

Behavioral Health Unit Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

June 28, 2017

Committee Members

Lt. Tashia Hager, PPB; **Sgt. Chris Burley**, PPB; ***Sgt. Todd Tackett** PPB; ***Ofc. Jason Jones**, PPB CIT; **Emily Rochon**, PPB SCT; **Shannon Pullen**, National Alliance on Mental Illness; ***Bill Osborne**, Multnomah County Behavioral Health; **Cristina Nieves**, Commissioner Fritz's Office; ***Maggie Bennington-Davis**, Health Share of OR; **Felesia Otis**, Volunteers of America; ***Floyd Pittman**, Community Representative; ***Jan Friedman**, Disability Rights Oregon; **Kathleen Roy**, Central City Concern; **Beth Epps**, Cascadia; **Katie Burgard** Multnomah County Sherriff's Office; **Mike Morris**, Oregon Health Authority Addictions & Mental Health Division; **Melanie Payne**, Bureau Of Emergency Communications, **Janie Marsh**, Mental Health America of Oregon, **Alex Bassos**, Metropolitan Public Defender's Office; **Leticia Sainz**, Multnomah County Mental Health & Addiction Services; ***Wyndham McNair**, Case Manager CCC

Guest: Lt. Chuck Lovell, PPB; Mark Jolin, A Home for Everyone

[* Indicates Committee Member was absent]

Intros & Updates

Lt. Tashia Hager is moving to a new unit within PPB, and Lt. Chuck Lovell will be taking her place at BHU. In addition, Adrian Brown from the DOJ has stepped aside from this case and Jered Hager will be the primary contact for the BHUAC moving forward. Seth Wayne from the Washington DC office will be the primary contact for all CIT/Behavioral Health issues generally.

May Minutes & Report

The minutes were reviewed and Melanie Payne moved to accept them as they are. Leticia Sainz seconded the motion. The motion passed.

M/S/P

The report was reviewed and Kathleen Roy moved to accept them. Katie Burgard seconded the motion. The motion passed.

M/S/P

BOEC Update

The committee needs to review the DOJ recommendation that BOEC directly dispatch calls to social service providers and the BHRTs. We will be discussing this at the next meeting. If you have any specific questions for BOEC, please bring them to the July meeting.

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Joint Office of Homeless Services

Mark Jolin, Executive Director of the Joint Office of Homeless Services, gave a presentation on the housing crisis facing the city of Portland and Multnomah County. He provided an overview of the scope of the problem, factors that contribute to housing shortages, point-in-time counts and surveys, efforts by the City and County to work together to address short and long-term housing needs, and what is needed to continue to reduce the number of homeless people in our community.

Following are highlights from the presentation and the ensuing conversation with the BHUAC members:

- The scope of the housing problem is enormous and driven by affordability and lack of income.
 - In Multnomah County, 18,000 people receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) which provides \$773 per month.
 - On average, studio apartments in Portland rent for \$1,156 per month, 1-bedroom apartments for \$1,343 per month; 2-bedroom apartments for \$1,450 per month.
 - Rents have increased more than 60% in the last 6 years, while SSI has only increased by 20%.
 - There are 185,000 households making less than 60% of median income.
- The number of people who are struggling with both mental health issues and homelessness increased between 2015 and 2017.
 - 70% of those who are chronically homeless have identified as having mental health, physical health or addiction issues.
- In terms of the total amount of people who are homeless, the overall number seems to have stayed flat, with an average of around 4,000 people in Multnomah County each year.
 - The chronically homeless tend to be most visible. Public conflict around tent communities, tent sleeping and parking RVs in public places has changed the perception of the crisis even though the numbers are fairly consistent.
- Every two years, Multnomah County and the City of Portland conduct Point-In-Time (POT) Counts surveys to get a better understanding of the issues, gather trend data and focus services
 - 11.6% fewer people were counted as sleeping without shelter in this year's survey because of 600 new shelter beds
 - Survey included questions about migration. The actual numbers are still being compiled but migration seems to have been small. Less than 20% of the homeless migrated here, and an even lower number of that portion migrated here because of the services provided. Many of them come here because they have family or a job offer.
 - Going to try and capture data points in next survey to better understand increase in number of people self-identifying as having disabilities and mental health issues

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- Difficult to capture couch surfing data. Communities of color tend to be under represented in POT counts and many move from relative's house to relative's house or double up
- Other factors contributing to the housing crisis
 - Failure to provide affordable rent drives homelessness.
 - HUD changed the term of transitional housing (24 months) but you have to leave, HUD understood that when HUD pays rent they are now thought of as rapid rehoused.
 - There has been a decade long disinvestment by the Federal Government on low income housing. Many of the budgets are down from 2010, there are 40,000 fewer section 8 vouchers available.
 - The Oregon Health Authority has \$1.2 million to maintain the people currently housed who have persistent mental health issues. As rents increase, it becomes more difficult to house the same number of people.
 - Failure to adequately invest in Community Based Mental Health & Addiction Services.
- Tax reform is needed
 - As a country, we subsidize lots of housing through mortgage deductions. If we capped the eligible mortgage deduction tax at \$500,000, you could provide section 8 vouchers to everyone in need in the nation.
- What are the City and County doing?
 - They have combined their efforts into one to create the Joint Office on Homeless Services.
 - Efforts focus on prevention and housing placements
 - Combines budgets and staff for efficiency
- A Home for Everyone (AHFE) is a community-wide plan and initiative and served over 25,000 people with some level of housing support services in year two of the initiative
 - AHFE doesn't provide housing directly but manages the grants and other monies that come in and manages who gets the funds and how they are spent.
 - AHFE is made up of 35 different coordinating people who meet every other month. Smaller groups work on various issues, such as housing, mental health and street living.
 - AHFE has an executive committee, including the Mayor, County Commissioners, the Portland Business Alliance and others who can direct/push agendas and allocate/guide funds.
 - AHFE funds different programs, outreach workers, street outreach and nonprofits.
- Prevention efforts
 - AHFE is trying to get everyone off the street by prevention and intervention by attempting to expand stabilization and placement assistance.
 - The Joint Office now has \$50 million budget and 96% of that goes to nonprofits to get people housed.
 - Aim is for prevention so less is needed for shelters. There are two new pilot projects to help prevent evictions and another to help pay for subsidized housing.

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- “Flip the Script” with Central City Concern looks at people who could become homeless and attempts to get in front of them before they wind up on the street.
- More supportive housing services are needed to help people with mental health issues be successful in their housing placement
- Outreach Teams
 - JOIN is an outreach program that focuses on homeless camps, including social workers from Project Respond, peer support specialists and psychologists.
 - Permanent supportive housing teams will work closely with outreach workers to help people with mental health issues.
 - There will be mobile assessment to help find nontraditional homeless
 - Increasing # of outreach workers from 10 -12 to 30.
- Shelters and Permanent Housing
 - \$15 million a year allocated for shelters, which will double the number of beds available.
 - All new shelters are 24/7. They are reservation based and that only applies to the year round shelters, not anything that opens for weather or during a temporary time.
 - The challenge will be to cycle people out and into permanent housing. Engagement is necessary.
 - The Royal Palm is no longer available, working on replacing it.
 - Short term sheltering at motels is expensive.
 - Unity has also talked about having permanent housing because so many of the people they see are homeless. They are looking at recuperative care.
 - The Henry will be more permanent and 122 and Burnside building will be a new facility.
 - The big question that always comes up is “Where?” There is a domino effect when one building is redone or taken out of the equation. There is a push to put new units out there, but where?
- Funding
 - Joint Office goes through both City and County budget processes. It’s all public money. Working on the housing bond, construction tax and the State DOJ agreement. Federal funding is possible, but currently unknown.
- What is needed?
 - Permanent Supportive Housing is needed
 - Study after study proves that permanent housing works and per person cost savings is around \$6,000 a person. Reduction of other services also happens.
 - Partnerships between law enforcement and outreach teams is needed and pushing everyone to a higher level of engagement is a must.

The next BHUAC meeting will be on July 26, 2017 at 2:00 PM at the Portland Police Bureau’s Central Precinct, 11th floor BHU Meeting Room.