

South Bay Cities Council of Governments

Meeting re: Homeless Services

Wednesday, September 14, 2016

3:00 pm – 5:00 pm

(3:00 – 4:30 pm for elected officials and staff; 4:30 pm – 5:00 pm for staff only)

Minutes by Jennifer Zivkovic LaMarque

Minutes

I. Welcome & Introductions

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

Others in attendance: Redondo Beach Police Department, Wayne Windman, Jeff Mendevce & Tom Krafick; Harbor Interfaith Services, Shari Weaver; City of Torrance, Domenica Megerdichian; Torrance Police Department, Matthew Wessels, Stephen Kim & Charles Fisher; PATH, Meredith Berkson & Lao Moua; City of Inglewood, Cinder Eller-Kimbell & Tracey Duncan; City of Lawndale, Deborah Holland; City of Carson, Keith Bennett & Cecil Flourney; City of Lomita, Laura MacMorran; City of Hermosa Beach, Nico De Anda; City of Rolling Hills Estates, Greg Grammer; LAHSA, Victor Hinderliter & Gary Mitchell; City of LA CD 15, Jacob Haik & Nicole Deering; Vets Advocacy, Anthony Allman; SBCCOG Jacki Bacharach, Jennifer Zivkovic LaMarque & Cierra Washington.

Chair Buscaino gave opening remarks and recognized the efforts of service providers and law enforcement and stated that both are vital to addressing the issue of homelessness. He thanked them for their service to the community.

II. Approval of minutes from July 13 meeting

Motion to approve by Councilmember Horvath; minutes approved.

III. Overview of PATH services – Meredith Berkson, PATH

Meredith Berkson of PATH gave a Powerpoint presentation and answered questions from attendees. The presentation covered an overview of activities since February and what is happening in the field, statistics, agency coordination, barriers/obstacles and additional funding opportunities. The presentation is available at www.southbaycities.org.

Key points covered:

- Meredith discussed the rental market and how it is very tight. She stated that most of the housing placements that have been made through this program

have been through shared housing. She reported that two people have received Section 8 vouchers and two have received VASH vouchers (for veterans.) Councilmember Horvath asked about interim housing and Meredith explained that emergency shelters and cold weather shelters are good for getting people off the streets for a short period but not for case management.

- Meredith stated that the PATH team has engaged 224 new individuals and provided 52 housing referrals and 16 people have been placed in permanent housing. She told the success stories of Matilda and Alan who are now both in permanent homes. Chair Buscaino stated that he would like the Committee to find ways to better communicate these success stories, perhaps by creating a narrative for each success story.
- Meredith stated that the main barrier has been finding landlords who will rent units. She mentioned that they are finding trends with the Coordinated Entry System (CES) packets. She stated that 38 percent were age 55 and older, 6 percent have chronic health issues, 22 percent have substance abuse conditions, 57 percent are chronically homeless and 36 percent have a mental health issue. (She said that this figure may be higher due to self-reporting.) She stated that 112 CES have been completed and that 32 percent have been determined to be high acuity, 48 percent medium acuity and 16 percent low acuity.
- She stated that the hotline receives an average of 6 calls a day and the average response time is 32.6 business hours. She said a lot of requests come directly from the elected officials and that they receive 3 to 5 requests a week from elected officials and staff. She said that law enforcement has been doing a good job of distributing the hotline card. She expressed a desire to meet with the cities. She said they are seeking to develop a "one stop shop" in Carson where a variety of services would be co-located, along with showers. She said the PATH staff has started doing "in reach" at 2 churches in Redondo Beach. Redondo Beach and Carson provided matching funds for a United Way grant and PATH will be hiring an extra person to work in those cities.
- 50 slots of Rapid Rehousing will be available for people living with HIV/AIDS as of October 1. Chair Buscaino asked where Rapid Rehousing locations are located and Meredith said they can be anywhere in LA County. She said a large majority of them are in South Los Angeles. Chair Buscaino also asked about where the people experiencing homelessness are coming from. Meredith responded that the CES questionnaire doesn't ask where they became homeless, only where they are sleeping that night or the night before. Chair Buscaino mentioned that he is frequently seeing new people in his District. Shari Weaver from Harbor Interfaith Services stated that there is a lot of movement with the transient population and that people from San Pedro are seen in the South Bay and vice versa and that people come down from the Palmdale area. Meredith and Shari expressed that they will work together to develop a question about where people became homeless. Councilmember Horvath stated that it has taken 6 months for trust to be

developed between people experiencing homelessness and PATH staff. Meredith said that PATH staff wants to help build capacity and work more closely with churches and the business community.

IV. Open Discussion on how the program is working in cities

Jacki Bacharach opened the discussion by saying that it is important to know how the program is working in the cities; strengths, weaknesses, where further help is needed, etc. She said the SBCCOG will need to approach the County Supervisors for renewal so an understanding of the current situation is needed. She said that the cities will be asked for letters of support. Deborah Holland from Lawndale said that it would be helpful to have more people working on this program, that there is not enough manpower relative to the scope of the problem. Meredith said that they are hiring a Rapid Rehousing case manager. Councilmember Osborne expressed concerns about the County passing the financial responsibility of providing homeless services to the cities.

There was a discussion about the use of storage facilities for people experiencing homelessness to store personal items to get the items off the streets. Chair Buscaino stated that the City of LA has been sued over this issue. He referenced an existing storage facility in Skid Row and said they are looking at other possible locations in the city and encouraged other cities to do the same to reduce lawsuits.

V. Educational workshop for landlords in the South Bay – Meredith Berkson, Jacki Bacharach

Meredith Berkson and Jacki Bacharach discussed a landlord engagement event which is being planned with Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas' office. When the date is set, the Committee will be notified. Meredith stated that an event of this type was held in the Gateway Cities area and that 70 landlords attended and 4 people were housed. Councilmember Horvath asked how the landlords are identified and Meredith responded that they partner with the Housing Authorities.

VI. Informational Presentation on West LA VA campus revitalization-Anthony Allman, Vets Advocacy

Vets Advocacy is a privately funded, non-profit advocacy organization facilitating the revitalization of the West Los Angeles Veterans campus as a condition of the Valentini v Shinseki settlement. Mr. Allman stated that he is an Army veteran and has been working on veterans' advocacy for 13 years. He discussed how the West LA VA property was donated to the federal government, 1,000 acres in the initial land grant. He discussed the Draft Master Plan for building 1,200 to 4,000 units of housing. He explained the planning process and the feedback received from veterans about what other services they would like to see. They expressed interest in having a town center in which to congregate, rather than just going there for health care services. Housing will also be provided for women with dependents. (Historically there were no beds for women.) He said he is getting letters of support from cities for the Master Plan and the associated legislation to implement it. Legislation was needed because the VA lacks the authority to do the execution strategy. It has passed the House now it needs to pass in

the Senate. Jacki Bacharach stated that she would pursue having the SBCCOG Board support it.

VII. Other Business

Shari Weaver of Harbor Interfaith Services (CES Coordinator for SPA 8) reported the following results from the 2-day outreach event in August in Redondo Beach:

- 38 outreach workers participated over the course of 2 days
- 48 contacts with homeless individuals
- 2 individuals placed in emergency shelter
- 1 Veteran placed in interim housing at WLA VA
- 1 re-connected with Dept. of Health Services housing provider
- 1 Mental Health Hold (5150)
- 8 connected with Mental Health services
- 2 provided bus tokens
- 2 connected with drug/alcohol recovery services
- 8 provided with DMV Fee Waiver to obtain CAID

She also stated that another outreach event will be held in Torrance on September 21 from 8:00 am until noon at the First Christian Church. They will be doing events city by city.

VIII. Next Steps and Follow-up Actions

Assemblymember Hadley will hold a homelessness forum at the Nakano Theater October 13 at 10:00 am. Next meeting of this Committee is tentatively scheduled for held Wednesday, November 9. Meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm.