

SPECIAL HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes of Meeting

March 16, 2004

Kenosha County Administration Building

Committee Members Present: John O'Day, Don Smitz, Eunice Boyer, Anne Bergo,
William Grady

Staff Present: Dennis Schultz, Jim Kennedy

Others Present: Dan Melyon, Sue Schmidt-Decker, Jeannine Field

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Eunice Boyer, Chairperson.

1. Comments by the Chair - None
2. Citizen's Comments - None
3. Resolution to Carry Over 2003 levy underspending by the Department of Human Services into the 2004 County Budget for a Community Homeless Shelter Program

Jim Kennedy distributed a summary handout. He then introduced Dan Melyon, Director of the Shalom Center, and Sue Schmidt-Decker, Transitional Services Director at WoMen & Childrens Horizons, both members of the Joint Task Force on Homelessness. The visibility of homelessness is increasing. Three (3) different events brought this issue to the forefront: (1) The mini-crisis last fall when they ran out of volunteers to run the INNS Program, and delayed the opening, (2) CUSH, a coalition of 15 member churches identified homelessness as a priority social issue, and at a meeting in November with the Mayor, County Executive and 4 ESN agencies, it was agreed to develop the Task Force, and (3) the Homeless Coalition held a conference in November on affordable housing. The County promised \$250,000 of underspent levy as a one-time grant for start-up costs. Start-up costs do not include wages or administrative overhead; it would include procuring or renovating a building, and furnishing it with beds, sheets, etc.

Sue Schmidt-Decker spoke both as the Director of Transitional Services at WoMen's Horizons and as an INNS volunteer. This population has more needs with respect to mental health and AODA issues and they need connection to other services. During the hours of 7:00 p.m. - 7:00 a.m., at the INNS shelters, they cannot access those services. A one-stop shop would be better for these individuals. As a CUSH member, we are committed to homelessness, and we need a permanent shelter to serve people who need to be served, to get them the services they need such as permanent housing. WoMen's Horizons has a transitional program, as does the Shalom Center. With a permanent shelter, the homeless would have a place to be during the daytime.

Dan Melyon stated that it is important to provide the service components to these individuals, to have people working with the homeless persons to become self-sufficient and more successful.. Lack of education and lack of job skills are some of the problems. We are seeing increasing numbers of people coming to us, so we need to do this. If we do nothing, the numbers will just continue to increase and create more problems.

Jeannine Field, KHDS Associate Director, said that a permanent site would help identify those folks who need assistance now and those who need long-term assistance (it

currently takes us a long period of time to identify those who need the long-term assistance). KHDS also provides transitional housing grants.

Dennis Schultz said that the carryover from 2003 comes from (1) Brookside, \$800,000 - \$900,000, due to an increase in "paying" customers, and (2) DCFS placements which were down \$980,000. After the \$250,000 for this resolution, the balance of \$1.6 million will be returned to the general fund.

Dan Melyon confirmed Eunice Boyer's observation that the INNS Program just gives shelter, no interaction. People have a place to sleep, but they're back out onto the street the next morning. They have 7 locations (a different one each night) that operate year-round.

Jim Kennedy said that leasing or rehabing is probably what we are looking for; not a new building. The City is on this Task Force and can help locate a building.

Sue Schmidt-Decker stated that the Task Force is working very cooperatively together.

Bill Grady asked if this will replace the INNS Program. Mr. Schultz responded that we don't know yet. It may be a consideration. We don't want to eliminate the wonderful volunteers. Jim Kennedy added that we want to eliminate the hopping around from shelter to shelter. Ms. Schmidt-Decker said that volunteers will be vital to the success of the new location.

Mr. Grady suggested that language be added to the resolution that the \$250,000 will go to brick and mortar, no administrative overhead, no wages, and no operational costs.

John O'Day suggested having the summary handout attached to the resolution that goes to before Finance and the County Board.

MOTION to approve the resolution as submitted by Don Smitz, seconded by Anne Bergo. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. Such Other Business as Authorized by Law

Dennis Schultz informed the committee members of the Open House for the Job Center/Human Services Building that will be held on Monday, April 12th from 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. This open house will be for the County Board Supervisors, elected County officials, and DHS oversight committee members. Flyers will be mailed to everyone.

5. Committee Members Comments - None

6. Adjournment

It was moved to adjourn by John O'Day, seconded by Don Smitz. Meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Davis
KCDHS Secretary

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