

COMMUNITY HOMELESSNESS ADVISORY BOARD DRAFT MINUTES

Monday, July 12, 2021
9:00 a.m.

Reno City Council Chamber
One East First Street
Reno, NV 89501

Neoma Jardon, Chair, Councilmember, Ward 5, City of Reno
Oscar Delgado, Councilmember, Ward 3, City of Reno
Ed Lawson, Vice-Chair, Mayor, City of Sparks
Kristopher Dahir, Councilmember, Ward 5, City of Sparks
Alexis Hill, County Commissioner, District 1, Washoe County
Bob Lucey, County Commissioner, District 2, Washoe County

1. **Pledge of Allegiance**

The Community Homeless Advisory Board was called to order at 9:07 AM by Member Jardon, and the Board conducted the following business:

2. **Roll Call**

Present:

Neoma Jardon
Devon Reese, Alternate for Oscar Delgado
Ed Lawson
Kristopher Dahir

Absent:

Alexis Hill
Bob Lucey

3. Public Comment (This item is for either public comment on any action item or for any general public comment.)

Jessica Castro commented on shelter conditions and homeless services.

Ilya Arbatman commented with concern over big picture approaches that don't meet individual needs.

Eileen Bidwell commented on best practices for a safe parking program and advocated for its implementation.

4. Approval of Agenda - For Possible Action

a. July 12, 2021

On motion by Member Lawson, seconded by Member Reese, which motion duly carried on a 4-0 vote, it was ordered that Agenda Item 4 be approved.

5. Approval of Minutes - For Possible Action

a. June 7, 2021

On motion by Member Reese, seconded by Member Dahir, which motion duly carried on a 4-0 vote, it was ordered that Agenda Item 5 be approved.

6. Election of Chair and Vice Chair for the Community Homelessness Advisory Board for July 2021 - July 2022 - Community Homelessness Advisory Board - For Possible Action

It was motioned by Member Dahir, seconded by Member Reese, to appoint Member Lawson as Chair.

Member Lawson declined the nomination due to concerns over control moving to the county.

Member Jardon asked if it was possible to implement an interim chair.

Community Homelessness Advisory Board took a recess at 9:22 AM

Community Homelessness Advisory Board reconvened at 9:28 AM

Member Jardon suggested that this item be brought back at a future meeting, due to the interest in the County taking over.

Previous motion was withdrawn by Member Dahir, second withdrawn by Member Reese.

On motion by Member Jardon, seconded by Member Reese, which motion duly carried on a 4-0 vote, it was ordered that Agenda Item 6 be moved to a future meeting.

7. Board presentation and discussion on the Built for Zero initiative, including a year progress overview and a homelessness solutions matrix update - Dana Searcy, Washoe County - Non-Action Item

Dana Searcy, Special Projects Manager, City of Sparks, gave a presentation for the Build for Zero Program, providing a summary of the benefits and an overview of data.

Member Dahir asked to know if this reporting could provide data on caseworkers, and requested to know if currently there is a strategy to cover outstanding issues.

Ms. Searcy said numbers are reviewed quarterly, and that in January there were 700 available beds, but capacity is a constant issue. Ms. Searcy said the next step is to find out why beds are going unused and sort through those issues.

Member Jardon expressed concern over barriers restricting people from accessing unused beds, and wondered why other entities have not switched to using the HMIS data reporting system.

Ms. Searcy replied that a barrier is the expense of the program, especially for small nonprofits when starting, then explained that It is difficult to train staff on it when most workers are used to paper lists and not complex technology, along with concern over data security.

Member Jardon reiterated the importance of data to work off of for being able to follow up on specific issues.

Member Reese requested to know about the existing beds units, and wanted to bring awareness to the transgender population and ask that their issues be build into the programs. Member Reese then expressed concern over the difficulty created by not clearly signifying the resources available, such as listing vacancies instead of how many beds there are.

Ms. Searcy provided more data on the vacancy of beds and temporary vs. permanent units.

Member Reese expressed a need for clarity and accessibility as the data shows there are available beds, but people come to the meeting reporting on individuals who are unable to find support.

Ms. Searcy explained a desire for centralized information and accommodations for special circumstances for individual needs, along with providers in a potential panel setting.

Member Reese voiced concern over vacancies caused by extensive interview and evaluation processes that prevent immediate care.

Member Jardon echoed concern over the barriers for entry to services, and expressed praise for the Cares Center for not turning anyone away, and the work that is being done to match people to open services appropriately.

Member Lawson expressed understanding for the current frustration but reflected on the previous siloing that existed prior, and pride over the progress that has been made.

Ms. Searcy said programs are excited to participate, but a limitation of organizing a new process is that there are restrictions for case management. Ms Searcy explained that there is a desire to better integrate so HMIS can be a program used on its own.

Member Lawson asked what could be done to incentivize agencies to use HMIS.

Ms. Searcy expressed willingness to work on incentives for HMIS reporting.

Member Lawson said gathering information should be a priority, and directing people to where they are likely to qualify so they do not have to fill out lots of rejected applications.

Member Jardon agreed persuasion was important in order to get everyone on the same page.

Member Dahir expressed a desire for a list of friendly resources and secondary partnerships that are not part of homelessness services

No public comment or action was taken on this item.

8. Board update and discussion on the Nevada Cares Campus shelter including, but not limited to, shelter usage and additional facility improvement costs - Doug Thornley, City of Reno - For Possible Action

Doug Thornley, City Manager, City of Reno, provided an update regarding the Nevada Cares Campus

Member Reese wanted to know about how to share with the community a detailed breakdown of the budget and services in order to justify the expense, and possibly provide access to it online.

Mr. Thornley said the budget should have been published in previous agendas but it would be possible to create social media slides for updates.

Member Reese raised concerns about the extreme heat issues and why there is no regional cooling center or directories to identify locations where people can get out the heat.

Mr. Thornley said getting these kinds of regional services would be aided by the implementation of the unified HMIS program.

Member Reese expressed concern over the spraying that will temporarily relocate people during extreme heat and asked if there is a plan for those displaced.

Mr. Thornley said this was a singular event and not a regularly occurring issue.

Member Jardon expressed that the body needs to do a better job communicating the information for heating centers and cooling centers.

Member Dahir expressed that government spending is not always the answer, suggesting a look into churches and other organizations that are looking to provide help.

Member Jardon addressed concerns that that laundry services remain impaired at the Cares Campus shelter

Mr. Thornley responded that the laundry issue should be resolved in short order.

Member Reese asked for the immediate plan in regards to heat, noting that it was brought to attention last summer. Member Reese also suggested bug spraying issue should be done in conjunction with fixing onsite laundry, to eliminate the need to do it again in the event of bed bugs

No public comment or action was taken on this item.

9. Board update and discussion on the Nevada Cares Campus safe camp including, but not limited to, camp usage and operations - Dana Searcy, Washoe County - Non-Action Item

Ms. Searcy provided an update for the Nevada Cares Campus safe camp.

Member Jardon remarked that staffing is particularly difficult for this kind of work and that efforts to provide incentives for employment are being worked on.

Member Reese questioned if this was a pilot program, and if there would be expanding locations such as safe camp sites for veterans or other specific groups.

Ms. Searcy replied that it was a trial that has brought understanding needed for expansion. Ms. Searcy explained that many will not go into a shelter with 500 other people, opting for more privacy which can be provided with this model, but there is difficulty finding suitable locations that meet the requirements.

Member Dahir wondered if any work was being done in regards to animals with local shelters.

Ms. Searcy said the regional animal services have been out to the SAFE camp and are trying to respond to needs at the shelter. Ms. Searcy added that there are possibly some kennels that can keep dogs cool while those using the services are at work.

Community Homelessness Advisory Board took a recess at 10:36 AM

Community Homelessness Advisory Board reconvened at 10:40 AM

No public comment or action was taken on this item.

10. Board update, discussion, and possible recommendation to staff related to the Interlocal Agreement for Shelter Operations and other Homeless Services related to the transition of responsibilities from the City of Reno to Washoe County - Regional Agencies Staff - For Possible Action

Mr. Thornley provided an update on matters relating to the Interlocal Agreement for Shelter Operations and Other Homeless Services.

Member Reese said while the intention is to transition to a regional approach for issues, in terms of the City of Reno, the goal is not to walk away.

Mr. Thornley explained that the point of the ILA is to adequately define the providing of services from Reno to Washoe county, and that directing CDBG funds into affordable housing rather than sheltering operations will help to address the larger issue through a different approach.

Member Jardon said that the county has the expertise to be able to handle issues, with the exception of hiring which is a problem for everyone. Member Jardon also expressed concern that the largest shelter not restrict sheltering for emergency access.

Member Dahir voiced excitement for the concept of strategy for long term support rather than only on what has historically been done, without abandoning the other services and goals.

11. Board members announcements and updates, including future agenda items requests. No discussion will take place on this item.

Member Jardon requested an update on the tiny home facility and the intake process, as well as updates on the laundry issue, SAFE, a regional plan for cooling and heating, staffing, VOA, SAFE parking, maps of all homeless facility structures, transportation, transfer of leadership, as well as chair and vice chair, responsible giving, Phase 2 and Phase 3 funding, and community involvement.

Member Reese expressed interest in understanding restraints for ARPA funds.

Member Jardon requested the next meeting start an hour earlier and go for an hour longer, 9 AM to 12 PM.

12. Public Comment (This item is for either public comment on any action item or for any general public comment.)

No public comment was received for this item.

13. Adjournment - For Possible Action

There being no further business to discuss, on motion by Member Reese, seconded by Member Dahir, which motion duly carried on a 4-0 vote, the meeting was adjourned at 10:57 AM.