

HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE  
Minutes of Meeting  
August 2, 2005  
Kenosha County Administration Building

Committee Members Present: John O'Day, Don Smitz, Ruth Booth, Bill Grady, Gordon West

Staff Present: Dennis Schultz, Jim Kennedy, LaVerne Jaros, Mark Felsing

Others Present: Supervisor Terry Rose, Chris Barncard (Kenosha News), Dan Melyon, Sue Schmidt-Decker, Dan Wikel, Rev. Georgette Wonders, Pastor Larry Smith, Supr. Jan Marelli, Supr. Anita Faraone, Supr. Mark Modory, Mary Zorn, David DeBerg, Katherine Marks

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by John O'Day, Chairperson.

1. Comments by the Chair

John O'Day welcomed everyone in the auditorium, saying that we are all here to help.

2. Citizen's Comments

Pastor Larry Smith, CUSH Co-Chair, spoke on agenda item No. 5, the \$250,000 grant for a homeless shelter. CUSH has been working the last couple of years to provide housing for the INNS Program. We need to stay at the table on this. It would be a detriment to pass a resolution like this. There was a Task Force meeting today and the Mayor attended, as well as the other task force members from the community. We are not sure yet if a single site is the way to go, or if we can add on later. A lot of work has been put into this so far. I would speak against this resolution and trust the work to the Joint Task Force. There is a summit being planned for all interested parties and it will happen in the next 90 days. Interested citizens will be invited to a later one. Please do not push forward with this resolution.

Sue Schmidt-Decker, representing Women & Children's Horizons, said that in Nov., 2003, CUSH presented this idea for the Joint Task Force to the City. We have been meeting since Dec. 2003. Members include representatives from the Housing Authority, DHS, DWD, UW-P, KHDS, United Way, and others. We have worked hard at this. I would hate to see this resolution pass. The current Shalom Center site was looked at. The neighbors were approached about selling their homes to be able to build, but they would not sell. It would be detrimental to the community, the Shalom Center, and to the homeless population to approve this resolution.

Mary Zorn, a CUSH representative, has been part of the Joint Task Force from the beginning. Homeless people need our help, our voice. A permanent shelter would help them rebuild their lives. Shuffling around doesn't help them. We should be looking at what is best for Kenosha. We need a goal to rally Kenosha behind us. Kenosha people do have a heart for this. We need focus. We need to table this resolution and clarify our goals.

Rev. Georgette Wonders, CUSH Co-Chair, said the Joint Task Force has been working on this project for the past 2 years. It has been rather slow. We can only do so much. It

behooves us to entrust the process to the people so it can come to fruition. To eliminate any possible sites would be premature.

David DeBerg, a CUSH representative, said they are interested in helping the homeless and have worked many years towards this goal. The homeless population gets pushed around like ping pong balls. These people will be here in the winter. We need a place for them. First Step Services was doing the work. I met a lot of these people in Library Park, some with frostbitten feet. We need to be doing a better job. But it seems we would rather put up condos. We need to act as a community, and we can do better. It behooves us to be good stewards of the \$250,000. The homeless do not have a place. We need to address it from what Kenosha needs (not Milwaukee or Racine). We need a permanent place. Shuffling from site to site each night is not the way to go.

Supervisor Joe Clark spoke as a citizen on the introduction of the resolution. We need to be good stewards of this money we entrusted. Everyone wants to do something for the homeless. We need to find an efficient solution.

Supervisor Terry Rose spoke as the preparer of the resolution. On 4/13/04, this came before the Board (15 months ago) and with certain urgency. We are about in the same position today that we were then. Summits could have been held then. They can be held now. The proposal was one site, and the current site was the preferred site. A single site makes more sense than two sites. We will be bussing from one site to another. It will cost about \$1 million to renovate the Sheridan Road site. Do two sites result in better service for the general public? I don't think so. Bussing from one site to another does not provide good service. Does this make good sense to renovate a building for \$1 million for a 10-year lease, plus other expenses, and still not own the building? What happens at the end of the lease? These are questions that have not been addressed. Two sites is a short-sighted idea. It makes sense to have one location. I don't think the current proposal is a good one.

3. Approval of Minutes - 7/5/05

MOTION to approve minutes by Gordon West, seconded by Bill Grady. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. Aging - Resolution to Add Community Options Program Administrative Grants to the 2005 Budget

LaVerne Jaros explained that \$17,417 is a carryover of a grant to help support activities for long-term care worker retention. \$16,130 is to expand our equipment loan closet which is located in the Job Center building. We have a room for walkers, canes, crutches, etc. We have an agreement with Easter Seals, and because of this our loan of equipment has tripled. In return, Easter Seals repairs our equipment when it needs it. They also have a physical therapist who will work with individuals who are not using equipment properly, or maybe their canes or walkers are not at the correct height. We also received \$3,600 to work with long-term care providers for leadership training. We submitted a proposal to the State for this grant. The State has a pot of money not used by other counties, but this was a competitive process. Total grant amount is \$37,147.

MOTION to approve by Gordon West, seconded by Don Smitz. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. Resolution Concerning \$250,000 Grant for a Homeless Shelter in the City of Kenosha

Dennis Schultz stated that our guests have indicated that it has been a long, difficult process. We have a commitment from the Mayor to attend a summit. I don't believe this resolution is needed. We must make a decision by 12/31 of this year according to our contract with Shalom Center, and we would have to come back to this committee at that time with a recommendation. There has been some movement. We had excellent attendance at the Joint Task Force. Katherine Marks is here tonight, and she also attended the Task Force meeting today as the representative for United Way. I will stand by the comments made by our guests today. A summit will be held within 90 days (so it could be held in 30 or 60 days, depending on the Mayor's schedule). All Joint Task Force members will attend, and we have asked them to suggest others to attend. Both the Mayor and UW-Parkside offered names of people who could help facilitate the summit. Other invitees would include some Human Services Committee members and Shalom Center board members.

Terry Rose said that 90 days is a long way off -- in November. He suggested holding the resolution in abeyance to keep this issue on track.

John O'Day commented that this summit probably would not have taken place without this resolution. It was stagnating. This resolution has pushed the process along - whether it ends up as one site or two sites. The County has two jails and shuttles prisoners back and forth. If we could get down to two sites from 7 different sites for the INNS Program, that would be a miracle in itself.

Don Smitz said that this is quite an undertaking and we need to get all of our facts before we make any decision. With two sites, there will be double staff, How many homeless do we have right now? We are going to spend some significant money here, and we should spend it in the right way.

Ruth Booth stated that the urgency is to see that the homeless have a place to stay before winter. The Sheridan Road site could house more people than the current INNS sites at the churches. The homeless need a place to stay. There is room for expansion at the Sheridan Road site. It was stated at last month's meeting that the Sheridan Road site can be made ready this year. The rest of the services can be moved to that site later.

Dan Melyon explained that this is a complex issue. It takes a lot of cooperation. To get everyone to agree on everything is very difficult. Where in our community do we locate this program? People are not agreeing on this, and this is the main issue. To operate two locations will definitely cost more money. This is a major concern of the Shalom Center. We have other programs, not just the INNS Program. We have to make sure that the steps we take are economically feasible for years down the road. We have not begun our capital campaign yet. We are waiting until we can say 'This is our plan, this is where the building is going to be, and this is why we are asking for money'. This could go past the 12/31 contract deadline. We have not had a capital campaign at the Shalom Center before. The Shalom Center raises approximately \$600,000 annually; 60% of our budget is raised through donations.

Bill Grady said that he sympathizes with Terry Rose in his effort to get this resolution to help the homeless. His heart is in the right place. However, he would not be in favor of this resolution. We will be revisiting the homeless shelter issue with the summit.

Bill Grady moved to table Resolution No. 28 indefinitely, Ruth Booth seconded, and the motion was passed unanimously.

6. Such Other Business as Authorized by Law - None

7. Committee Members Comments - None

8. Adjournment

It was moved to adjourn by Don Smitz, seconded by Gordon West. Meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Davis  
KCDHS Secretary

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