

One Albuquerque Homeless Advisory Council Meeting

February 4, 2021

3:00 pm

Attendees: William Hoffman (ABQ Interfaith), Beth Brownell (Stronghurst NA), Richard Mansfield (New Beginnings Church) Lisa Huval (CABQ-DFCS), Quinn Donnay (CABQ-DFCS), Jeff Hoehn (Cuidando de los Ninos), Steve Johnson (New Day), Evelyn Kuhn (AHCH Board), Jenny Metzler (AHCH), Rowan Wymark (Downtown NA), Yuko Kobayashi (NMAFC), Hana Gossett (NMCEH), Heather Norfleet (Near North Valley NA), Aaron Nieto (CABQ Mayor's Office), Travis Clark (Steelbridge), Dr. Denise Lin (UNMH), Mike (Near North Valley NA), Cheri Lopez, Skye Devore (Tractor Brewing), Bobbt Ehrig (NMVIC)

1) **Welcome and Introductions:** Lisa Huval welcomed Council members; introductions made.

2) **Homeless Coordinating Council - Updates & Discussion:** The HCC was convened last summer, with three entities working collaboratively (City of ABQ, Bernalillo Cty, and UNM). They identified 5 core areas, for which 5 committees were formed. Those committees charged with developing high-impact strategies to address needs and gaps. Committees now implementing strategies

Quinn Donnay provided update on Youth Housing Continuum and its Needs Assessment which will be underway soon with the goal of helping better understand youth homelessness. Will also have a nonprofit organizational assessment component. The Committee is also moving forward with planning for a Young Adult Shelter, ages 18 - 24. Jenny Metzler shared that Columbia University estimates a 40 to 45% increase in homelessness post Covid, for general population. Asked if anyone had data relative to youth/young adults; Steve Johnson referenced a SAMHSA statistic that persons under 24 are fastest growing population of persons without homes. Jeff Hoehn added that average age of parents currently at Cuidando is 22.

3) **Gateway Centers - Updates & Discussion:** Voters approved \$14 million in GO bonds in Fall 2019, as a response to homeless issues in ABQ. Initial plan was for 300-bed shelter. The approach changed from a large, single shelter to multiple, smaller shelters. The Homeless Services System committee is tasked with identifying what services would be at these gateway shelters. Demographically, anticipate a shelter for single men/women, family shelter, and young adult shelter. Have also discussed needs/gaps regarding sobering center, medical detox, and medical respite. The City of ABQ is in process of purchasing Gibson Medical Center which would provide options for multiple services one location. Another potential gateway center location is adjacent to the current HopeWorks campus in Wells Park. This is in the conversation phase but could provide shelter for single men (75 beds) and single women (25 beds) if finalized. Rowan Wymark asked whether Wells Park Neighborhood Association has been involved; Quinn Donnay confirmed they have, while Jenny Metzler added that as a service provider business in the neighborhood, they also have been engaged.

The Westside Emergency Housing Center (WEHC) remains an important part of shelter continuum as City of ABQ's largest shelter for persons with no home. Ultimate goal is to bring beds into town to better connect people with services. WEHC is 20 miles out of town. Closure will take time, as it will take time to develop replacement Gateway Centers. Could also remain operational at some level, especially during busy winter.

4) **COVID-19 response for people experiencing homelessness - Updates & Discussion:** Lisa Huval shared that a system of partners worked together since beginning of this crisis (Heading Home, AHCH, State Health Dept, Bernalillo County, UNMH). Have been successful in preventing a large outbreak among

persons with no home. Strategies included keeping the WEHC open 24/7; hot meals provided, and more pick up locations in town added; hired a medical director to help develop Covid screening and testing protocols; opened 3 wellness motels which are at full capacity (partners include Pathways, HeadingHome, AHCH and Bernalillo County). Will Hoffman asked, as Covid crisis moves toward end, what the plan is to close hotels and move families to alternative housing. Lisa Huval said that wellness motels have been operating with Cares Act funding, and not sure when the phase-out will occur. Are working now to help families exit into permanent housing. Also, with help of many, including AHCH, First Nations and Heading Home, opened 2 Covid hotels for a safe place for people to isolate. Through WEHC and 5 hotels, an average of 800 persons per night are being served. At the WEHC previously, max served would have been 450. In partnership with Public Health, a Covid vaccine clinic has occurred at WEHC for age 75 and over, and those with underlying conditions.

5) Eviction Prevention – Updates & Discussion: The state and CDC currently have a moratorium on evictions due to Covid crisis. City of ABQ identified a need in 2020 to scale up eviction assistance, previously had provided \$100,000. Cares Act funding allowed this to increase to \$800,000. CDBG funds are being used also to provide eviction assistance, \$1 million. A significant amount of funding was awarded to City of ABQ during December 2020 Congressional action bringing \$24 million to pay for back rent, utilities, rent going forward. Still at preliminary planning phases for expending the funds, which must be done by end of 2021. Awaiting clarity from Dept of Treasury, but do know recipients will need to be at 80% of median income and directly or indirectly impacted by Covid. Heather Norfleet asked if they can help spread this news via neighborhood associations; Lisa Huval to send info to Council members when have more detail. Also, can direct people to call 311.

6) House Bill 111 – Modernizes New Mexico’s Housing Code: The City of ABQ is supporting this legislation which balances rights of the property owner and renter, among other things. The bill prohibits source of income discrimination, meaning that currently landlords can deny taking renters who use vouchers (Section 8, PSH, etc) to pay rent. Jenny Metzler said that AHCH is tracking this daily, and she welcomes any calls if Council members have questions.

7) Council member updates and announcements:

- Quinn Donnay said a short survey for persons with lived homeless experience is being created and focuses on operations of gateway centers. What matters to those who will use them? This information will influence design. Survey will be shared at WEHC, wellness motels, service providers, Friends Meeting House and others. Will send the link/information to all Council members also when it is ready, which should be next week.
- Steve Johnson announced that New Day’s Drop-In Center is open now, at 142 Truman. For ages 16 to 22, open Tues-Sat from 12 to 7. It also has a street outreach component, so staff can come to identified youth/young adults. Also, Steve Johnson shared that New Day is interested in locating an apartment complex of 6 to 8 apartments that they can rent and manage for youth/young adults.