

MEETING MINUTES

**Town of Waynesville
Task Force on Homelessness**

Thursday, March 4, 2021

5:30 PM—7:00 PM EST

**Location:
Zoom Meeting (held online in
accordance with CDC
guidelines)**

| | | |
|--|--|-------------------------------|
| Meeting Facilitator: | Amy Murphy-Nugen | |
| TOW TFH Members Roster | | |
| ✓ Police Chief David Adams *Lt. Tyler Trantham attended | ✓ Patsy Davis or Brook Smith as proxy | ✓ Amy Murphy-Nugen (Chair) |
| Juleah Berliner | ✓ Commissioner Kevin Ensley | ✓ Bob Cummings |
| ✓ Wanda Brooks | ✓ Keri Guidry | ✓ Joslyn Schaefer |
| ✓ Dale Burris | ✓ Mandy Haithcox | Alderman Anthony Sutton |
| ✓ Nathan Cartwright | Jon Lynn McDermott | Brandon Wilson |
| ✓ Sheriff Greg Christopher or proxy | | |

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Amy Murphy-Nugen opened the meeting at approximately 5:30 p.m., with welcoming everyone and roll call. The charges of the Task Force were reviewed by Chair Amy Murphy-Nugen. A timeline for the continued work of the Task Force, including a timeline for data collection, was reviewed.

Approval of Minutes from February 4, 2021

A motion to approve the meeting minutes from February 4, 2021 was made by Commissioner Kevin Ensley. The motion was seconded by Dale Burris. All voted in favor of approving the meeting minutes from February 4, 2021.

Work Group Reports:

The Health Work Group, Eviction, Foreclosure and Crisis Response Work Group, Community and Social Cohesion Work Group, and Education Work Group do not have any updates for the Task Force at this meeting. Groups are continuing to collect and report data. The Economic Stability work group provided the following update:

Economic Stability Work Group

Joslyn Schaefer provided an update from the Economic Stability Work Group. The group last met on March 3, 2021. The group is planning to distribute paper copies of the business survey to businesses, in order to provide an in-person options for business to complete the survey. The group determined who is going to cover what geographic region in Waynesville/Haywood County. Joslyn Schaefer is going to cover Frog Level and Wanda Brooks is going to cover the West Waynesville area. The group is going to collect the surveys and then give them to Hannah, MSW intern, to enter the data into the survey monkey database. Through paper and in-person options, business owners who do not use email or who do not check their email regularly will be able to participate.

Community Updates/Resource Discussion

Joslyn Schaefer reported that Grace Church has some funding to donate toward eviction and foreclosure prevention. Joslyn Schaefer asked if there are any community efforts coming together to pool funds specifically for eviction and foreclosure prevention. Patsy Davis from Mountain Projects stated that they have a fund for eviction and foreclosure relief. Mandy Haithcox reported that Pathways has funding for prevention efforts for people who are involved with Department of Social Services as well.

Mandy Haithcox provided an update for Cold Grace. Ninety people stayed at Pathways for Cold Grace in January. She stated most of the nights in February qualified as Cold Grace. Mandy stated that Pathways can partner with Helping Hands if need be and that they have not had to partner with Helping Hands too much, or churches. Pathways does not have the data/numbers of people served through Helping Hands or the church, but does have data for who comes to Pathways, when they come, and how long they stay for Cold Grace. The individuals who stay the night during Cold Grace weather are generally not accessing shelter services beyond seeking shelter overnight due to freezing or below freezing temperatures.

Chair Summary

Chair Amy Murphy-Nugen attended the Southwest NC Consortium Stakeholder Session (HOME funds); attended NC Housing Coalition podcast on Treasury FAQ; met with a student rural advocacy team; and attended Economic Stability Work Group meeting. Chair Amy Murphy-Nugen's current focus is on preparing to analyze the business survey data; preparing the IRB protocol for the survey with

people who are experiencing homelessness, listening sessions, and community survey; scheduling listening sessions; and following CR fund distribution. Chair Amy Murphy-Nugen provided an overview of the Southwestern NC Home Consortium Home Investment Partnership Program. Counties involved in the project are Haywood, Jackson, Macon, Swain, Cherokee, Graham and Clay. The start date of the project is July 1, 2020. An annual allocation of \$537,500 has been made for the HOME Program, serving low and very-low-income households and housing needs for people living in eligible counties. The HOME funds have been matched (25%) through the Dogwood Foundation. Patsy Davis shared that Smoky Mountain Partnership has also partnered with the Southwestern Commission and that they are proud that these dollars are coming into the seven most western counties of Western North Carolina. Chair Amy Murphy-Nugen shared that she saw three primary points of need for intervention through the work the Task Force has done so far, which are 1. The core group of 40-50 people who are cycling out of the criminal justice system into homelessness who are service resistant, 2. Transitional housing, and 3. People who are working and not making enough wages to afford rent or a mortgage. Chair Amy Murphy-Nugen will continue to offer feedback to the Southwestern Commission committee based on the continued community needs assessment conducted by the Task Force on Homelessness. How funds are distributed is still being determined and suggestions from the community are welcome as it is a community-based project that is open to community input. The need for affordable housing at all levels and multiple points of entry to care was highlighted by Mandy Haithcox. Chair Amy Murphy-Nugen highlighted the Treasury FAQ, which clarifies guidance for HOPE emergency rental assistance funds. The Emergency Rental Assistance program is directing \$546 million dollars to North Carolina and the balance of state. First Citizens Bank is merging with another financial institution and has developed a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) as a result of this merger. The CBA has resulted in \$16 million dollars that will be reinvested in low and moderate-income communities and neighborhoods of color. Chair Amy Murphy-Nugen reviewed the proposed American Rescue Plan Act, which contains a possible \$40 billion in housing assistance. The CDC eviction moratorium is set to expire March 31, 2021. Chair Amy Murphy-Nugen shared North Carolina House Bill 196 was passed today, which is the state implementation of the first part of the COVID-19 response and relief, which is going to help the fund allocation begin. There are some expectations that the distribution of funds from the state to counties may not be as timely as providers hope. Patsy Davis reported that Mountain Projects receives about 100 calls a day for rental and emergency assistance. The Section 8 waitlist is currently closed. Dale Burris stated that currently the cost of building materials is extremely high. The Task Force on Homelessness discussed current housing resources and funding in Haywood County.

Affordability Gaps in Rent and Wages

Hannah Minick, MSW intern, reported some data on affordability gaps between rent and wages in Haywood County. Fair market Rent in Haywood County for a one bedroom is \$806, \$918 for a two bedroom, \$1,167 for a three bedroom and \$1,484 for a four bedroom. The fair market rent amounts are defined by Housing and Urban Development agency and does necessarily not reflect the housing and rental market in a given community. In order to afford a one bedroom in Haywood County according to the fair market rent prices, a single person would need to make \$15.50 an hour, \$17.65 for a two bedroom, \$22.44 for a three bedroom, and \$28.54 for a four bedroom. In Haywood County 48.8% of the population makes under \$15.00 an hour, 16.6% make between \$15.00 and \$17.67 an hour, and 34.5% make between \$17.67 and \$37.50 an hour. Keri Guidry stated that she thinks it would be important and more interesting to look at what is actually available in Haywood County that actually fall into the fair market rent amounts. Keri stated that she is curious if there are actually livable options that fall within the fair market rent amounts and how many. She stated that people she works with cannot find a livable option for housing within the fair market prices listed here. The Task Force members discussed rental opportunities and the rental market in Haywood County.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday April 1st, 2021 from 5:30 p.m-7:00 p.m. and will be held on Zoom.

Additional Information:

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

Community members: Please feel welcome to provide feedback here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TFHSept3Feedback>



Minutes respectfully submitted by Amy Murphy-Nugen on _____(date).

