



MINUTES
Ad Hoc on Homelessness & Solutions
Tuesday, July 11, 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 3:30pm

PRESENT

Council Member Jeffrey Brown, Chair
Council Member Adam Hussain, Vice-Chair
Council Member Patricia Spitzley, Member – unexcused

OTHERS PRESENT

Renee Richmond, Council Administrative Assistant
Lisa Hagen-Lawrence, OCA
Matt Staples, OCA
Jordan Hankwitz, ED&P Director
Barb Kimmel, ED&P
Norma Bauer

MINUTES

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER HUSSAIN TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JUNE 27, 2023 AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED 2-0.

DISCUSSION/ACTION

DISCUSSION – Committee Recommendations and Reporting

Councilmember Brown explained the Ad Hoc Committee to Mr. Hankwitz and Ms. Kimmel and asked them to address some of the topics identified to share how they are addressing homelessness.

Ms. Kimmel explained in EDP the development office is the conduit to which HUD/ESG funds flow from HUD to HRCS. And then the development office is also the fiduciary for MSHDA grants for the CoC, the development office then acts as the fiduciary MSHDA's ESG funds, both the ESM and ESF funds (match and federal component respectively). Last night Council approved three MSHDA grants that EDP will be the fiduciary for, including the shelter diversion grants. Those are awarded to the CoC and they act as the fiduciary for MSHDA and CoC. Which means the CoC spends money and then request reimbursement from EDP and then they ensure the grantees/sub recipients have provided proper documentation and what they are requesting is eligible and provide funds and draw funds from trust.

Councilmember Brown asked what the ESG (Emergency Solutions Grant) services. Councilmember Hussain and Ms. Kimmel stated outreach. Ms. Kimmel added for them emergency shelter and outreach prevention these are the activities covered by the city ESG, but this is the HUD ESG goes to HRCS that goes for emergency shelter and outreach prevention and MSHDA ESG funding can be used for emergency services and outreach. Councilmember Brown inquired what is ESM/ESF used for. Ms.

Kimmel responded it can be used for emergency shelter and outreach. Councilmember Brown asked what does outreach mean, and Ms. Kimmel is unsure and suggested to ask an agency that provides it like Advent House. Adding also provide outreach funding thru HRCS to child and family services. Mr. Hankwitz asked Ms. Kimmel to expand on what it means that they are the fiduciary as opposed to the ones actually implementing and administering these programs.

Ms. Kimmel mentioned they act as a financial Conduent between MSHDA and the subrecipient. Councilmember Brown asked who acts as the quality assurance, Ms. Kimmel answered they do. Councilmember Brown asked if people have complaints with services who do they voice them to. Ms. Kimmel indicated they could to her or to MSHDA. Councilmember Brown asked what the current pathway is for someone experiencing homelessness, how are they informed to get ahold of you. Ms. Kimmel stated she did not know but can say they have adopted the MSHDA policies/procedures and assumes that each agency has their own policy and procedures to provide to people.

Ms. Kimmel stated she herself received one complaint during a planning board meeting, on the rescue mission, regarding their treatment of people who are non-gender conforming. Councilmember Brown asked if they are the fiduciary that houses the programs then they go to HRCS. Ms. Kimmel responded not all of them, the city receives ESG funding and that goes to HRCS from HUD, Councilmember Brown inquired are they fiduciary for that as well, Ms. Kimmel answered no, HRCS manages the funds and expense the funds, works with finance to draw the funds down and then they approve those draws, adding they are pretty hands off the HUD ESG. Councilmember Hussain confirmed that they administer home & CDBG. Ms. Kimmel confirmed, adding that this year for the first time they did a monitoring of subrecipients with HRCS or the ESG grantee. Councilmember Hussain stated generally speaking what is your perspective on the planning side what can we in the city do to get better to get after the issues and preventing homelessness, the ultimate charge of the body of this committee is to make recommendations.

Ms. Kimmel suggested that the Committee meet with the CoC and discuss their policies and procedures, she's heard some comments and looking at past minutes, there is a lot of things said so talking to the CoC directly, to understand what they are doing related to getting funds out to the community, related to awarding funds within their organization. Councilmember Hussain agreed that would provide some clarity and help make recommendations on what they are trying to get after and what they can be doing "better" as well as their partners. Ms. Kimmel also suggested talking to HRCS, it's her understanding their role used to be more hands on but unsure now. Also, the Development office is not out in the community but they attend as many CoC mtgs as they can. The City does have a membership on the CoC and a voting seat which is Kim Coleman. Also, regular funding has not increased, ESG funding has remained stable throughout the years because not a lot of money, yet more people are homeless than before, she thinks increasing the dollar amount would be good. Two CoC members did apply for the shelter diversion grant that is a \$500,000 grant spread over two years, it was Advent House and Child Y& Family Services awarded and they will act as the fiduciary that will help them divert people from shelters and look at different solution like doubling up families. They hope to touch a total of 500 people in the 2 yr. Councilmember Hussain mentioned HRCS will be at the July 25th meeting, and Ms. Kimmel continued that shelters are full, more shelter space is needed. In the development office in the HOME ARP plan they have set aside money for increasing shelter space that is non-congregate and also set aside CDBG funds that is poised to go out to the community. Increasing the amount of permanent supportive housing units is desperately needed. Also have HOME ARP funds to utilize in conjunction with the low income tax credit deal to maximize the number of supportive housing units.

Councilmember Hussain asked in terms of units of supportive housing in the City, and units of affordable housing based on studies, what do you believe is our need, do you have a number. Ms. Kimmel said a number is unknown, she hasn't pursued that, but can say the shelters are full and HRCS housing people in hotels, and we still have people sleeping on the streets, in cars, in encampments. Councilmember Hussain inquired on a conversation recently as last night, asking what her opinion on

city sanction encampments is, there are some individuals that just don't want to be in housed. Ms. Kimmel stated it's her feeling proceed with caution because when you sanction encampments you are bringing a large population together and some or most don't want to be together that is why there are separate encampments, when you bring them together then you have possible conflicts, you'll need security cost and other costs. Added, that they can at least try, it would give them somewhere to wash up, take a shower, use a toilet but there are potential problems that could come along with that.

Councilmember Brown mentioned with the HOME ARP and different funds it was said that they should reach out to regional partners because what they are hearing is that there are no shelters they are coming to Lansing and over populating. Is your office looking at working or talking regionally to look at funds or to pull funds. Ms. Kimmel responded that can happen but expect the developers that apply for the funds to do that when they are on the forefront of their planning to reach out to those entities and ask if they would want to contribute, including that is something they could assist with, and since they are still designing the RFP they could even go as far as to weight the scores. Councilmember Brown asked if they've been doing any additional research with being a fiduciary, at looking across the country and innovative models, Ms. Kimmel said not her department, she is down 1/3 of the staff and has had no opportunity to do any research.

Councilmember Brown asked if there were any updates on the warming/cooling centers, Ms. Kimmel said she knows the administration is discussion it and believes Ms. Coleman is the lead. Councilmember Brown asked Ms. Kimmel if they are tracking where their original residence was, she answered that is tracked through HMIS, and suggested to invite the current Chair of CoC, Rawley Van Fossen at Capital Area Housing Partnership and maybe sent along a list of the data you are interested in so the HMIS can pull the data for you.

Ms. Kimmel added she believes supportive housing is the key and have to be able to create supportive housing that supports people in many ways, not just teaching life skills but also employment skills and all kinds of supportive skills and funding is going to be an issue, she believes in the HOME ARP they have approximately \$300,000 set aside for supportive services to be used by 2029.

Councilmember Brown inquired if there was a grant writer to look at the different funds speaking on the non-congregate housing, isn't it more costly for a large warehouse style, Ms. Kimmel said it is a dormitory style. Councilmember Hussain asked Ms. Kimmel to define non-congregate, she responded non congregate shelter means that an individual or family will have private space or access to a private bathroom.

Councilmember Hussain indicated to Mr. Hankwitz that he had some point highlighted any thoughts on any of these. Mr. Hankwitz stated he pulled out code related stuff and feels Code is cause and effect (as an example a red tag is the cause and the effect is not having a place to go). Mr. Hankwitz the gave the committee an update on their request from June 26th on owner occupied vs rental:

Red Tags – 653

Rentals – 245

Owner/Occupied – 408

Pink Tags - 300

Rentals - 245

Owner/Occupied - 55

Continuing, being early in his tenor there are some red tags in upward of 20+ years, they are working on identifying the oldest properties, on internal policies & procedures, they are working on a re-bid on code top/bottom. Councilmember Brown asked how long the process is until you feel you have overall summary. Mr. Hankwitz finished stating they are going back to the bid for RFP hope early fall/winter, they don't want to make monumental changes that won't create consistency and expectations.

Lastly, Councilmember Hussain asked if they know if all permits for the SIMTOB properties have been pulled, and Mr. Hankwitz indicated he is going to leave that to OCA to respond to.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Norma Bauer stated she admires and appreciates how Ms. Kimmel can sort through all this, there are so many diverse problems and demographics. She mentioned both Mike Karl and the original Homeless Angels as well as Dave Muelle who built Cottage Lane Senior Housing. She finished by saying understanding and showing compassion is needed in having these conversations.

OTHER

ADJOURN

Adjourned at 4:24pm

Submitted by

Renee Richmond, Recording Secretary

Lansing City Council

Approved by the Committee on July 25, 2023