



MINUTES
Ad Hoc on Homelessness & Solutions
Tuesday, March 14, 2023 @ 3:30 p.m.
City Council Conference Room, 10th Floor City Hall

CALL TO ORDER

Council Member Brown called the meeting to order at 3:31pm

PRESENT

Council Member Jeffrey Brown, Chair
Council Member Adam Hussain, Vice Chair
Council Member Patricia Spitzley, Member – arrived at 3:34pm

OTHERS PRESENT

Renee Richmond, Council Staff
Lisa Hagen-Lawrence, OCA
Matt Staples, OCA
John Shaski, Sparrow Hospital
Mike Karl, Cardboard Prophets
Linda Karl, Cardboard Prophets
Gail Sawyer
Daniel Arnold
Belinda Fitzpatrick
Michael Lynn
Councilmember Jackson
Norma Bauer
Jody Washington
Sherri Davio
Tessa Reeves

MINUTES

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER HUSSAIN TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 28, 2023, AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED 2-0.

PRESENTATIONS

Sparrow Hospital

Mr. Shaski is the Government Relations Officer and has been with Sparrow for 15 years, throughout 127 years they have provided compassionate care partnering with various local organizations like Cristo Rey, Holy Cross (which used to be VOA).

Councilmember Spitzley arrived at 3:34

Mr. Shaski continued they also operate a mobile clinic staffed by physician and family medical residents to help bridge the gap. Councilmember Brown said he hears the vision and the support with the health

center but is looking on if there is an uptick and what is the hospital doing. Mr. Shaski stated that trends have been consistent with 5-10 patients per day in the ER for services. Councilmember Brown asked about during COVID, Mr. Shaski did not know specifically during 2020. Adding that they come in seeking shelter, food, respite, over the counter medications and they see a modest increase in cold weather, during the polar vortex years ago we had a number seeking shelter in the lobby. Mr. Shaski mentioned Joan Jackson Johnson and how she had a way with people and would come in and talk with people, was amazing and yielded respect, he continued to read a comment from case management:

There is difficulty in the homeless population when they have medical needs and a homeless shelter is unable to accommodate. We do encounter many of these very vulnerable, and often very ill, adult patients. In the Detroit market, the Salvation Army has initiated a "Medical Respite" clinic. This innovative approach to care transitions of the homeless is something completely lacking in the mid-Michigan area

Many of the Medical health plans subsidize this type of setting. The Sparrow case managers have referred cases to the medical respite site when the patient has the appropriate subsidizing health plan. This type of setting allows a homeless individual to recover and heal in a supportive setting, connects them to medical care, and transitions them to the appropriate housing situation when recovery is complete.

Mr. Shaski indicated in his roll he is aware the state is focused on number of issues, medical respite care centers, and they will advocate for those. Councilmember Spitzley asked what the cost breakdown for respite clinic and partners are, Mr. Shaski didn't have specifics and would be happy to dig in and check, he will follow up with Ms. Richmond.

Councilmember Brown indicated he would like to have Mr. Shaski return to speak on medical respite, Mr. Shaski responded that he didn't know if Sparrow would lead the charge on that and suggested Ingham Community Health.

Councilmember Hussain inquired about the UM takeover, everybody talks about disruption but not preventing and hope that Sparrow and McLaren continue to care and be concerned. Councilmember Spitzley asked if a representative with McLaren was present. Ms. Richmond stated she received confirmation but has not seen anybody. Councilmember Spitzley continued that she has heard that EMTs and EMS are told to go to Sparrow and not McLaren, so it is like there is only one hospital. Mr. Shaski stated that Sparrow is a Trauma 1 hospital and on the night of the MSU tragedy they also had three traumatic vehicle accidents and if the next nearest is Grand Rapids and Ann Arbor.

Councilmember Brown asked if there is any vision for supporting homeless directly, Mr. Shaski said he did not know, but it is a concern and this is their city too and these are their community members. He finished with staff challenges he is unaware of what more can be done but is open for ideas.

McLaren Hospital

No one present.

Cardboard Prophets

Mr. Karl gave a brief introduction, he's been doing street outreach since 2010 and after being with the Homeless Angel, in 2017 decided to do something separate. He is the founder of Cardboard Prophets along with his mother Linda Karl who runs the Capital Area Diaper Bank. He proceeded to handout a folder to the Committee Members. Stating that the biggest hurdle is to get a category 1 for homeless, there is way too much paperwork from the State of Michigan (SOM), in the packet there is a verification form and they need this and an HMIS card# to be documented. The shelters like City Rescue Mission (CRM) do not use the number, using religious exemptions but still get money from the city.

Councilmember Spitzley commented if they are claiming religious exemption how are getting money from the state and city, and the people aren't documented, Mr. Karl voiced he didn't know, but then they can't get to the next level. Councilmember Brown asked as an example if he is homeless and goes to

CRM and not documented he can't get housing support, Mr. Karl said not without the HMIS but you can still go to CRM. Councilmember Brown asked what other shelters, Mr. Karl indicated Holy Cross and Advent House. Councilmember Brown asked Mr. Shaski if Holy Cross is the shelter connected to the health center, Mr. Shaski confirmed.

Mr. Karl continued that the shelters aren't following the process, stating that Tim Bays owns a mortgage company that owns one of the hotels so he is benefiting, saying holding people for a year then moving to personal properties. Councilmember Brown asked if he had documentation on this, and Mr. Karl referenced the pink binder clipped portion of the folder he handed out. Mr. Karl said there is a scale from 1-10 rating the severity of homelessness and 4 is chronically homeless. Receiving permission to share Sam's story he stated she has been homeless 100 times but things were missing, on paper she qualified for housing (9+), put in rapid housing in Todd Dowrick homes that didn't meet habitability standards, sewage in basements, electrical not done so Sam went back into the system. Councilmember Spitzley asked when you go to CRM you have to demonstrate homelessness for x amount of day, Mr. Karl confirmed.

Councilmember Brown asked how Capital Area Housing is and Mr. Karl responded they control the housing money. Councilmember Brown said if he has this case study why are these groups passing money and the system broken how do we have these fiduciary's passing money, Mr. Karl did not know.

Mr. Karl said he brought a guest, Jessica to give her story if the committee allowed.

Councilmember Jackson left the meeting at 4:00pm

Jessica stated she became homeless the end of 2021 due to a domestic violence situation, was dropped off at the Causeway Hotel by CPS and they paid for three days. She reached out to Holy Cross and they advised her they were not a domestic violence shelter and wasn't able to help, so Jessica reached back out to CPS and they extended her another two weeks in the hotel. After that ended, she went to America's Best saying it is not a safe hotel and holy cross continued to refuse her help or put her on a hotel program. Councilmember Brown stated for the record why do we keep giving money if this continues to happen and this began in December 2021. Councilmember Spitzley asked if anyone from HRCS contacted her, Jessica said no. Continuing, Jessica was passed to the Advent House still with no verification or HMIS ID, they used all her funds to pay for the hotel from Dec 31 to June 15, she was on a Section 8 waitlist and found her funds were being used illegally. Every time she asked a case worker, she was told they'd look into it and then she got a different one. Until Mr. Karl reached out and put pressure on them for an ID, they said they couldn't. Jessica added that by using her funds illegally they put her "address" as Holy Cross not the hotel.

Councilmember Brown commented he was on the HRCS Board and they had grants.

Jessica added she finally got a Section 8 voucher but was told by the LHC it would be 9 months to get it because money going to Holy Cross and that when she found out they changed her "address". The first three months were paid upfront but for some reason she had late fees and the apartment complex told her they were aware that LHC is always late and even though she was incurring \$50/monthly late fees she wouldn't have to pay. Jessica finally added that she received assistance from a gracious person and paid the apt. complex.

Mr. Karl added the big issue is when not documented is messes up everyone, he reference the folders he gave the committee and there is a list of names and numbers for them. Councilmember Spitzley asked him for three things they should do. Mr. Karl responded:

1. First issue is HMIS, every person in a shelter should have an intake and get an ID
2. He challenges them to walk up to just one homeless person in a shelter and ask for their HMIS ID, more than likely they won't have one

3. Address the demerits received in shelters, like if someone misses chapel they get a demerit and if it happens again they get another.

Councilmember Brown thanked Jessica for sharing and Mr. Karl for his presentation and stated he would like to look through the folder and possibly have him back to a meeting. Councilmember Spitzley asked Jessica if she's spoken to the Housing Ombudsman, Jessica didn't know there was one.

DISCUSSION/ACTION

DISCUSSION – Committee Intension

Councilmember Brown is waiting on a few follow-ups and will confirm with Ms. Richmond.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Washington expressed her gratitude towards Cardboard Prophets and all she's learned from them, and commented that CoC is broken, Housing Ombudsman is worthless, the grants are a joke.

Mr. Lynn mentioned that the passion out of this committee is amazing and can't wait to see the actions that come out.

Ms. Davio mentioned she has worked in housing and care, she loves what Cardboard Prophets are doing, unsure how she can help but has the skills to do so and has volunteered with Habitat for Humanity, Sparrow Nest, etc.

Ms. Bauer mentioned she has seen people sleeping in the corner at Sparrow lobby, Cedar Place is terrible, locks broken, and there are lots of places that the homeless aren't counted, so keep an eye out.

Mr. Arnold spoke on his approval and likes what is happening in this committee.

OTHER

ADJOURN

Adjourned at 5:10pm

Submitted by

Renee Richmond, Recording Secretary

Lansing City Council

Approved by the Committee on March 28, 2023