

# MEETING MINUTES

**Town of Waynesville  
Task Force on Homelessness**

**Thursday, October 8, 2020**

**6:00—7:30 PM EST**

**Locations:  
Public Services Building  
129 Legion Drive**

**Zoom Option**

<b>Meeting Facilitator:</b>	Amy Murphy-Nugen	
<b>TOW TFH Members Roster</b>		
✓ Police Chief David Adams or appointee	✓ Patsy Davis (proxy, Brooke Smith)	Neese Morris
✓ Juleah Berliner	Commissioner Kevin Ensley	✓ Amy Murphy-Nugen (Chair)
✓ Wanda Brooks	✓ Keri Guidry	Linda Nulsen
✓ Dale Burris	Bill Guy	Theresa Pierce
Nathan Cartwright	✓ Mandy Haithcox	✓ Joslyn Schaefer
Sheriff Greg Christopher or appointee (proxy, Sgt. Doug Carver)	Laura Howell	✓ Alderman Anthony Sutton
✓ Bob Cummings	✓ Jon Lynn McDermott	✓ Brandon Wilson

## **Welcome and Introductions**

Chair Amy Murphy-Nugen opened the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

## **Approval of Minutes, Sept 24, 2020**

Alderman Sutton made a motion to approve the September 24, 2020 meeting and the motion was seconded by Brandon Wilson. Minutes were approved.

## **Defining Homelessness**

Chair Amy Murphy-Nugen provided documents to the Task Force outlining and defining homelessness according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The following categories were defined, Category 1: Literally

homeless, Category 2: Imminent risk of homeless, Category 3: Homeless under other federal statutes, and Category 4: Fleeing/attempting to flee domestic violence (DV).

Police Chief Adams suggested to strike the 90-day stipulation in the Category 1 definition and suggested leaving the rest of the definition as is.

A question was raised to look into the age limit of “25 years of age” in the Category 3 definition. Chair Amy Murphy-Nugen and Task Force Intern Hannah Minick will research reasoning behind the age limit. The Housing and Urban Development definition of “chronic homelessness” was reviewed, as was the North Carolina General Statute definition of “homeless”. Task Force members discussed the definition of homelessness and how definitions are used (i.e. for grant funding, services providers, etc.).

The Task Force discussed the value in not using the HUD definition in order to more accurately represent the homeless population in Waynesville. The HUD definition was recognized as potentially limiting the Task Force’s charge. For example, the HUD definition does not consider people who are incarcerated as homeless, and the Waynesville Sheriff department has stated people who are incarcerated may not have housing secured when they get out of jail. Brandon Wilson suggested a subcommittee be formed to create a definition to guide the work of the Task Force. The subcommittee was suggested to discuss the definition via email and have a working, collaborative definition before our next meeting on Thursday October 22, 2020. Volunteers for the sub-committee include: Brandon Wilson, Joslyn Schaefer, Mandy Haithcox, and Alderman Sutton. Brandon introduced a motion to approve a subcommittee and the motion was seconded by Joslyn. The motion was approved to create a subcommittee to create a definition of homelessness for the Task Force’s consideration at their October 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting.

### **Working Groups Progress Reports & Action Planning**

Chair Murphy-Nugen provided the following updates to the Task Force: Hannah is working with ABCCM, Veteran’s Services of the Carolinas. The Task Force now has a Unite Us profile. Access to this platform allows the Task Force access to data that will help inform its work. Chair Murphy-Nugen, Hannah, and Alderman Feichter have met to discuss planning listening sessions for residents of Hazelwood. On September 30<sup>th</sup> Hannah and Amy met with Jesse Lee, who, upon request from the Task Force, is compiling data on the low-barrier shelter that operated this summer and early fall. At this meeting, a jail annex project was also discussed. Chair Murphy-Nugen and Wanda Brooks met for Wanda’s orientation to the Task Force. Upon discussion at our last meeting of a shared Task Force interest in exploring options for a low-barrier shelter, Chair Murphy-Nugen began researching funding support and feasibility of low-barrier shelter. The following funding sources were shared with the Task Force: A National Institute of Health grant is available that is associated with Covid-19. This grant application is due December 1<sup>st</sup>. It is for \$500,000 annually for a maximum 5 years. In addition, a HRSA grant is available that focuses on health connections with a focus on

strengthening rural health. It is due November 15. There is Dogwood Trust meeting scheduled on October 28, 2020 from 3:30-5:30pm, Chair Murphy-Nugen and Brandon Wilson will be attending.

Questions were raised by the Task Force members around management of grant funds. Chair Murphy-Nugen recommended those decisions be considered strategically depending on the focus of the grant and which community partner is most effectively situated to take the lead. Chair Murphy-Nugen asked Task Force members to consider grant options and have feedback at next meeting on October 22<sup>nd</sup>.

A timeline for working groups was presented by Chair Murphy-Nugen. It was stated that November, December, and January were months in which working groups will start to identify data needs and craft research questions. As the working groups start reporting data, Hannah and Chair Murphy-Nugen will begin to work on developing a research proposal and submit it for human subjects review. A general timeline is as follows: In November, December and January, groups start to identify data needs and develop research questions. January, February, and March will be focused on data collection, listening sessions and gap identification. April, May and June will focus on community planning and identification of community priorities. Targets for July and August 2021 include drafting a report from the Task Force and presenting it to the Mayor and Board of Aldermen for review.

### **Working Groups Report Out:**

#### Education Working Group:

Bob Cummings Reported to the Task Force:

The groups last meeting was held September 28<sup>th</sup>. In attendance was Patsy Davis, Bob Cummings and Jeremiah Jaynes. The group has added Jeremiah Jaynes, a community member, to their group. Education and short- and long-term prevention were discussed at their last meeting. Patsy stated she would like to come up with a curriculum for renters. The curriculum was reported to include "how-to" for banking, cleaning, landlord communication, etc. Jeremiah and Bob reported they are both interested in doing prevention in schools. Jeremiah discussed the Safety-First program with the group. Bob has a certification in train the trainer for Safety-First and is interested in substance use prevention. Bob mentioned six community prevention strategies that he knows of and would like to work towards seeing what can be implemented in Haywood. The group suggested Pathways and Reach present to us what they offer/programs they have. It was suggested by a community member that Mountain Projects offer landlord property training in addition to tenant trainings.

#### Eviction Foreclosure and Crisis Response Working Group:

Brandon Wilson Reported to the Task Force:

The groups last meeting was held October 27<sup>th</sup>. In attendance was Vicki Gribble, Brandon Wilson, Commissioner Ensley, and Michelle Rogers. The group discussed winter planning and preparation. There was some discussion on the county level for ideas around winter prep. Management issues were discussed as well, such as who would manage and oversee nightly spaces where people can sleep, similar to code purple in other counties. Pathways is planning to shelter people into their dining hall. The packing party is scheduled for next Thursday, October 15<sup>th</sup> from 6pm-8pm. Vicki created an eviction resource handout, which will be put in outreach bags and posted in town all over Waynesville. Brandon W. hopes to include the logo of Town of Waynesville on the flyers. Michelle R. wants to work with other realtors around evictions and landlord tenant issues. Sargent Doug Carver is going to join committee. November 13<sup>th</sup> there is a resource fair that may be of interest to the Task Force, details are to be determined. The team discussed community collaboration and the possibility of collaborating with Haywood Christian Ministries who provide food to offset utility bills.

#### Economic Stability Working Group:

Alderman Sutton Reported to the Task Force:

The group reported meeting once between the last meeting and the present meeting. In attendance was Sheriff Christopher, Chief Adams, Joslyn Shaffer and Jon Lyn McDermott, and Stephanie Sutton who is a recent community member/business owner addition to the group. The group discussed needing to do a point in time count sooner rather than later. The group reported wanting to complete the point in time count by the end of October. They would like to include Hannah Minick and Joe Landry to make that happen. Keri Guidry also stated she could help coordinate the point in time count. The group discussed potential business surveys. They are going to talk to Chair Murphy-Nugen as the begin to create surveys. The group has heard community members raise concerns about the concentration of homelessness in Hazelwood.

#### Community and Social Cohesion Work Group:

Keri Guidry Reported to the Task Force:

The team reported not having met again since their initial meeting. The team is scheduled to meet next week, October 15<sup>th</sup> at 6pm, location to be determined. Becca Goldstein from the North Carolina Harm Reduction Coalition is going to be joining this working group. Wanda Brooks reported joining group as well. Alderman John Feichter is also reportedly joining this working group. The group stated they want to work on gathering additional data, as was outlined in first meeting. They are particularly interested in gaps in homeless services access to mental health. Brandon Wilson suggested looking at the data that is gathered by local LME/MCO's (Vaya Health) who run reports with statistics on health per county.

#### Health Working Group:

Juleah Berliner Reported to the Task Force:

The group's last meeting was held October 4<sup>th</sup>. Some data had been gathered from Blue Ridge Health regarding the number of people experiencing

homelessness who access services at Blue Ridge Health. The group discussed the need to keep gathering more data. The group discussed the fact that the numbers from Blue Ridge Health seemed low and that data could be skewed for a variety of reasons (i.e. people not reporting accurately, the question not being asked by intake, etc.). The group discussed possibilities of underreporting homelessness. The group discussed ways in which data is being collected, and how that impacts validity. The group discussed that there is still need more information to identify gaps in health services in the community. Medical, mental health, and substance use gaps were primarily discussed in terms of access to care. Gaps resulting in following through, i.e. can someone get a prescription, were also identified. The group would like to continue gathering data from resources we already have, i.e. Pathways and NC 360.

The group also discussed affordable housing at the last meeting and is going to send those notes to the group (Economic Stability) who has affordable housing as part of their focus.

### **Next Working Group Meetings:**

All groups are set to meet again before the next Task Force on Homelessness Meeting on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. Please contact Chair Murphy-Nugen or Hannah Minick for more additional information on working groups and their meetings.

### **Upcoming Task Force on Homelessness Meetings:**

Chair Murphy-Nugen is going to send out survey to determine best times to meet in November and December given holiday schedule. It was suggested moving meetings to 1 time per month as opposed to 2 times per month as working groups are additionally meeting.

Brandon made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Alderman Sutton seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:35 PM.

### **Actions Between Now & Next Meeting**

Complete survey re: meeting schedule

Working groups will meet & continue to identify data needs

Packing Party is coming up October 15<sup>th</sup> from 6pm-8pm.

### **Anticipated Items for Next Meeting Agenda**

Revisit definition on homelessness

Discuss meeting schedule (Nov—Jan)

Revisit proposed grant options

Working group updates

Review initial plans for homelessness needs assessment

**Additional Information:**

The Task Force on Homelessness is committed to providing opportunities for community feedback.

Community members: Please feel welcome to provide feedback here:



Minutes respectfully submitted by Amy Murphy-Nugen on Tuesday, October 13, 2020.