

West Des Moines Human Services Advisory Board

139 6th Street, West Des Moines, IA 50266

January 21, 2020 Minutes

Members Present: Sue Wright, Dan Werner, Mary Bernabe, Jo Helling, Jami Schnoebelen, Mari Bunney, Bill Solawetz, Joe Happe, Kasey Tickle, Doug Loots, Sean Fredregill

Members Absent: Rick Riley, Matt McNeese, Janet Clarey-Jones, Carol Sipfle, Council Member Russ Trimble

Staff Present: Althea Holcomb

Citizen Participation: none

Call to Order: called the meeting to order at 5:32pm.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes from the November 19, 2019 meeting were approved by Dan Werner, seconded by Mary Bernabe, and approved by the board.

Director's Report:

- New board members Sean Fredregill and Doug Loots were introduced and welcomed.
- Althea reported that HS staff made it through a shortened (by 1 week), more intense period of holiday service from just before Thanksgiving to Christmas and by January 10 the staff was feeling like they were getting back to normal. At Christmas, 498 families (1553 individuals) were served, down slightly from 2018. One pair of families had their gifts received mixed up, but that was sorted out and all were happy.
- Donations during the holiday period included monetary donations of \$16,055, gift cards totaling \$9,990, plus \$5,000 in gift cards from Polk County for Thanksgiving.
- Poor families in West Des Moines are still struggling based on contacts with Human Services – many with jobs have low wages and few or no benefits included. Althea said WDM residents are generous with donations to HS that get to our clients, more so than other communities she has worked in.
- Dan mentioned he finds increased awareness of Human Services around the community; Sue shared that we currently have lots of clothing donations for the clothing closet, including summer clothes that we don't have room for so they get sent on to St. Vincent de Paul. Clothing donors feel we are a good alternative to Goodwill as there is no charge to clients and their donations are going directly to our community.
- In part to inform newer board members on HS funds and fundraising, Althea shared:
 - Alice Fuhrmann Estate (AFE)-donation to HS to help seniors stay in their homes; funds typically used for snow removal and handyman needs
 - Josephine Goodman funds-unrestricted, can use where needed
 - Friends Foundation-created to augment what we get from city budget and cover items that city budget funds do not cover. (E.g. cooler for food pantry produce storage, room dividers for multi-purpose room)
 - We receive \$500/month from an anonymous donor which goes into the "Daddy Fund"; can be given to a family in high need, such as to augment the typical \$250 we would give a family so they can stay in their housing and keep the utilities going
 - Sunday Supper in Our Town provides HS with our main donation inflow. Last year's WDM Leadership Academy spearheaded event, Dueling for Humanity, that raised \$52,000 and the Friends Foundation is looking to develop another fundraising event.

- Althea mentioned a fundraising letter which normally would be sent in later November. For HS though, that time is not good as we've just been through school supplies drive, Sunday Supper, and Holiday donation recruitment.
- Transportation changes (change is hard for seniors) – Althea is meeting with city councilmembers on this; a slow process but following is how things are working now:
 - HS will refer all clients to Polk County Adult, Children and Family Services to assess each rider for eligibility-if on Medicaid their Managed Care Organization (MCO) will provide transportation
 - DART Bus Plus program for those who fall in cracks - \$3.50 fare
 - Community and Economic Development (using Community Development Block Grant funding) can provide free bus passes
 - Althea shared that we have one client who does not qualify for any of above. A trip to the hairdresser via DART would cost us \$54. HS located a Polk County nonprofit that cares for elderly in 2-hour increments that will transport her to get her hair done.
- Disposition of Human Services transport buses
 - One small bus to Polk Co. Justice League of Food who prepares meals at Foundry and brings to Senior Center across from Human Services for MWF late afternoon meals.
 - One bus to West Des Moines Fire Department
 - One bus is broken down
- Althea will ask city for an SUV for small trips HS needs to make
- Client Relations Assistant position, when filled, will serve as coordinator of transportation as well as other responsibilities.

Advisory Board Chair Report:

Sue facilitated the start of the board's effort on Strategic Planning for Human Services. We have not done strategic planning in recent memory. Work will begin with the Mission and Vision statements and then move on to more detailed elements. Strategic Planning will involve the Advisory Board, Friends Foundation, and HS staff. A Planning Committee is charged with organizing the efforts/results of the 3 groups and providing a road map for the overall process. Sue provided guidelines for mission and vision statements and some examples from WDM and state groups. A short brainstorming session ensued with thoughts from board members for possible inclusion in mission and vision statements:

Serve the people of West Des Moines Integrity Respect Improving condition of city Uplifting

Say something about the values of our community A way for people to be generous

"We take care of our own" Giving people who want to help a professional outlet Compassionate support

Helping our whole community Provide opportunity to interface Public/private partnership

Our mission is....using public and private resources....to help the elderly, the hurting, and the poor of our community

Meeting adjourned at 6:32pm, motion by Mary Bernabe and seconded by Jami Schnoebelen.

Respectfully submitted,
William Solawetz