans Administration (VA), presented on the primary reasons she sees for homelessness in veterans: 1. Lack of affordable housing, 2. Lack of livable wage jobs, 3. Dual diagnosis situations (alcoholism, mental illness (especially post traumatic stress disorder), drug use) and 4. the time it takes for federal assistance payments to be processed.

Judy shared that the VA estimates 1/3 of homeless in America are veterans. Locally the number of homeless veterans is growing, especially in terms of women and families. Friday, September 29 the VA hosted their annual "Stand down" where homeless individuals enjoy a day of hospitality. 359 homeless registered with 110 of those individuals being veterans.

The VA provides a full-service medical clinic that is available for all veterans. Vets are encouraged to use this clinic so that other community clinics and resources are open to other individuals. The VA also provides a clothes closet and emergency funds for items

such as gasoline or a hotel (one night) on a case-by-case basis. Substance abuse assistance and behavior health care are also provided through the Veterans Administration.

Epperson recommends the Grant Per Diem program as a possible model that could be applied to a larger population of homeless individuals. She also has another best practices model to share with the taskforce; details of this model will be shared later.

Due to a lack of time Focht asked the taskforce to email additional questions. He, staff and Epperson will meet and the results of the meeting will be shared with the taskforce.

### **Department of Corrections Presentation**

Kent Sisson and Sally Frey presented on offender reentry in Sedgwick County and how this population impacts the number of homeless. The two reported 1700-1800 former offenders return to Sedgwick County each year, with 400-600 of these individuals becoming homeless. Approximately 80% of those who are returned to Sedgwick County have a direct tie to the community (i.e. they lived here prior to incarceration).

The biggest challenge facing ex-prisoners is employment followed by cognitive/anti-social thinking/barriers. The third cited cause is housing. To help address these problems, the Kansas Department of Corrections has instituted a new program which begins 14-months prior to release. During this program, individuals take classes and plan for their community reentry. The fruits of this program will be seen in May when the first participants are released. A handout was provided for further details of this presentation.

### **Future Meetings**

In keeping with bi-weekly Wednesday mornings meetings, the next meeting will be Wednesday October 18, 2006 from 7-8:30 a.m. The meeting will be in the United Way of the Plains Board Room, 245 N. Water. Meetings are open to the public.

### **Adjournment**

Having no other business the meeting was adjourned at 8:34 a.m.