

HOUSING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
6/25/21

TASK FORCE CO-CHAIR CONNIE BOOKMAN- Welcome everyone to meeting under I-110 overpass, calls meeting to order at 3:00 PM. Explains intent of meeting as an immersion experience with our service providers who provide boots-on-ground services.

COMMITTEE CO-CHAIR: Meredith Reeves, City of Pensacola

TASK FORCE CO-CHAIR JOHN JOHNSON, Opening Doors

MELISSA JOHNSON, Fearless Community Inc.- Melissa is here providing outreach 7 days a week bringing these people their daily needs such as food and water, tents, and life classes, where they sit in the middle of the encampment and discuss the hurdles they face in life, and how to get over them.

Recently, she encountered a veteran, who only wanted to go home and didn't have access to banking or transportation, with no real way to get back home. He was very ill and couldn't really move, so they were able to get him a ticket and a way back. She also had a story regarding a mother who needed housing, and couldn't afford rent or childcare, and they helped her get the resources she needed to be housed.

CONNIE: This is the exact reason we have this task force, to help solve these issues.

SERENE KEIEK., Opening Doors- There were 100 people seen at this encampment last month, 42 this week...they revolve in and out, about 10-15 new people on a daily basis. Currently there are 11 females and 30 males , 6 vets who are all males. Serene can provide the data on this. Opening Doors has 10 current SOAR cases and 12 service provider organizations working for these individuals.

MICHAEL KIMBERL, Satoshi Forest/Washburn Center- Mike has been working with the homeless for about a decade. He has 9 acres off of Mass. Ave. where people currently live, and he helped the city grant the stay for this encampment. When people are in "survival mode" they are not thinking about jobs, etc, but instead focusing on food, water, shelter and sleep. We must do our best to wrap services around these people who are dropped off at these shelters and encampments. This is the first in a series of baby steps that will get people into housing.

QUESTION: Are there children in the encampment?

MELISSA: Children are usually remove in one day, and stay in contact with parents and do visits/regular communication

MARTIKA, Opening Doors: We can help with services for those who qualify as homeless, who are fleeing domestic violence, and who meet certain standards. We also work with social workers at Opening Doors.

QUESTION: What can faith-based orgs do?

MELISSA: They should do more meal supplies, transportation to other shower facilities, AA and Doctor transports, can “adopt a family” or even donate housing for a year.

Melissa can talk down rental rates with landlords, and Opening Doors can cover utilities sometimes. “Team Blessings” allows different groups to pay down debts as a group collective.

The service providers under the bridge meet every Wed from 9-11.

ALLISON PATTON, Retired Attorney and Co-Chair of Criminal Justice Subcommittee- Allison visited the encampment on Wednesday during the peak service hours and stated it was a very educational experience. Doing so will help you to understand the struggles and issues from all sides.

Also in attendance:

JANELLE BERGER, United Ministries

LISA BERNAU, EC Housing Finance Authority

BLAIR CASTRO

MAGGIE MCKEAN, Intern

WAYNE EVERS, Property Manager

BOB HUMMEL, The Community Project

MIKELA MAKEPACE & JOEY, Pensacola Positivity

FRAN JONES, EC Housing Finance Authority

JAMIE LAPOINTE, Lutheran Services Outreach Manager

AVALON MALLORY “MAL,” 211 United Way Resource Manager

KATHLEEN BELLARD

ASHLEY WILKSON-MEYER, Cokesbury United Methodist Church, Faith-Based Committee Co-Chair

PATRICIA MILLER, Early Learning Coalition

MELISSA JENNINGS, Early LEarning Coalition