BALTIMORE CITY COC MINUTES

CoC Board Meeting

March 21, 2024 | 2:00 p.m.-4:30 p.m.| Hybrid: Enoch Pratt Library and Microsoft Teams |Meeting called to order by Dan McCarthy

In Attendance

Attendees across platforms (from current board): Dan McCarthy, Jeff Garrett, Iya Dammons, Tara Taylor, Doug Schmidt, Ciera Dunlap, Kevin Lindamood, Nico Sanders, Carolyn Johnson, Lolah James, Courtney McKenney, Jeff Griffin, Chuck Callahan, Levy Johnson, Da'Mel Ross, Amy Collier

Members of the public or support entity representatives: Aliza Sollins, Ernestina Simmons, Eileen Cotton, Mark Council, Mary Rode, Ellis Lee, Kate Calhoun, Allision Korte, Janice Miller, Victoria Wynn, Renee Lau, Melissa Deveraux, Robert MillerJr., Jeff Singer

Approval of Minutes

Meeting minutes from February meeting are approved.

Agenda

I. Welcome
II. Election CoC Chair
III. Review of CoC Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Policies
IV. Recruitment of Open CoC Committee Chairs
V. CoC Compliance with HUD Standards
VI. MOHS Updates
VII. Encampment Protocol Discussion
VIII. Housing Accelerator Awards

Agenda items/order are subject to Discussion

Meeting called to order by Dan McCarthy.

Agenda Item: Meeting Minutes

A motion was presented to approve the minutes, it was seconded.
Motion passes.

Agenda Item: Election CoC Chair

The meeting began by discussing the previous election outcome, where Jeff Garrett secured 7 votes, Edward Blackstone secured 5 votes and there were 3 abstentions from voting in an election to of a Chair for the Journey Home, Baltimore's

Continuum of Care. Following a discussion of the meaning of abstentions and interpretations of bylaws from the February 22, 2024 Board election, Dan reported on the research done on how to count abstentions and the discussion of the issue at the Journey Home Executive and Governance Committees. The Executive and Governance committees deliberated and based upon research concluded that abstentions do not count as votes and that the candidate with the greatest number of votes would be elected Chair. Dan provided an opportunity for those who abstained from voting at the in-person February meeting an opportunity to vote. No abstainers choose to vote. The Journey Home Board accepted the recommendation of the Governance and Executive Committees that Jeff Garrett was elected to serve as the Chair going forward.

There was a discussion on proxy voting and clarification that this meeting would not serve as a re-vote. Iya expressed concerns that she was not aware that she could not send a proxy to vote in her absence. It was stated that the by-laws covering Board actions do not allow for proxy voting. Iya stated that she was dissatisfied with the outcome, announced her resignation from the board, then left the meeting.

Recruitment of Open CoC Committee Chairs

Jeff announced that there are vacancies within the CoC committees and that a prior Board had decided not to have a separate Race Equity Committee, noting that racial equity should be represented in all the work of the CoC. Carolyn asked for clarification on the process of filling open Board seats. Kevin explained that the Governance Committee needs to identify the openings and how they move forward on filling them, naming that the guidance in the by-laws is limited. Carolyn voiced that there are missing sectors represented on the board.

Agenda Item: CoC Compliance with HUD Standards

Allison Korte and Janice Miller of TAC are consulting to complete SOPs for CoC and ESG. Earlier today they met with YAB and LEAC to gather feedback. TAC will combine the feedback and all existing documents into one document that will be returned to the entire CoC and committees on 3/29/24, noting that any individual in Baltimore has the ability to provide feedback. After consolidating the feedback, TAC will provide a draft to the Executive Committee, LEAC and YAB for final review. In May, the Executive Committee will vote. Allison noted that the YAB/LEAC session emphasized the need for transparency, open communication, and accountability. Janice explained that the SOPs include CoC structure, eligible projects, costs allowed, matching process, grievance process, participation from the LEAC, goals and expectations for performance, grant administration rating and ranking, and intersections of VAWA and public health. The timeline is compressed due to HUD previously granting an extension. HUD has given until June 30 and will not grant another extension. Levy voiced liking the goal of the process, but having a concern that the CoC will not be accountable to the SOPs due to CoC's current ability to follow the bylaws. Janice stated that it is the job of the CoC to implement the SOPs. Jeff reminded everyone that the CoC purchased Member365 and has not been utilizing it fully.

Agenda Item: MOHS Updates
Agenda Item: Encampment Protocol Discussion
Agenda Item: Housing Accelerator Awards

Community Comments:

Jeff Singer: Working in homelessness for 50 years. Interested in knowing why Baltimore City is criminalizing homelessness by destroying encampments, noting that HUD has stated that encampments may be the best option for homelessness. He has fought the destruction of encampments. He highlighted the importance of building trust and positive relationships with individuals experiencing homelessness as the most effective way to assist. He asked the CoC to pass a resolution to stop the destruction of encampments. Director Simmons discussed the Encampment Protocol

and that her focus is on connecting people who are in encampments to services and housing. She offered to have a one-on-one meeting with Jeff Singer to discuss further.

Encampment Protocol: The encampment protocol focuses on providing comprehensive services to individuals experiencing homelessness. The goal is to ensure that every person is offered interim housing , such as hotel accommodations. Data reveals that a significant portion of the homeless population remains unsheltered and not engaged with the navigation systems, like Coordinated Access. To address this, the protocol includes intensive case management and additional support services. Before resolving encampment sites, there is a 30- day engagement period to understand barriers and offer shelter options. Furthermore, efforts are made to build relationships and outreach teams and connect individuals with benefits like food stamps, TCA, medical care, and legal assistance. The success of this approach relies on ongoing follow-up and support to meet the needs of those promised to be served.

Melissa Deveraux: The Baltimore CoC is failing and called for Iya to be back on the board. Noted that it is imperative that the CoC learn to work together because this work affects people's lives.

Renee Lau: CoC is necessary in Baltimore City to maintain HUD funding. The CoC must have a voice in City Hall and stand tall with MOHS.

Iya Dammons: Calls to put herself back on the board, highlighting the necessity of collaboration between the CoC and MOHS. She stated that the CoC is not ready to go forward without MOHS, urging for collective responsibility and collaboration.

Agenda Item: MOHS Updates
Director Ernestina Simmons shared the following updates:

HABC: MOHS has secured additional units with HABC.

Springboard: 1 million to provide dorm style, interim housing for youth, ages 18 – 24 who are match through Coordinated Access and looking for housing. The goal is to reduce the length of time that youth are homeless.

Hotel Acquisition: MOHS finalized the acquisition the 2 hotels and will continue to use those hotels as short-term shelter through 12/31/24. MOHS has also launched an RFP and started engaging in community conversations that focused on obtaining feedback and providing information about the initiative. MOHS will be releasing an RFP to identify a developer/operator to renovate and run the 2 hotels as Permanent Supportive Housing.

Supporting providers: The focus for the upcoming quarter is on supporting and assisting the provider community, recognizing their struggles with complex projects and high client needs. Efforts will be directed toward providing technical assistance to support providers in meeting compliance. While funding may be available, there is a disconnect in ensuring that people receive necessary services. The goal is to build communication among providers and address missing gaps.

Internal SOPs: MOHS is creating SOPs to create procedures to ensure the continuity of work when staff members leave. The aim is to provide a starting point for the next person, thereby minimizing disruptions and maintaining consistency in

operations. This initiative is crucial for preserving institutional knowledge and prevents new employees from starting from scratch.

Discussion:

What is MOHS doing to increase the number of people who have access to the system?
Director Simmons: There are plans to invest in outreach services to address a gap in the system, which misses the chronically homeless population.

In regard to HABC units, can MOHS give a timeline on where things are and how funding will be allocated to support the system?

Director Simmons: HABC and MOHS have created an MOU that is going to the BOE board. MOHS is investing $666,000 in HABC units that be available in the Coordinated Access System for people experiencing homelessness. Timeline looks like working with HABC on renovations of the space, they don't anticipate it taking a long time. Some units will have supportive services, some will not. The reason for making units flexible, is to allow a person who is homeless to fill the vacancy.

Is there a set aside number of units for Veterans? There was a set aside for units for veterans, but it was difficult to get veterans into housing. Someone needs to work with HABC to streamline their processes because it is slow getting inspections completed.

Director Simmons stated that she will take this into consideration and will report back as to how these units will be prioritized.

Are these HABC units public housing unit? Coordinated Access needs to be mindful of fair housing act when prioritizing. Someone with a disability does not have to take PSH. People with disabilities cannot be excluded. We do not get to decide for them.

Director Simmons: These units are project based, meaning the voucher is attached to the unit.

Request for clarification on outreach expansion.

Director Simmons: Referring to outreach in the community, not MOHS outreach. Everyone needs to be part of it.

Recommendation to review processes of outreach strategy to ensure outreach is meeting people. Providers need to strategize and readdress protocols if they're not meeting the people.

Agenda Item: Encampment Protocol Discussion

There was discussion from diverse viewpoints and concerns regarding homelessness and encampment clearings. Carolyn emphasized racial disparities noting that law enforcement has no role in ending homelessness. Iya and Da'Mel expressed discontent with the handling of the encampment clearings, calling for more communication and accountability. Ciera echoed sentiments of distrust and questioned the change in dates for clearing. Dan proposed involving LEAC and YAB in

policy updates. Director Simmons addressed process of encampment resolutions and committed to better engagement with stakeholders. Renee raised questions about homelessness and autonomy, while Director Simmons emphasized offering choice and avoiding criminalization.

Revisiting conversation about voting and bylaws:

Ciera inquired about co-chairs stepping in for each other, asking how to change the bylaws. Kevin stated that the job of the Board is to interpret the bylaws, noting that on the date of the election Levy's vote was accepted. Dan noted that the YHAC chair is open. Da'Mel announced resignation of YAB from the CoC. Levy agreed stating that the bylaws are unclear, there are conflicts of interest, lack of transparency. YAB members left the meeting with many others following.

Members on Teams call noted the disconnect between YAB and CoC, noting the amount of distrust among the group is disheartening. A suggestion was made to make the meeting fully in-person or virtual.

Nico motioned to end meeting, Carolyn seconds. Meeting ended at 4:22 p.m.