



MINUTES
Ad Hoc on Homelessness & Solutions
Tuesday, August 8, 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 - excused

OTHERS PRESENT

Renee Richmond, Council Administrative Assistant
Lisa Hagen-Lawrence, OCA
Matt Staples, OCA
Pastor Damon Milton, Greater Lansing Clergy Forum
Pastor Sarah Johnson, Greater Lansing Clergy Forum
Bradley Funkhouser, CEO CATA
Lolo Robison, Director of Marketing, Customer Experience & Public Information CATA
Rita Dunlop
Norma Bauer
Ulises Rosa, 54A District Court

MINUTES

COUNCIL MEMBER BROWN MOVED THE MINUTES OF JULY 25, 2023 TO THE NEXT MEETING ON AUGUST 18, 2023.

PRESENTATIONS

Greater Lansing Clergy Forum – Pastor Damon Milton, President

Pastor Milton spoke that they have about 25 churches around the city, as a group they work directly with The City Rescue Mission when dealing with homelessness or hunger problem. Each church operates independently but also work together. Most churches have their own programs to reach out to Union Missionary Baptists, Friendship Baptist, Tabernacle of David. They feel their partnership with CRM is strong and stick with what works.

Pastor Johnson spoke that she is with Ellis Tabernacle at 1916 Olds Avenue, they are a smaller congregation and have partnered with Dr. Eleanor Quaid who helps disadvantaged families. She has concerns with vacant houses, she has one on each side of her home which one for 2 years the other for many months. She asked if there are any incentive for landlords to have them rent and not just sit vacant.

Councilmember Brown explained why he wanted the Clergy Forum at the meeting, and how as a group or individually they are helping those that are transient or homeless not just access to a shelter. How are they working with disadvantage in the population to address human needs, basic needs, maybe employment outcomes. Looking at what needs are being met in the community by the church. Continuing they hear so much about HRCS, along with all the service providers and agency's like Advent House and Holy Cross. He wants to understand what they are doing to impact the vulnerable populations.

Pastor Johnson mentioned they are a smaller congregation, twice a year they contribute to Greater Lansing Food Bank and City Rescue Mission, with new project with Dr. Quaid they have committed to a monthly basis for a set dollar amount to help with the disadvantage and homeless. Councilmember Brown asked if she was speaking to the Helping Hands Clinic, Pastor Johnson responded no Dr. Quaid is more into missionary work now. Councilmember Brown asked how she defines missionary work in Lansing. Pastor Johnson answered reaching out to help the disadvantage with their needs but she also wants to send people to the churches. Councilmember Brown confirmed that is the ministerial work and asked if there were any direct services like human services like case management and what she was referring to as meeting their needs. Pastor Johnson believes it is more on a spiritual basis but also meeting some of their other physical needs.

Councilmember Brown asked what services he believes his affiliate churches are providing in the community in the congregation or at risk. Pastor Milton stated he would rather have them to speak on themselves as they operate independently and stay within the perimeter of what they do as a conglomerate. Councilmember Brown asked him to explain what they do as a conglomerate. Pastor Milton reiterated the farthest they go into that is the Rescue Mission. Councilmember Brown asked if they have multiple organizations to help, homelessness isn't always people on the street and needed shelter, so how are you helping the vulnerable population. Pastor Milton again stated he'd rather have them speak for themselves. But added generally as a pastor they get difference situation, people on verge of addition, recommended to a facility or shelters. Also find resources to help with rent, and next steps after eviction, financial situations, etc.

Councilmember Brown asked if they've worked with Luciana Solis, Pastor Milton state no they have not. Councilmember Brown inquired if they have you worked with Ms. Solis in the faith based initiative role to identify what he stated they were doing to have an understanding of resources available and mentioned Ulices Rosa. Pastor Milton mention she is early in her roll and she is a good go between to help them right now. Councilmember Brown asked as an organization providing services, have they thought about taking inventory as an example, what churches are providing what services, so when a referral comes their way, they know who is doing food pantry, eviction assistance, financial, etc. Pastor Milton stated he would have to meet with the other Pastors to compile a list of each church.

Councilmember Brown mentioned having HRCS informed so they know what the churches are helping with. Asking if Mr. Rosa has spoken with the Clergy Forum and how many has Mr. Rosa diverted from eviction, Mr. Rosa answered no on speaking with the clergy and a little over 700 and has not worked with Ms. Solis. Pastor Milton added their organization did not receive any of the ARPA funding, agreeing everyone needs to group tighter together and get resources and communication pulled together.

Councilmember Hussain said to be clear this is an action/work group, ultimately looking to create recommendations to legislation and at the local/state/federal level. Adding he was hoping there was a local convener whether faith based or clergy forum working together to collaboratively bring together local churches determining if there is resources, duplication, or gaps. Councilmember Hussain stated one of his recommendations will be to identify a local convener, maybe form task force.

Councilmember Brown added related to homelessness, anything they would say from the community is it up/down, what the real challenge is. Pastor Milton from his perspective several people trying to tackle the issue, become more unified. He believes in his experience people tend to do a one man show. Left hand needs to know what the right is doing. He believes where Ms. Solis is, she is the prime person to put the components together, but still learning her position. Adding to maybe ask the mayor to develop taskforce.

Pastor Johnson referenced Joan Jackson-Johnson working with the churches and she advised the churches to not contribute to individuals but contribute to the agency's or organizations that help them. Councilmember Brown asked if they have worked with Kim Coleman. Both Pastors indicated they know her name but have not been in any meetings that she's attended.

Capital Area Transportation Authority – Bradley Funkhouser, CEO and Lolo Robison, Director of Marketing, Customer Experience & Public Information

Mr. Funkhouser stated one recommendation he sees is bumping the clergy to front of the line. Adding this is a very difficult problem we've had for a long time. What they learned from day one is starting with their mission which is transportation. Growing back from the pandemic, and during the rebuild period they've had an increase in those that are homeless, challenged or unhoused, and other needs as social service and financial. He feels they've made great gains but lot to do.

Ms. Robison explained one of her roles is engagement with community partners on wide range of issues. Some actions they've addressed towards. They have long provided complimentary tokens and passes through their transportation hubs or 18 agencies. In FY 22, CATA recorded 35,000 in token and 100 bus pass donations in FY23 year to date 33,000 tokens and 100 bus passes. Of the 18 partners range from Advent House, Capital Area Ministry Services, Cardboard Prophets, Rescue Mission, The Fledge, Cristo Rey to name a few. CATA continuously participates in round table discussions with CoC. Councilmember Hussain asked by partnering with the agencies does that mean they can access tokens/passes at these locations, and Ms. Robison confirmed it is one of many ways. Mr. Funkhouser added the strategy is important and they want to be on the front end of it.

Ms. Robison gave an overview of the following:

- They work with the CoC and Rawley VanFossen to address various needs
- They partner with school districts to provided transportation to the three high schools
- Provide upward of 400 afterschool meals per month for those who are at the CTC and identified as unhoused
- Advocacy officers regularly engaging child protective service to help reunite students with estranged family members to remain safe and off the streets
- Met with Mark Criss at Rescue Mission and they have a proposal for day/night shelter
- Partner with Cit of Lansing and other municipalities for things like the annual coat drive program
- Involved with Mayor's senior resource fair, BW&L resource fair, Disability Network, TCOA, Peckham etc.
- For the city/county they provide sponsorships of many diverse programs. In 2022 provided 41 sponsorships and 48 programs. Year to date CATA had provided 50 organizations and 69 initiatives
- Homebuilding projects
- In 2018 State of Michigan identified 3,605 homeless veterans, in 2021 the VA reported 24,000 almost 700 resided in Clinton, Eaton and Ingham, with Ingham has the largest population of 12,850. In 2021 CATA Board of Directors approved year round system wide free fare for US military veterans, 1 year after implementation they recorded 92,772 free trips, year to date in 2023 more than 118,000 trips

- Since 2020 they have been meeting with Kim Coleman, and Susan at Advent House, to better understand the needs of the homeless and be better resources to effectively assist. Often LPD are present at meetings
- During the pandemic CATA Helped transport those exposed to isolation centers and vaccinations/testing centers etc.

Councilmember Brown asked if they are working with the Social Workers in LPD, Ms. Robison confirmed.

Ms. Robison continued that in Feb 2021 they successfully onboarded an Advocacy Officer through Advent House this is a trained and experienced social worker who is also a street outreach specialist, he supports community advocacy program and the downtown CTC, his name is Aaron Abbott. They have a second who is Enrique who is bilingual. They work hard to build trust and assess individual needs and educate to available resources. An added benefit, the MSU Street Medicine works directly with their advocates every other Saturday and operate total health clinics with locate shelters and are in conversations to have inhouse at CTC especially during cold season.

They also transition from hotels to income based apartments, help obtain birth certificates, social security numbers, state ID's, and other official documents. Councilmember Brown asked are the Officers supporting these individuals and then CATA taking them to the locations. Ms. Robison confirmed.

Ms. Robison continued the advocacy officers work with Community Mental Health, AARP to help re-enter into the work force and provide bus passes. Assist re-entering citizens so they can check in with parole officers and avoid re-incarceration and have provided bus passes and donated unclaimed bicycles. Officers have been trained on the HMIS. Important to note that CATA's initiatives are funded through their operating budget. CATA currently does not service as a 24/hour cool/warm center but do during the hours of operation which is 7a-7p M-F and 9a-5p on weekends. Advocacy officers also assist those having difficulty with landlords. They were approved in June to operate a license safe place transit program for those facing domestic abuse/violence. They recognize that homelessness is culminated from a variety of factors like poverty, housing, unemployment, health issues, substance abuse.

Councilmember Brown and Hussain would like to invite CATA to COW for a full presentation.

Councilmember Brown said related to employment that the transportation system (not CATA) doesn't connect to those communities that have the jobs. What are they doing to advocate for the needs and is it a local thing or regional. Mr. Funkhouser stated that he is also the Executive Director of EATRAN and hope to combine in the future between the three counties.

Councilmember Hussain mentioned a report in the Lansing State Journal that CATA was looking to partnered with LHC on two projects, his understanding that it may hinge on a \$15 million appropriation, asked for an update. Mr. Funkhouser answered in conversations with Mr. VanFossen, they found that with state leaders other funding pots in the state budget they can exercise with the developer and continue pursuing. For example, offer incentives to those that sign a lease like offering bus passes. Councilmember Brown asked how CATA is preparing to be a housing landlord, Mr. Funkhouser indicated they are not.

Councilmember Brown lastly asked about safety on the buses. Mr. Funkhouser

First state he rides the bus, feels it's safe and second these are the same community members that are riding the bus, going to the store/library's going from A to B. They do have a system of supervisors for the school kids with immediate response, and resource officers from schools that know the kids. There are some issues on the bus however, increasing cameras and communication.

DISCUSSION/ACTION

DISCUSSION – Committee Recommendations and Reporting

- i. Resolution establishing the Ad Hoc Committee on Homelessness & Solutions #2023-014
- ii. 2023 Committee Minutes

PUBLIC COMMENT

Rita Dunlop spoke on a possibility of a third shift for CATA, Mr. Funkhouser responded they have had this request and they are looking into it.

Pastor Johnson spoke of a concern of the difference between ‘affordable housing’ and ‘low-income housing’, there needs to be more low-income, most affordable housing is not affordable.

Ulices Rosa asked the CATA presenters if they hear of the F.O.R.T. Program through Lansing School District. Ms. Robison responded no, and Ms. Richmond said she would forward the information presented by LSD.

OTHER

ADJOURN

Adjourned at 4:53pm

Submitted by

Renee Richmond, Recording Secretary

Lansing City Council

Approved by the Committee on August 18, 2023