

LEGAL SERVICES/CRIMINAL JUSTICE SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

12.7.21 11:45 AM Whibbs Room @ City Hall & Zoom

IN ATTENDANCE: Allison Patton, Ronnie Rivera, Blair Castro, Chief Powell, Commander Nash, Patrick Jennings, Cathy White, Kaitlyn Bonham, Kelly Richards, John Johnson, Leslie Powell-Boudreaux

Allison gives update that group has met with the State Attorney's office; they will be sending a representative to attend next month. Hope to have discussion on statistics, as that needs to be a priority.

Chairs went to visit "One Hopeful Place" in Okaloosa County. In 2007, they ended up setting up their own subcommittee within the chamber of commerce to take this issue on. The business community found a site (old wastewater treatment plant) and raised the funds to rehab the building and start a men's shelter. It was really one man (Ted Corcoran, head of Chamber of Commerce) and a group of citizens who came together and made this happen. It grew into a men's shelter and a women's shelter, and are in the process of building out a cold weather shelter. It is a low-barrier shelter, which is a "Come as you are" shelter can't have drugs on premises and can't "be a butthead."

They are not looking at setting up a 24/7 building where homeless individuals can be held instead of being arrested for low-level misdemeanor crimes where they would work with law enforcement. They have talked to Ginger Madden already about setting up this infrastructure.

Travis Tompkins and Clara Long went on the tour as well. There seems to be appetite at the county for creating a similar facility to "One Hopeful Place."

Capacity: 50 men's beds, 11 women's beds, looking at an urban campground as well. also looking at a couple's shelter.

John suggested that this may be a good time to loop in Pastor Renee of Heavenly Blessings, as she is currently runs the closest thing we have to be low-barrier shelter.

Data & statistics discussion: Many people arrested do not give the most recent address to law enforcement. Deputies do not see a drastic number of misdemeanor arrests; there is more felony arrests. Most low-level homeless offenders are not being arrested anymore.

We should consider the impact of an arrest on family and why people may give an inaccurate address.

How do we create a program to help those who are in need (like a woman who has gotten a DUI and cannot drive, yet still has to work and provide for her kids day to day? How to we create policy change and provide relief for those people?

MEETING ADJOURNED at 1:11 PM

Next Meeting January 4th at 11:45 at City Hall in Whibbs Room