

**Mental Health Response Advisory Committee (MHRAC)**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, September 17, 2019**

**In Attendance:**

Co-Chair Danny Whatley, The Rock at Noon Day  
Co-Chair Rick Miera, Executive Committee  
Betty Whiton, NAMI  
Gilbert Ramirez, CABQ-Dept. of Family & Comm. Services  
Nils Rosenbaum, MD., M.P.H., APD Behavioral Health Division  
Lieutenant Matt Dietzel, APD CIU  
David Webster, Bernalillo County Behavioral Health  
Bridget McCoy, MD, UNM Department of Psychiatry  
Cassandra Bailey, Detective, CIU  
Laura Nguyen, Albuquerque Ambulance  
Robert Salazar, NAMI/Peer Representative  
Maxwell Kauffman, Law Offices of the Public Defender  
Paula Burton, Peer Representative  
George Mercer, Albuquerque Health Care for the Homeless  
David Ley, New Mexico Solutions

**Non-Voting members:**

Deputy Chief E. Garcia  
Sergeant D. Dosal  
Scribe: Lori Cruz, APD

**Absent:**

James Burton, Peer Representative  
Laura Johnson, Michael Armstrong Law Offices  
Rob Nelson, APD/C.O.A.S.T.

Meeting was called to order at 5:01 PM. A quorum was met at time of start.

**Welcome first time guests:**

Meeting began with a brief overview of the creation and purpose of MHRAC by Danny Whatley.

Bernadette Miera, Bernalillo County, Project Manager – Tiny Home Village

**Approval of meeting minutes**

There was a motion made by Rick Miera to approve the minutes as written. The motion was second by Dave Webster. The minutes were approved as written.

**Public Comment (two minutes per person, 15 minutes total)**

Danny Whatley informed the board that he received a copy of the transcript of the Status Conference Hearing from Elizabeth Martinez. The transcript is over three hundred (300) pages. Danny Whatley asked the board members to please contact Lori Cruz if they would like a copy of the transcript.

**New Shelter Plans Presentation, Lisa Huval and Gilbert Ramirez, Deputy Directors, FCS**

The presenters introduced themselves and Carol Pierce, Director, Family and Community Services. Reviewed data. On any given single night there are approximately fifteen hundred (1,500) individuals experiencing homelessness. Believe the actual number is higher. Only includes those sleeping outside or in a shelter. Does not account for those who may be couch surfing or staying with family members,

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etc. Presented two different possible scenarios. Drug use. Mental health. Transitional homelessness. Loss of job. Sick family member. Want to work but having trouble getting back to work. As a community we need to get from there to here. Not looking to duplicate services. Need centralized emergency shelter. The interim shelter strategy is the west side shelter. Case managing services from UNMH is being provided. Health Care for the Homeless is providing services as well at the shelter. However, the west side shelter is not a long term strategy. The location is problematic. Spending \$1M annually to provide transportation. This is money better spent elsewhere. Too remote a location. Not a hub. No site currently identified. The new shelter will provide 24/7 365 days/year. Place first responders can drop off. On-site manager critical part of the plan. Need to determine best practices for the shelter, providing permanent housing connections. Will not be a one stop shop or huge campus. Want to build a facility where they can stay and have a safe place to sleep and acts as a hub. Have a conceptual design which has been based on preliminary ideas submitted by others. Three hundred (300) bed facility. Similar to utilization rate currently experiencing at west side shelter. Will have clinic beds. Common barriers. Fenced storage area. Pets will be allowed. Generic plan. Drop off area in front for school buses, others. Timeline: \$985,000 granted to City for architectural design, Request for Proposals August 7<sup>th</sup>, November 2019 ballot for funding. Emergency shelter is just one component. There has to be a strategy for more permanent housing. Housing vouchers in conjunction with supportive services. Affordable housing necessary. There will also be \$5 M housing funds on the ballot. Street outreach is still necessary. Housing is not possible for all. Have a working group focusing on street outreach presentation. In process of establishing contracts with providers who will handle housing vouchers.

#### (Q) Questions, (A) Answers, (C) Comments:

- Q: Will any of the providers who are part of outreach be selected to handle the housing vouchers?
- A: Lisa Huval: The contractors have not been determined.
- Q: Will the shelter itself receive any housing vouchers?
- Q: Danny Whatley: Who will operate the shelter?
- A: Lisa Huval: It will be a collaborative effort of those interested. The City isn't interested in being the direct service provider in this. Medical respite will be required. Means it will have to be a collaborative effort. Will be hard to find one operator who can do it all.
- C: Danny Whatley: As the representative of all providers, very concerned about the size of the facility. Need separate, smaller shelters for LGBTQ, women, women and children, young adults. Not one large shelter. Concerned that this will be the only bite of the apple to do this. The operating costs are going to be shocker. Ten years down the road we will be looking at this and will still be needing a group of smaller shelters.
- Q: Rick Miera: What is the time limit?
- A: Lisa Huval: At this time we do not have a definitive time limit. We have nothing to reference as far as how long it will be needed. No base line as of yet as to how long they will stay.
- A: Carol Pierce: Very low barrier. As long as you can walk on the bus, you will get services. Part of the low barrier is the length of stay. We have to continue to move towards more affordable housing. This includes support of shelter until they get the services they need to become stable.
- Q: Max Kauffman: Will there be any coordination with pretrial services? Have you considered coordinating with pretrial services?
- A: Gilbert Ramirez: As we are integrating those services, intake, we will try to handle that coordination. It is a piece of the hub.
- Q: Will you have a number of offices for all those services?

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- A: Gilbert Ramirez: More space for services. Similar to Health Care for the Homeless Resource Center. Flexible meeting place at HCH. Resource Re-entry Center also has something similar.
- Q: What is your structural plan for pets?
- A: Lisa Huval: Want to be more deliberate with those plans.
- Q: Who is part of these determinations? At what point do you start involving the stakeholders?
- A: Lisa Huval: Next year when the architect is in place we will begin meeting with stakeholders. The preliminary meeting, however, will just be with a few of the providers. Heat up early next year with stakeholders.
- Q: Danny Whatley: you mentioned a drop off and pick up location for APD. Will APD be included in those determinations and establishing protocol?
- A: Lisa Huval: We are even considering drop off options for potential medical services that do not require an emergency room visit. Will need to plan to meet with AFR and APD. Similar to MATS. No procedures mapped out. In conversations with the County about the triage center and its component.
- C: The school drop off does not make sense. You can't drop off children at a shelter.
- A: Carol Pierce: Agrees. No, that will not happen.
- Q: Rick Miera: How many children are at the shelter?
- A: Gilbert Ramirez: Thirty (30) to forty (40) children. During the summer months those children had access to the summer programs that other children had. Interacting with the Title One Liaison with the schools. Will still consider the possibility of having school buses stop at the shelter.
- Q: Casandra Bailey: Will the perimeter of the shelter be secured?
- A: Lisa Huval: The area will be fenced. Controlled property.
- Q: Cassandra Bailey: What about possible homeless encampments going up along the perimeter? Will there be any on-site security?
- A: Lisa Huval: We haven't discussed any of those issues as of yet.
- Q: Dr. Bridget McCoy: Do you know the location of the new shelter? How much space is 30,000 sq. ft.?
- A: Lisa Huval: No. The location has not been determined.
- A: Carol Pierce: Compare it to the size of the Taylor Ranch Community Center. Three (3) to four (4) acres.

**Tiny Home Village Presentation by Bernadette Miera:**

The Tiny Home Village Project offering transitional housing has been in the works for over two years. It was in response to the shut-down of tent city in Barreلاس. It is a collaboration between Bernalillo County Commissioner Debbie O'Malley and City of Albuquerque Councilors Diane Gibson and Pat Davis. In November 2016, voters approved the \$2 Million General Obligation Bond to fund the development of the tiny home village project. In November 2018, voters approved an additional \$75,000 in another General Obligation Bond to fund the development of a community building for the project. Infrastructure grants were received for water and sewer. The project was modeled after Eugene, Oregon's project. Average stay in the transitional housing is six (6) to nine (9) months. With an anticipated maximum stay of two years. As long as the individual(s) is working on an exit plan, they will be allowed to stay. The design is complete. The Request of Bids for construction is scheduled to go out next week. Have been working with the carpenters union. They have agreed to help build the 120 sq. ft. homes free of charge. Also working with other unions. We anticipate breaking ground December 1<sup>st</sup> of this year. There was a lot of community outreach and community meetings involving stakeholders,

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neighborhoods. Attendance over one hundred for the majority of the meetings. Looked at unincorporated areas. The ad hoc committee selected the top six (6) potential sites. Held a series of public meetings. During one meeting on the west side, attendance was close to six hundred. "Not in our back yard". The other remaining meetings were much more subdued. We invited individuals experiencing homelessness as guest speakers. This was very beneficial. Chose a site that is a little over an acre with some additional land across the street. Assisting in the center will be occupational therapists, some UNM student nurses and UNM physicians. Three tier board system. The top tier board will consist of the Albuquerque Indian Center; the stakeholders board which will be responsible for helping the Indian Center and the Villagers; and finally the villagers board. Bernalillo County will be on the board of stakeholders. Bernalillo County will be leasing the land from the Albuquerque Indian Center but will own the village tiny homes and buildings. Villagers will be responsible for maintaining their living areas and assisting in assigned duties, therefore Bernalillo County wants to ensure that those people selected to live in the village are a good fit. They will have to be amenable to live there. As such there will be a vetting period. Portland allowed a multitude of pets. Bernalillo County will allow dogs and service dogs. Only seven (7) dogs will be allowed in total. Bernalillo County is willing to bring in service animals weekly so villagers can work with them. During the design phase of the project; there was a lot of talk about public safety. The area will be fenced off and gated. The gate will be maned 24/7 by villagers. There will be 24/7 lighting for safety. Units will not have running water or bathrooms. There will be eight (8) restrooms. There will be a community garden. Will be using solar for the community building. The Water Authority will be building a cistern for the community garden. Parking will be offered. The Village is located in an area where alternative forms of transportation are available. Bernalillo County will be partnering with high schools to do some of the carpentry work. The homes ideally need to last fifteen (15) to twenty (20) years. The life of the bond is fifteen (15) years. All units will be the same though the initial villagers will have the opportunity to select from different color schemes and patterns on the initial build of the tiny homes. Each unit will have heating and cooling and electricity. Bike racks will be furnished. All homes will face the center, where the community building will be located. The community building will have restrooms, a kitchen, a laundry, office space, a television room, a computer area, library and lockable storage bins. There will be a table area. Bernalillo County is working with food providers to stock the pantry. There will be two industrial size ranges, two refrigerators and storage areas for villagers own food. Of the eight (8) restroom, three (3) will be ADA compliant. The tiny homes and the community building will have high ceiling and plenty of lighting. The two thousand (2,000) gallon cistern will collect water to be used for the community garden. The Request for Bids for construction will go out next week. We are reaching out to providers to partner with. We will be going down to Austin to look at their villages. Micro-enterprise component. Literacy component. The hope is that within the two (2) year period, they will feel stable enough to move to more stable housing. This is a housing development it is not a shelter. There will be thirty (30) homes, we do accept couples.

#### (Q) Questions, (A) Answers, (C) Comments:

- Q: How do people get on the list?
- A: Bernadette Miera: We want to work with outside providers to avoid looking like we are choosing who gets into the houses.
- Q: Unsure how the cooking element is expected to work with only two stoves?
- A: Bernadette Miera: The two stoves are industrial size. There are also numerous hot plates and microwaves. Some villages use a schedule for cooking. That is what we are looking at.

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- Q: Individuals under ADA have to be able to use the restroom right away. How will the need be met?
- A: Bernadette Miera: All the ADA restrooms are very close to all the homes. We are considering having portable toilets available in the event individuals are sick.
- Q: Betty Whiton: What are the vetting criteria?
- C: Bernadette Miera: Villagers cannot use drugs on site. Villagers can have addictions and mental health issues; however, there is a vetting system. Homes will be offered to those people who can be stabilized. If they have intense behavioral health needs we will not be able to house them. This is transitional housing only; for those individuals who are on track for more permanent housing. Will have services on site. Will hire two folks: a village manager and a village resource person.
- Q: If the villager has income, will you be charging rent?
- A: Bernadette Miera: Yes, they will be charged rent. If a villager has no income, he/she will be required to work around the facility. For example, cleaning, gardening, manning the security booth, etc.

**Proposed New Project Re: Gun Purchase and Illegal Drug Use/Possession by Commander Mizel Garcia:**

Betty Whiton informed the board that Commander Garcia asked that the presentation be postponed for one month. Commander Garcia would like to include the FBI in the presentation.

**Status Conference Hearing Report:**

Danny Whatley informed that board that he was blindsided by some of the comments made during the hearing. He felt they were inappropriate and those issues should have been addressed outside of the hearing. The hearing ran the entire day and ended around 5:30 p.m. He further stated that he felt the judge would be good for the CASA. A copy of the three hundred (300) page transcript is available upon request. Lieutenant Dietzel thanked Danny Whatley and Rick Miera for their presentation. He stated their presentation was the only light of sunshine during the whole hearing. He had hoped that APD would have the opportunity to set the record straight on some of the comments made but they were not given the opportunity to do so. Danny Whatley stated that some of the individuals who spoke tried to tell the judge what MHRAC does, however, they are not part of MHRAC. Danny Whatley said that MHRAC is the shiny example of what has worked well.

**Report and update from CIU, APD and Dr. Rosenbaum**

Dr. Rosenbaum mentioned that they would be launching a wellness program next week for twenty (20) officers. He further stated that Portland is on-board for the launching of a mindfulness program. Captain DeBuck will be presenting at the next SCION Meeting. Lieutenant Dietzel thanked the detectives that worked late last night during the President's visit. Lieutenant Dietzel also informed that board that Project Guardian would be starting up. The Chief is trying to mitigate threats of mass shootings. The role at CIU is not changing. CIU will be responsible for mitigating only the mental health component. Lieutenant Dietzel was responsible for developing the flow chart for Project Guardian. He again assured the board that CIU's role would be the same as it always has been.

Assistant City Attorney, Lindsey Van Meter was present to answer any questions, if needed.

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**Report and update from C.O.A.S.T.**

In Rob Nelson's absence, COAST staff member Lisa Chavez informed the board that the revised resource card is almost completed. Lt. Dietzel informed the board that area commanders are showing acceptance of the weekly outreach and those providers assisting in it. Max Kauffman commended Lisa and the subcommittee for the work that was done on the resource cards. Lisa Chavez asked Max Kauffman if he was willing to help pay for them. Danny Whatley thanked Karen Navarro for her continued hard work on the resource cards. The resource cards were initially created by Health Care for the Homeless.

**Report and update from sub-committees:**

**Training Sub-Committee:**

Paula Burton informed that board that they received good marks (comments) from the monitor. There will be a Training Sub-Committee Meeting on Monday, September 23, 2019. The Training Sub-Committee will get started on the end of year report that is due in December.

**Information Sharing/Resource Sub-Committee:**

Sub-Committee received the final proof of the resource card that will go to the printer. The size of the card has grown. It will no longer fit in the pocket. A sub-committee of the sub-committee met first few times then took it to the Information Sharing/Resource Sub-Committee as a whole.

**(Q) Questions, (A) Answers, (C) Comments:**

- Q: Danny Whatley: is the layout the same?
- A: Karen Navarro: Not really. Karen Navarro then explained the layout.
- Q: Will it be in Spanish
- A: Karen Navarro: No

Lieutenant Dietzel informed that board that they have also been working on the process map on how APD will be serving Certificates for Evaluation. According the Lieutenant Dietzel, City Legal is on board with this.

**MHRAC Final Discussion:**

Gilbert Ramirez: informed the board that congratulations went out to everyone involved with the creation of the ***Mental Health: Youth Families Communities*** documentary. The show was honored with an EMMY (c) Award in the Public, Current Community Affairs Program/Special Category. Special congratulations to Robert Salazar and NAMI.

**Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 6:57 PM