

# MEETING MINUTES

**Town of Waynesville  
Task Force on Homelessness**

**Thursday, April 1, 2021**

**5:30 PM—7:00 PM EST**

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

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

## **Welcome and Introductions**

Chair Amy Murphy-Nugen opened the meeting at approximately 5:30 p.m., welcoming everyone and completing roll call. Chair Amy Murphy-Nugen announced the April 24<sup>th</sup> litter pick up that is scheduled in Waynesville, and Vicky Gribble announced that the next drive-through Resource Fair is happening May 5<sup>th</sup>. The charges of the Task Force were reviewed by Chair Amy Murphy-Nugen.

## **Approval of Minutes from February 4, 2021**

A motion to approve the meeting minutes from March 4, 2021 was made by Juleah Berliner. The motion was seconded by Sheriff Greg Christopher. All voted in favor of approving the meeting minutes from March 4, 2021 and the minutes were approved.

### **Review of Timeline:**

A timeline for the continued work of the Task Force, including a timeline for data collection, was reviewed. Chair Amy Murphy-Nugen reported that approval has been granted by Western Carolina University's Institutional Review Board for human subject protections and data collection will start this month. The data collection tools include surveys to be conducted with people who are homeless, community feedback surveys, and the continuation of listening sessions. Once the data has been collected the information will be presented back to the community and Task Force and priorities will be determined collectively, leading to the draft plan of recommendations that will be given to the Mayor of Waynesville and the Board of Aldermen in July/August 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. The Economic Stability work group is still working to conduct in-person surveys. The team is working on continuing to gather results and will give them to MSW Intern, Hannah Minick, to enter the handwritten information into Survey Monkey.

### **Data Collection Strategy**

Two separate surveys and listening sessions are the three ways in which data collection will occur. Both surveys can be conducted in person, over the phone, online, on a computer or cellular device, and on paper. The Task Force on Homelessness is hoping to reach 80 participants to complete the survey for people who are experiencing homelessness. Chair Amy Murphy-Nugen stated that the goal of interviewing 80 people who are experiencing homelessness would provide statistical significance, based on the point in time count for Waynesville/Haywood County. Chair Amy Murphy-Nugen acknowledged that the target goal of 80 interviews may not be reached yet remains the goal. The community survey is a community feedback survey that includes community members' perception of homelessness, what should be prioritized in terms of services, and what supports people believe should or should not be offered. The community survey spans a continuum of levels of support in the community and uses multiple scaling questions. The hope is to get 500 completed community feedback surveys, which would provide statistical significance for a town the size of Waynesville. Listening sessions will also be conducted, with eight to ten people participating at each session. There are five stakeholder groups with whom listening sessions will be conducted. The remaining listening sessions will occur with business owners, law enforcement, faith-based institutions, people who are homeless, and service providers. The listening sessions are targeted for particular groups of people who have expertise in specific areas. One listening session was previously conducted in November with residents.

Chair Amy Murphy-Nugen reviewed the survey that is being conducted for people who are experiencing homelessness. It is expected that it will take 30-45 minutes to complete the survey. There is a detailed consent form attached to the survey which Chair Amy Murphy-Nugen reviewed. In order to be eligible for participation participants must be 18 years of age or older, live in Waynesville/Haywood County, and be experiencing homelessness. Demographic information, educational history, employment history, wage/income information, veteran status, history in foster care, housing history, history of homelessness, housing supports, and non-housing supports, involvement in the criminal justice system, substance use, health and mental health care, and questions related to interpersonal violence are included in the survey. The goal is to gain a comprehensive understanding of people experiencing homelessness in our community. This understanding will inform community interventions. Questions were raised about the length of the survey and time needed to complete it. The Task Force members discussed the reason why each question was included as part of the survey, which is part of the broader community needs assessment. Participants of the survey for people who are homeless will receive care packages with a value up to \$20 for their time in participating in the survey. Sheriff Greg Christopher stated that he would like some surveys dropped off at the Sheriff's office and that they may be able to complete some with people as they are being booked into the county jail. Chair Amy Murphy-Nugen, Ronnie Johnson (MSW Intern), and Hannah Minick (MSW Intern) have all completed the Human Subject's Protections course and are willing and able to meet people in person who want to have someone go through the survey with them. All of the questions that are included on the survey for people experiencing homelessness have been provided to the Task Force members previously, in the form of a spreadsheet. The survey mostly consists of closed-ended questions. The listening sessions will provide open formats and could potentially be used to follow up on some questions from the survey. Chair Amy Murphy-Nugen reviewed the survey with the Task Force and created space for questions and answers regarding the survey.

Chair Amy Murphy-Nugen reviewed the community feedback survey. This survey is estimated to take 15-20 minutes to complete. Eligible participants must consent to the release of information, live in Waynesville/Haywood County and be 18 years of age or older. People may only complete the survey one time. This survey is going to give the Task Force on Homelessness a sense of what community members perspectives on homelessness, what their thoughts are about how to address homelessness in our community, as well as what they think the cause of homelessness is in our community. Questions asking what people think should be done to address homelessness in our community are also asked. The community feedback survey can also be completed by people experiencing homelessness. There is an open-ended question at the end of the community feedback survey where people can share additional thoughts.

The goal for the Task Force is to complete the two surveys within the month of April. This timeline will be re-evaluated according to response rates as surveys start to come in. The timeline for completing the surveys in one month can be extended if need be. Chair Amy Murphy-Nugen asked members of the Task Force to email her suggestions for people that would be beneficial to include in the listening sessions, which will be taking place in the Fall 2021. The specific listening session questions and format generally remain confidential until the listening session so that participants can provide unfiltered and immediate response to prompts. However, the general themes of the listening sessions were shared. The ways in which community participation and feedback is happening throughout the work of the Task Force has been influenced and impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Task Force discussed the participation of community members and residents in the work of the Task Force.

### **Federal Funding Opportunities**

Chair Amy Murphy-Nugen provided an update on federal funding, some of which our community could receive. There is further federal guidance that has been given about the Emergency Assistance Program. Security deposits and emergency stays in hotels and/or motels, as well as people who are renting to own are all now eligible to receive funding through the Emergency Assistance Program. There is an additional \$546 million that has been allocated to North Carolina which will be available to rural areas. Currently, there is no way for communities to access these funds, and we are awaiting further information about how communities will be able to access these funds. The American Rescue Plan was passed in mid-March and information regarding this plan, providing \$50 billion across the nation in housing assistance, was presented at the last meeting. The eviction moratorium has been extended from March 31<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>, Governor Roy Cooper passed legislation extending the moratorium in North Carolina. Chair Amy Murphy-Nugen discussed the passing of The American Rescue Plan. We are still learning how that funding will be filtered to states and what they can and will be used for. The HOPE program, which some of the emergency rental dollars were coming through, is currently oversubscribed, and we have to wait for mechanisms to be in place to access those funds. Governor Roy Cooper released his proposed budget. Chair Amy Murphy-Nugen provided an overview of parts of the budget that are related to housing.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday May 6<sup>th</sup>, 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 April 9, 2021.