

South Bay Cities Council of Governments

Meeting Minutes for Homeless Services Committee

Wednesday, May 11, 2016

Minutes by

Jennifer Zivkovic LaMarque

I. Welcome & Introductions

Councilmember Joe Buscaino Chair Elected officials in attendance: Los Angeles Councilmember Joe Buscaino; Redondo Beach Councilmember Christian Horvath; Lawndale Councilmember Jim Osborne; Palos Verdes Estates Councilmember Jim Vandever; Hermosa Beach Councilmember Hany Fangary.

Others in attendance: Redondo Beach Police Department, Wayne Windman; Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, John Hocking; Harbor Interfaith Services Shari Weaver & Tahia Hayslet; Los Angeles Police Department, Michael Oreb & Gary Walters; City of Torrance, Domenica Megerdichian & Viet Hoang; PATH, Meredith Berkson & Shannon Legere; City of Palos Verdes Estates, Tony Dahlerbruch; Hawthorne Police Department, Scott Swain; City of Carson, Keith Bennett, Cecil Flourney & Amanda Valorosi; City of Inglewood, Cinder Eller-Kimbell & Tracey Duncan; City of Lawndale, Deborah Holland; Torrance Police Department, Matthew Wessels; City of Lomita, Laura MacMorran; Hermosa Beach Police Department, Tom Thompson; City of Rolling Hills Estates, Greg Grammer; City of Hermosa Beach, Shawn Park; City of El Segundo, Raymond Garcia; Pamela Manning, County of Los Angeles; City of Los Angeles Council District 15, Nicole Wells & Jacob Haik; SBCCOG Jacki Bacharach & Jennifer Zivkovic LaMarque.

Chair Buscaino gave opening remarks, stating that he believes that the homelessness issue is the most pressing issue cities are currently facing. He said that the recent increase in homelessness makes it even more important for the South Bay Cities to work together to address the issue; to work with the service providers, find out what law enforcement is doing in the cities and to collectively review best practices.

- II. Overview of PATH services – Meredith Berkson, PATH**
 - a. Activities since February
 - b. Hotline
 - c. Coordination with other agencies
 - d. Coordination with cities

Meredith Berkson of PATH gave a PowerPoint presentation and answered questions from attendees. The presentation covered the 2016 Homeless Count results, implementation plan progress, street outreach, coordination with the Coordinated Entry System and next steps. The presentation is available at www.southbaycities.org.

Key items she discussed:

- Ms. Berkson and the PATH staff are working on building relationships with the South Bay cities. She stated that she has met with staff from the majority of cities and that the hotline postcards have been distributed to the cities. She stated that she has done ride-alongs with several police departments and that she is scheduling a meeting with the LAHSA staff who work out of the Council District 15 office.

- There has been a 22 percent increase in homelessness in the South Bay from the 2015 count. There are 3,663 people experiencing homelessness with 695 sheltered, 2,968 unsheltered and 374 veterans.

- PATH is working to engage the faith community and help them to be able to provide referrals, in addition to providing meals. She stated that they are working with 1736 Family Crisis Center on outreach to veterans and that they have engaged 2 veterans so far. She stated that PATH staff participated in the outreach efforts with Harbor Interfaith in front of the San Pedro Post Office and will continue to engage with them for collective outreach.

- 183 contacts have been made so far; including 116 unduplicated and 67 duplicated contacts and 2 have been referred to substance abuse treatment; 3 people have been linked with temporary shelter; and 1 person has been permanently housed.

- The goal is to canvass each city on a monthly basis, but the patterns of calls to the hotline may show that they need to change the focus.

- Councilmember Osborne stated that he would like to see more people housed. Ms. Berkson explained that connecting clients to permanent housing is not immediate and noted that the program is just getting underway. She explained that they must do the Coordinated Entry assessments first, which takes some time. She stated that 32 assessments have been completed and that 17 housing applications have been completed so far.

- A question was asked about how available housing units are found. Ms. Berkson stated that it is mostly scattered site housing made available through rental subsidies. She stated that there are some project-based sites such as the Vermont Villas in Gardena.

- A question was asked about whether volunteer opportunities are available as part of the South Bay program and Ms. Berkson stated that there are plenty of volunteer opportunities available.

- PATH is also seeking to develop partnerships with landlords and this is something the cities can help with. Councilman Buscaino stated he would like the South Bay Association of Realtors to be invited to the next meeting.

III. City Actions

a. Los Angeles City - LAPD Harbor Division Captain Oreb

b. Report from Redondo Beach on their services - RB Lieutenant Wayne Windman

Captain Oreb gave information regarding his background, stating that he grew up in the area and most recently served 4 ½ years as the commanding officer of the Central Division which includes downtown Los Angeles and Skid Row. He stated that when he first started with the Division, there were roughly 600 people living on Skid Row and that there were 2,000 to 2,500 by the time he left. He discussed several factors contributing to the increase: AB 109 prison realignment, Proposition 47 and several lawsuits. He stated he has been at Harbor Division for 2 months and that the issues are more manageable than in his previous Division.

He is seeing mental health and substance abuse issues amongst the homeless population. They are pursuing ways to address the issue constitutionally. He initially focused officers on quality of life issues and had 2 part-time officers but realized more focus is needed in this area. The officers will be working full-time starting next week. They participated in the outreach efforts with Harbor Interfaith, PATH and LAHSA and they are doing outreach in the watershed areas. He discussed the department's approach to enforcement, stating that those using drugs and breaking the law will be Commented [JB1]: Who is they? The city? The police? arrested and that they focus on getting the people who are arrested into services. If they receive services, their record will be expunged. Captain Oreb raised concerns about the mental health system and Chair Buscaino asked that the Committee consider a Resolution to support Congresswoman Waters' bill aimed at reforming the mental health care system.

Lieutenant Windman stated that he is in his 37th year in the South Bay. The homelessness issue is the biggest problem he's seen over his years of service. There has been a 400 percent increase in calls for service over the past 3 years relative to the homeless issue and the City of Redondo Beach spends \$300,000 a year on these calls alone. He tried to have a part-time program to address it but now they have a full-time dedicated officer during the day and 2 at night, as well as ancillary officers on patrol. Half of the food banks in the South Bay are in Redondo Beach which among other factors, makes Redondo Beach an attractive place for people experiencing homelessness to locate.

He described the Department's approach which focuses on connecting people to services, community education and outreach and enforcement. He stated that they work with PATH one day a week, that they are working with Shari Weaver from Harbor Interfaith Services and that they have a Department of Mental Health worker starting in 2 weeks. He stated that they are trying to educate people to not give handouts, but rather to collect funds to donate to the non-profits to help. This approach is being modeled after a successful program in the City of Beverly Hills.

IV. Coordinated Entry

a. SPA 8 - Shari Weaver, Harbor Interfaith

b. PATH Coordination with Coordinated Entry for SBCCOG Program, Meredith Berkson, PATH

Shari Weaver has been with Harbor Interfaith Services for 15 years and previously served as a Sheriff's Deputy. She is the regional planning coordinator for Coordinated Entry for Service Planning Area (SPA) 8. She provided background information on Coordinated Entry, stating that it began in July 2014 via the United Way Home for Good Program. Before Coordinated Entry, individual agencies were providing services but now 38 agencies are partnering. They coordinate with Mental Health of America which oversees the Rapid Re-housing program, Los Angeles County Department of Health Services to identify housing for frequent users of health care services and the US Vets in Inglewood. She also mentioned a partnership with the Century Villages at Cabrillo which houses veterans and gave a debrief on the 4-day outreach in front of the San Pedro Post Office, noting that it was a good team building effort among service providers. She would like to replicate this effort throughout SPA 8. Chair Buscaino asked how the Committee can help and Ms. Weaver stated that they can help by identifying hotspots and encampments. As part of this discussion, Harbor Interfaith Executive Director Tahia Hayslet provided further background information on Coordinated Entry and the process by which a service provider applies to be the regional coordinator. She expressed a need for service providers to work together.

V. Potential additional funding for South Bay – Meredith Berkson

- a. United Way funding opportunity**
- b. Upcoming RFPs**
- c. County Initiative**

Ms. Berkson stated that the United Way released an RFP that includes a 40 percent match for cities. PATH has approached some South Bay Cities and received commitments from Carson and Redondo Beach to try to secure an additional \$30,000. She mentioned a LAHSA RFP that deals with Rapid Re-Housing and stated that she would update the Committee at the next meeting.

Jacki Bacharach mentioned that the County wants to see funds being leveraged when they are looking to renew this program and that she would like the Committee to discuss funding issues at the next meeting.

VI. Other Business

A question was raised as to whether cities should contact PATH or Harbor Interfaith for services. Jacki Bacharach stated that they should contact PATH for purposes of the new South Bay program and in order to avoid creating confusion.

Chair Buscaino reiterated his interest in having the Committee support the federal Mental Health Reform Act and Jacki Bacharach stated that she would need to bring it to the Steering Committee as the first step. She asked Chair Buscaino to send her some information to present.

VII. Follow-up Actions

- a. Next meeting date**-Wednesday, July 13th, 3:00 p.m. Councilmember Jim Osborne offered to chair the next meeting in Councilmember Buscaino's absence.

VIII. Adjournment