

Minutes of April 1, 2015 Meeting of Ventura Social Service Task Force

Present: Judy Alexandre, Neal Andrews, Brian Brennan, Sue Brinkmeyer, Peter Brown, Tara Carruth, Jim Duran, Elizabeth Egelko, Tim Hockett, Camilla Lee, Arlene Martinez, Janelle Montalvo, Alicia Morales, Al Myers, Kathy Powell, Melissa Ramirez, Jan Schmutte, Debora Schrieber, Karol Schulkin, Doug Stanton, Ben Unseth, Daniel Zapata.

1. Meeting was called to order by Chair Judy Alexandre at 3:21 pm
2. All present introduced themselves and shared something they were currently excited about in our work to end homelessness. Among ideas shared were
 - The level of collaboration and cooperation
 - The closing of WWS is bringing a focus on other options
 - Increased activism throughout the county
 - The new program that is helping those who food insecure but can't get to pantries
 - Renewed energy and focus
 - Renewed spirit and re-dedication after March 12 event
 - New partnership with Housing Authority that is making units available to those who have been homeless
 - New collaboration between Community Action and City Center that is making 4 units of permanent supportive housing available
 - New runaway/homeless youth shelter that has already helped 16, each of whom came into the shelter because of collaboration with partners
 - Collaboration both in cities and in the county - 30 case managers attended training for Coordinated Entry System
 - Oxnard and Ventura are working together
 - The Vulnerability Index is allowing us to focus on our most vulnerable and on the needs of our clients
3. The minutes of March 4, 2015 were adopted as submitted.
4. There were no changes to the agenda and it was adopted as presented. (Note was made that Mary Haffner was not present to report on Laura's Law; Brian Brennan agreed to give update on process)
5. New Business items were discussed
 - A. The item on the Homeless Committee agenda related to hiring Dr. Marbut as a consultant to the City will likely be postponed pending the completion of the process being undertaken by the CoC to bring in a team from National Alliance to End Homelessness to do a system design clinic for the county. Team will meet with the CoC Board, evaluation how the current system is functioning, and help us become more competitive for HUD funding. The cost to CoC will be \$7,000 + travel costs, but the systems review will be looking at national best practices and cutting edge programs. The conclusions may not be specific enough to end the City's interest in what Dr.

Marbut offers, but Peter Brown will be recommending that the City allow the CoC design review to be completed before proceeding with any consultant. CoC process will likely try to schedule system review process for August or September.

Comments both positive and negative regarding Dr. Marbut as a potential consultant to the city were discussed. Ideas mentioned included:

Perceived positives:

- works well with business community and police
- brings in money (raised \$1million from Valero in Fresno)
- may be able to help us advance our agenda
- may broaden the discussion and engage more people in the discussion
- if CoC process helps us to complete Action Plan for 10-Year Plan, agreeing on who will do what by when and helps identify service gaps, a consultant might help us move toward closing identified gaps

Perceived Negatives:

- does not support Housing First
- purports to study community and tailor to fit, but recommendations for various communities are similar
- advocates for many things not rising up out of the continuum of care
- makes unsupported sweeping statements like most money people get from panhandling goes to drugs and alcohol
- does not appear to be a program operator
- appears to use old style reward and punishment behavioral modification (though he may have backed off from this)
- costs \$30,000 but his primary recommendation is likely to be creating a shelter/housing engagement center co-locating shelter and services

Questions:

- Why does he not support Housing First?
- Will the decision process including public input or a forum?
- Would he be hired to write a report and/or to implement recommendations?
- Which aspects of his skill set is the City interested in?

Discussion summary presented by Judy Alexandre: The Task Force sees potential positives: Dr Marbut reaches the business community, does fundraising, broadens stakeholders, and focused discussion. The Task Force sees negatives around his methodology and absence of shared goals. In addition, the Task Force would like to see a forum to discuss the hiring of a consultant like Dr. Marbut.

- B. Judy reminded Task Force that grant application are due by April 10 and will be reviewed the week of April 20 with results announced at May 6 Task Force meeting.

6. Reports:

- **Faith Committee** – 85 representatives from 30 houses of worship and 34 representatives from 29 different service providers came together March 12 at Poinsettia Pavilion for an evening of exploring ways we can all work together to end homelessness. Trudy Arriaga did a wonderful job as MC, and her powerpoint presentation is available online. Thirteen of the faith groups turned in action plans citing additional steps they would take to increase their role. The Faith Committee has identified specific steps it will take to follow up with all individuals who attended and with the leaders of houses of worship that were not represented. All are welcome to attend meetings, the 4th Wednesday of each month. The next meeting is April 22 at Ventura Church of Christ, 5401 Bryn Mawr.
- **Housing People Can Afford** – The group is working to develop plans for housing in the \$500–\$800 per month range. Fun, creative ideas re coming out. The group continues to investigate costs and locations. Meetings are 3rd Mondays at 3 at the Salvation Army Board Room, 155 Oak Street. The next meeting is April 20.
- **Education/Advocacy** – The group continues to brainstorm, research, and develop talking points around VSSTF goals: a housing engagement center and housing people can afford. Next meeting is April 21 at 3:30 at Judy's, 914 Utica Ave.
- **Housing Engagement** – The goal of this group is year-round housing engagement center(s) where people can find shelter at night and, during the day, assistance to move toward housing. The group worked on identifying barriers, assets or opportunities, strategies and possible allies.
- **Homeless Prevention** – In March a total of \$1,574 in donations from Sacred Heart, the UU Church, Ventura Church of Christ, and Judy Alexandre. We provided rental assistance in the amount of \$2,366.52 to 3 families consisting of 6 adults and 4 children. The Fund has less than \$100 at the moment. So far this year we have kept 18 families, consisting of 31 adults and 20 children in housing. Since 2007, it's a total of 349 families and 925 people kept housed.
- **Steering Committee** – the new VSSTF brochure was distributed. Thank you to Peter Brown and City for printing these. Only 100 were printed for March 12 event. Please send revisions to Sue Brinkmeyer or Debora Schreiber before we print more. (Deadline May 7)
- **City (Peter Brown)**

- the Council Committee on Homelessness meets tomorrow (Thursday, April 2). On the agenda are a possible new food & services program at River Church, the Ambassador program, a review of the shelter and group care zoning maps showing where each is possible by right, with CUP, or not at all, data from the Winter Warming Shelter, the continuation of the arrangement for Ventura and Oxnard to jointly employ Peter Brown, and updated panhandling materials.
 - the WWS closed last night (March 31)
 - The FUSE (Frequent User Systems Engagement), developed by CSH, is an approach to finding out whether the cycling of folks repeatedly through services is systemic and includes benchmarking systems against best practices. The City is impacted by location of countywide services within the City, so the City has pushed the program, but not all agencies support the approach, so we are in discussions about process.
 - City has worked with Dyer Sheehan on a request for qualifications for developers to partner with the City on a build out. Prop. 41 requires that we work with established Veterans Housing Developers. We have met with 3-4 in the broad region. The Request for Qualifications precedes the Request for Proposals, so the process is moving slowly.
- **CoC** – We completed a training in HMIS incorporating the Vulnerability Index. We have started using the VISDAT, and have about 3 weeks’ experience with it. We will use it to place people in the Community Action units at City Center and then continue to advocate for others to dedicate housing stock to this process. This pilot intended to inform us is moving forward and we are working to get all HUD-funded housing in the database.
 - **WWS** – final numbers are not yet in, so at the moment will just report that this was the largest number of individuals served in the history of the shelter
 - **H2H** – housed 14 with Rapid Rehousing dollars; other figures are not yet in. The County housed 11 from Ventura, 43 countywide. The coordinated entry line had 33 calls; most were handled with quick referrals or callers were reconnected back to case manager.
 - **One Stop** – Tim Hockett reported that One Stop at Community Action in Oxnard today (April 1) served more people than ever, perhaps because the WWS had just closed. Tim also reported on a conversation with police chief from Santa Paula, who said in one day the police received 68 calls, with 40% of them dealing with homelessness. The Santa Paul task force has been reactivated. Debora Schreiber reported that the numbers at the Ventura One Stop today were not above normal.
 - **Laura’s Law** – Brian Brennan reported that a subcommittee from Behavioral Health Board met last week and heard some of the challenges in implementing Laura’s Law. That subcommittee should make a recommendation to Behavioral Health by end of April, and Behavior Health

will likely make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors by 2nd week of May.

- **VSSTF Grants** – Applications are due April 10; the committee will likely review them the week of April 20, and results should come to next VSSTF meeting, May 6.
- **PATH visit** – A group of 9 visited People Assisting the Homeless in L.A. yesterday (March 31). We toured the facilities and beautiful low-income housing, as well as their Gateway-like facility called the Mall. They are constantly learning and changing their approaches. They do many things very differently than we do: case managers do outreach and then hand off to case managers for services going forward; use permanent supportive housing and Section 8 vouchers primarily to get people into housing, while we use private landlords. Street outreach is paid for by businesses in a dedicated area. Alicia commented that she is actively trying to figure out how we can split our street outreach and ongoing case management. The situation is very different for PATH because they get Section 8 vouchers and have a Housing Development Department to build permanent supportive housing. They are using a harm-reduction model, being realistic about people not drinking or doing drugs, and housing them first. They are flexible as long as people are moving forward. PATH is now working with San Diego, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo, and they are open to working with Oxnard and Ventura as well.

C. Networking/Upcoming events

Dependent adults and senior at risk of homelessness or in homelessness is now focuses on transportation; next meeting is May 11 at 9:30 at VCAAA office.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:18 pm.

Next Meeting is May 6, 2015 at 3:15 at the Family to Family building, 303 N Ventura Ave #E.

Submitted by

Sue Brinkmeyer