

HOMELESS POLICY GROUP MEETING

Pinellas County

November 5, 2004

Present:	Virginia Littrell James Bennett Carlen Petersen Patricia Gerard Beverley Billiris Don Shea Ron Dickman Rev. Louis Murphy Gary MacMath Sandra Lyth Thomas Lange Dr. Theresa Bradley Okey Ryan Bob Dillinger Elizabeth Gunderson Joanne Olvera Lighter Catherine Alexander-Ponder	City Council Member, City of St. Petersburg City Council Member, City of St. Petersburg City Council Member, City of Clearwater Vice-Mayor, City of Largo Mayor, City of Tarpon Springs St. Petersburg Downtown Partnership, Inc./CEO International Downtown Association Executive Director, Religious Community Services Mt. Zion Progressive Baptist Church President, Boley Centers for Behavioral Health Care, Inc. Pinellas County Coalition for the Homeless Executive Director, Police Applicant Screening Service Vice-President Medical Affairs, St. Anthony's Hospital Interim President/CEO, Community Health Centers of Pinellas, Inc. Public Defender's Office, Juvenile Welfare Board Vice-President Community Impact, United Way of Tampa Bay President/CEO, Allegany Franciscan Foundation Homeless Program Coordinator – Bay Pines VA
Also present:	Cliff Smith Jean Vleming Virginia Rowell Beth Eschenfelder Howie Carroll Joshua A. Johnson Mike Dove P. A. Tyrer Cynthia Fox Marcia Crawley Brenda Moses	Assistant Director Pinellas County Human Services Programs Analyst Pinellas County Human Services Manager Social Service Programs City of St. Petersburg City of St. Petersburg Assistant Director Economic Development & Housing Department, City of Clearwater City of St. Petersburg Housing & Community Development City of St. Petersburg Neighborhood Services Pinellas County C.D. 2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares Pinellas County Communications Department Board Reporter, City of Clearwater
Absent:	Kenneth T. Welch Susan Latvala Jean Halvorsen Katie Cole Bonnie Collins Jacqueline Rivera	Commissioner, Pinellas County Commission Commissioner, Pinellas County Commission Commissioner, City of Largo Interim President, Clearwater Chamber of Commerce Integrated Health Plan, Inc. Exec. Director, Clearwater Housing Authority

Consultant Herb Marlowe called the meeting to order at 1:15 p.m. at the Area Agency on Aging Office, St. Petersburg.

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

2. Adoption of agenda items

Consensus was to adopt the meeting agenda.

3. Approval of meeting notes from the meeting of October 8, 2004

Consensus was to approve the meeting notes from the October 8, 2004, meeting as submitted in written summation.

Programs Analyst Pinellas County Human Services Jean Vleming circulated an attendance sheet. She said each member was provided a binder regarding information on homelessness in Pinellas County. She said information also is available on various websites listed in the notebook, including the County's website at www.pinellascounty.org.

4. Overview of Homeless Policy Group – Herb Marlowe

a. History and Purpose

Consultant/facilitator Herb Marlowe said the Homeless Policy Group is one of the organizations created to address human services and homelessness in Pinellas County. He reviewed the Group's relationship to other stakeholders. The committee's purpose is to identify homeless issues, develop, and implement a Countywide 10-year strategic plan to impact homelessness, which will be presented to the appropriate entities, endorsed, and funded. Mr. Marlowe said this committee is a planning body with no authority or funding. The committee's role will address homeless issues from a policy perspective. Mr. Marlowe reviewed the history of the homeless issue and support services.

b. Membership

Mr. Marlowe reviewed the composition of the committee. He said the committee will operate by a consensus whenever possible, or a majority vote of those members present when needed.

c. Key Terms

Mr. Marlowe defined the terms: 1) targeted; 2) mainstream; 3) chronic homelessness; and 4) housing first. In response to a question, Mr. Marlowe said the committee will discuss homelessness in general. He said dealing with chronic homelessness also will be part of the plan developed by the committee.

d. Work Plan and Schedule

Mr. Marlowe reviewed the committee's work plan, process, and schedule.

e. Operating Guidelines

Mr. Marlowe said committee members cannot be formally committed to perform any fiscal or legal action. He said the committee will focus on two major strategies: 1) prevention, and 2) intervention.

Discussion ensued. It was remarked that the child welfare system washes its hands of children aged 14 –18 and those children become homeless due to the lack of a support system. A comment was made that all forms of abuse are a huge factor in homelessness.

Mr. Marlowe said the committee will design a system customized to Pinellas County with a number of components such as prevention, intervention, services, infrastructure, transportation, and governance.

5. 2004 PCCH Report on Homelessness in Pinellas County – Cliff Smith

Pinellas County Human Services Assistant Director Cliff Smith said accurate data regarding homelessness is vital to addressing the problem. He advised that Pinellas County Coalition for Homeless performs an annual survey of the homeless population in January. Because it is important to have valid statistics, agencies providing services to the homeless were asked to provide statistics. In addition, Mr. Smith told of a new component that was added to the recording process this year to obtain valid statistics to the homeless population. He said the Coalition contacted the school system, and the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office took Coalition staff to streets where homeless are found, such as downtown areas, under bridges, in

the woods, to homeless camps, mobile medical units, day labor sites, etc. Duplication was avoided as much as possible and statistics are more comprehensive than in the past.

Mr. Smith reviewed homeless population statistics for Pinellas County this year indicating that of 4,081 homeless persons in the County, 2,352 or 58% are men, 889 or 22% are women, and 840 or 20% are children. The average age of adults is 43 years. He said 62% of the homeless population is white; 22% is African American; 8% is multiracial; 2% is Native American; 1% is Asian; and 2% is unknown.

Mr. Smith cited multiple reasons for homelessness - 40% are homeless due to a lack of income to meet basic needs; 38% are unemployed; 32% are homeless due to alcohol or drug problems; 18% were evicted; 12% have physical/medical problems; and 11% were released from prison. He said as the alcohol/drug problems were self-reporting statistics, those numbers may be higher than reported.

Mr. Smith reviewed: 1) reasons for homelessness; 2) frequency of homelessness; 3) how the homeless ended up in Pinellas County; 4) how long the homeless have been in Pinellas County; and 5) the cities in which the homeless mainly live. He said 43% of homeless live in St. Petersburg; 20% live in Clearwater; 6% live in Largo; 3% live in Pinellas Park; 1% live in Tarpon Springs; and 27% includes unknown statistics including unincorporated areas of the County. Mr. Smith said he felt the figures for north County are probably under-reported. It was remarked that many homeless can be found where human services are provided, typically in downtown areas. Some of the uncounted homeless population sleep on porches, in their cars, etc. Mr. Smith said the demand for homeless facilities exceeds the supply. He said detailed information has been provided in committee members' binders. Mr. Smith said he is tracking all public services dollars being spent on public services, including the United Way. Faith-based and similar organizations were not included in the data. It was remarked that persons living in weekly rate motels/hotels were included in the detailed report. Mr. Marlowe said when available, he also will provide a dollar figure regarding how much is spent to provide services to the homeless. He said he also will be talking to prison officials.

6. Prevention Systems Assessment and Report on the October Strategic Planning Committee Meeting – Herb Marlowe

Mr. Marlowe reviewed the results of a survey done by the Pinellas County Coalition for the Homeless' Strategic Planning Committee. He said the committee is working on prevention of homelessness. The survey rated a list of services related to homelessness compared to other services in the County. Mr. Marlowe reviewed survey results regarding areas where the County's services are weak, strong, or average.

7. Funding for Homeless Services – Herb Marlowe

Mr. Marlowe said HUD (Housing and Urban Development) is promoting 10-year plans to end chronic homelessness. He said whether or not a community has a 10-year plan will impact that community's public services funding.

8. Proposed Presentations Schedule

Mr. Marlowe proposed a targeted monthly program with topic-based discussion. Staff members will schedule committee meetings and committee members will be asked to work together to present information on each topic.

9. Proposed Site Visit Schedule

The list of suggested site visits was reviewed.

10. Development of the 10-Year Plan

a. Format-Broad based vs. detailed or both

Beth Eschenfelder, City of St. Petersburg, said the committee needs to determine how to proceed in order to develop a 10-year plan. She said County staff has placed sample 10-year plans in committee members' binders. There are links to other websites on the County's website. Mr. Marlowe said although HUD is promoting 10-year plans to address homelessness, Pinellas County already had made the decision to address homelessness prior to HUD's decision. HUD came on board after the President declared homelessness as a national priority. Ms. Eschenfelder said HUD guidelines regarding the 10-year plan and a step-by-step guide from the U.S. Interagency Council, is included in committee members' binders.

b. Drafting the plan

Discussion ensued. Consensus was to develop a summary 10-year plan first to present to HUD, then work on a detailed plan. The summary should identify general, overall goals and objectives to reduce homelessness. The detailed part of the plan will be more specific. It was suggested a review is needed of what is in place now to address homelessness prior to setting goals and objectives.

c. Working Group(s), Subcommittees

Ms. Eschenfelder said it would be beneficial for committee members to share their expertise and commit to giving individual presentations. Guest speakers also will be invited to meetings. Discussion ensued regarding whether the group should be divided into individual groups. Consensus was to keep all members together in one group.

d. Timeline

Committee members reviewed the monthly topics on the draft schedule. It was suggested the committee enlist the expertise of the 2-1-1 staff early on in the process. Mr. Marlowe said hopes are the committee will finalize its work plan by the end of September. It was suggested a representative from the Pinellas County Coalition for the Homeless be invited to the December meeting and at other relevant times to review their strategic plan. Another suggestion was to invite Howie Carroll, Clearwater's Assistant Director of Economic Development & Housing Department, and Joshua Johnson, City of St. Petersburg Housing & Community Development Department, to speak regarding barriers. Consensus was to discuss data and outcome measurement, and barriers at the December 3, 2004, meeting.

11. Policy Group Administrative Issues

a. Policy Group Chair/Co-Chairs

Discussion ensued regarding the need for a Chair or Co-Chairs. It was remarked that Mr. Marlowe has a contract with the County until September 30, 2004, with a renewal option. It was felt he has done a good job facilitating the group thus far.

Member Littrell moved that Herb Marlowe continue to facilitate the group. The **motion** was duly seconded and **carried** unanimously.

It was suggested the group consider electing a Chair for public relations purposes.

b. Appointment of At-Large Member

Member Littrell nominated Virginia Rowell, Manager Social Service Programs City of St. Petersburg, as the at-large member. The **motion** was duly seconded and **carried** unanimously.

12. Other Business

a. Next meeting date: December 3, 2004 at 1:00 p.m.

Ms. Eschenfelder thanked Pinellas County staff for their assistance coordinating meetings, distributing information, etc., and to the City of Clearwater for donating the committee's binders.

Jean Vleming, Programs Analyst Pinellas County Human Services, requested committee members contact her regarding information to be placed on the County's website or included in notebooks, or if any other site visits need to be made.

It was noted that Committee members will be notified of the location of the December meeting once determined. Ms. Vleming reported future meetings will be scheduled from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:18 p.m.