

**HOMELESS POLICY GROUP MEETING MINUTES  
PINELLAS COUNTY**

July 15, 2005

**Awaiting approval**

Present:	Ronnie Duncan	Commissioner, Pinellas County
	Virginia Littrell	City Councilmember, City of St. Petersburg
	James Bennett	City Councilmember, City of St. Petersburg
	Carlen Petersen	City Councilmember, City of Clearwater
	John Doran	City Councilmember, City of Clearwater
	Patricia Gerard	Vice Mayor, City of Largo
	Andrew Guyette	City Commissioner, City of Largo
	Rick Butler	City Councilmember, City of Pinellas Park
	Ron Dickman	Executive Director, Religious Community Services
	Bonnie Collins	Consumer
	Dr. Teresa Bradley	Vice President, Medical Affairs, St. Anthony's Hospital
	Bob Dillinger	Juvenile Welfare Board, Public Defender's Office
	Kathy Haynes	Director, Sec. 8, Pinellas County/Dunedin Housing Auth.
	Elizabeth Gunderson	Vice-President, Community Impact, United Way/Tampa Bay
	Joanne Olvera Lighter	President/CEO, Allegany Franciscan Foundation
	Janet Clark	Pinellas County School Board – District One
	Virginia Rowell	At-Large Member
Absent:	Kenneth T. Welch	Commissioner, Pinellas County
	Beverley Billiris	Mayor, City of Tarpon Springs
	Don Shea	President/CEO St. Petersburg Downtown Partnership, Inc.
	Beth Coleman	President, Clearwater Chamber of Commerce
	Rev. Louis Murphy	Mt. Zion Progressive Baptist Church
	Gary MacMath	President, Boley Centers for Behavioral Health Care, Inc.
	Sandra Lyth	PCCH, YWCA of Tampa Bay
	Sid Klein	Police Chief, City of Clearwater
	Patricia Mabe	President/CEO Community Health Centers of Pinellas, Inc.
	Catherine Alexander-Ponder	Homeless Program Coordinator/Bay Pines/Vet. Admin.
	Karl Nurse	President, SP Council of Neighborhood Associations
	Duke Tieman	President, South Clearwater Citizens for Progressive Action
Also Present:	Herb Marlowe	Consultant, Facilitator
	Cliff Smith	Staff, Assistant Director, Pinellas County Human Services
	S. Jean Vleming	Staff, Programs Analyst, Pinellas County Human Services
	Beth Eschenfelder	Staff, Manager, Social Svc. Program, City of St. Petersburg
	Howie Carroll	Staff, Assistant Housing Director, City of Clearwater
	Carl Brody	Staff, Pinellas County City Attorney's Office
	Patricia O. Sullivan	Staff, Board Reporter, City of Clearwater
	Kathy Mitchell	Grants Coordinator, Pinellas County Human Services
	Ed Peachey	WorkNet Pinellas
	Jeff Parker	Citizen
	David Vaughn	PCCH
	Mary Brennan	Gulf Coast Jewish Family Services
	Regina Alexander	VARO
	Doug Leonardo	Westcare Florida
	Dwayne Cox	Westcare Florida
	Sonja Davis	Seniors Offering Services
	Rev. Lionel Cabral	Suncoast Haven of Rest Rescue Mission
	Tom Mitchell	Suncoast Haven of Rest Rescue Mission
	Laron Barber	Le'Azon Technology Institute
	Michael Amidei	FLASH

Facilitator Herb Marlowe called the meeting to order at 1:37 p.m., at Operation PAR, 13800 66th Street North, Largo, Florida.

**To provide continuity for research, items are in agenda order although not necessarily discussed in that order.**

## 2 – Adoption of Agenda Items

Member Bennett moved to adopt the submitted agenda items. The **motion** was duly seconded and approved without objection.

## 3 – Approval of Meeting Notes – June 3, 2005

Member Bennett moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of June 3, 2005, as corrected: page three, paragraph three, sentence nine, to read Ms. Rowell, rather than Ms. Littrell. The **motion** was duly seconded and approved without objection.

## 4 – Policy Group Membership Changes

### **Approve replacement of Jean Halvorsen with Andy Guyette**

Member Gerard moved to accept Largo City Commissioner Andy Guyette as a member of the Homeless Policy Group, to replace Largo City Commissioner Jean Halvorsen. The **motion** was duly seconded and **carried** unanimously.

### **Other Changes**

Facilitator Marlowe said as several policy group members never have attended a meeting, he recommended that staff research unrepresented organizations that work with the homeless for consideration for membership by the Homeless Policy Group.

## 5 – Report and Feedback from Miami Trip

Discussion ensued regarding the June 28, 2005, chartered trip to visit South Florida homeless programs.

Favorable comments were made regarding the Miami facilities. Services offered at the shelter include day care, health care, dietary counseling, and computer learning. The medical facilities were impressive. Psychologists and psychiatrists treat onsite, as a large number of clients have substance abuse and mental health issues. The program includes a medical outreach component. Private rooms allow confidential discussions with clients during case management review. Homeless people interviewed in Miami spoke positively about the facility.

The facility is a fine example of a private/public partnership with all providers willing to work under one umbrella. The facility features a continuum of care and a prevention component. A major corporation successfully encouraged the Miami business community to participate in funding the shelter.

Problems experienced by the Miami facilities included the inability to shelter the chronically homeless. The facility used a major grant to hire two social workers to provide two years of follow-up and found that the shelter only serves a small portion of the homeless population. Shortcomings included a lack of long-term tracking of clients to see how they manage in the system and to detail the revolving door syndrome. Housing of 80 men in one

room seemed unreasonable. The facility does not address youth homelessness. The program does not address affordable housing, an essential component. After the successful completion of life skills and job training, residents become discouraged due to the lack of affordable housing.

It was reported that 75% of the Miami-Dade County population speaks Spanish. The County, with 160 minority groups, stopped counting its homeless for a while. With a significant number of middle class families leaving the county during the past decade, the per capita income has decreased and major corporations have left. Miami is working to create a financial base and deal with a wave of immigration. The City has many private/public partnerships. More than 4,000 non-profits are registered in the county. Farm workers rarely use homeless services.

The Broward County facility, a result of private citizen efforts, not Court action, was complimented.

It was stated that Pinellas County is “behind the curve” regarding its attention to local homeless issues but could improve on the south Florida programs. Pinellas County hospitals have operating agreements but local non-profits lack a network to facilitate communication. Affordable housing is needed.

## 6 – Subcommittee Reports

### **Overcoming Street Homelessness**

Policy Group Member Dr. Teresa Bradley reviewed the draft on Overcoming Street Homelessness, which includes data, solutions, goals, objectives, strategies, and identifies responsible entities and completion timelines. Estimated costs and potential funding sources have not been determined.

Dr. Bradley said outreach efforts seem to be successful in Broward County, where teams of three outreach to homeless people, whose locations have been reported. The homeless population often is exploited and needs to trust those who provide outreach and safe shelter. Outreach efforts in Pinellas County are not coordinated. The report considers outreach opportunities and homeless subpopulations, such as veterans, youth, the criminally involved, and domestic violence victims.

Dr. Bradley said outreach teams must be sensitive to cultural and other issues and should not depend only on the police to identify the location of homeless individuals. She suggested a Parks & Recreation network also could provide related information. She supported shelters that provide one-stop services and community treatment teams. The report supports educating the public to appreciate the problem and also educating and engaging law enforcement and frontline providers. Outreach programs must be of high quality to be effective. She recommended the policy group visit other outreach centers. She said shelters must be safe havens and are preferable to the street, no matter how small the provided space is. She suggested a center be established for the chronically homeless, who require more efforts.

Dr. Bradley reviewed policies to feed the homeless in south Florida. Miami opposes street meal programs, as that is not the right place to eat and supports one stop centers for eating. Broward County is less rigid. While some feel that meal programs encourage homelessness, others think that homelessness always will exist.

Discussion ensued regarding impacts of homelessness, the vulnerability of youth to exploitation, and the need to outreach specifically to youth. In response to a recommendation, Facilitator Marlowe reported that a local governing structure will be proposed for discussion in August. It was stated that Pinellas County lacks adequate space to address the various levels of care needed. It was recommended that increases to capacity be coordinated and the faith-based community be tapped for help. Mental health policies developed by the New York City program were referenced, with a recommendation that policy group members visit that facility too. It also was recommended that relationships be clarified between this policy group, the Homeless Coalition, and the Agency Executive Director's Group.

## **Funding**

Policy Group Member Rick Butler reported his group had reviewed possible opportunities to fund efforts to reduce homelessness including a gas tax, documentary stamp tax, food and beverage tax, parking meters, a tobacco tax, sales tax, linkage fees for commercial development, new coastal construction fees, in lieu of fees, resort tax, taxes on water use above base level amounts, taxes on adult entertainment, building permit fees, linkage fees for commercial development, and franchise fees. Affordable housing could be funded with impact fees or general obligation bonds. He recommended community feedback on a 10-year plan, and encouraged financial support from business leaders. His group opposed increasing utility fees.

In response to a question, Facilitator Marlowe said taxes that support the Miami program are divided 85% on homeless issues, 15% on domestic abuse, with none invested in affordable housing. The permitted use of fees and taxes must be clarified. Discussion ensued regarding legislative requirements to establish different fees and taxes and permitted uses of those funds. A benefit to the person paying the fee must be established. It was stated that special interests will lobby against some taxing efforts. The state has no mechanism to collect a luxury item tax. Pinellas County has the opportunity to designate, before referendum, future Penny for Pinellas taxes for health care, in addition to infrastructure/public facility construction. Staff will report on the ratio permitted when splitting the penny. It was suggested a percentage of the penny also could be used for health and human services, including mental health. Current Penny for Pinellas tax restrictions would permit construction of a homeless shelter, but not its operations.

It was reported that local doc stamp revenues have increased substantially since 1992, and the legislature this year had appropriated half of the fund to use for general revenues. Concern was expressed that inclusionary zoning would deplete the ability of municipalities to create affordable housing, as funds could be used anywhere in the County. Support was expressed for allowing municipalities to reinvest generated funds in their own community. Facilitator Marlowe said future negotiations will result in a fair benefit for all. It was recommended that developments be required to include affordable housing, rather than pay an in lieu of fee.

Facilitator Marlowe polled attendees regarding their support or opposition to proposed funding sources, including increases to property taxes and to the TIF (Tax Increment Financing) in CRAs (Community Redevelopment Agencies). Staff will report on how new growth management legislation would affect impact fees. Staff will research other taxes, such as a "dine-in" tax. Establishment of a special taxing district also was recommended.

## **8 – Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 3:43 p.m.