**DRAFT MINUTES**

Friday, March 19, 2021, 10:00 a.m., Virtual

**Meeting Minutes & Other Resources:** <https://www.iowafinance.com/homelessness/homeless-service-agencies/iowa-council-on-homelessness/>

Chair Ashley Schwalm opened the meeting at 10:01 a.m. The Council has 36 of 38 seats currently filled. 19 members checked in as present using the shared Google Sheet at

[**https://tinyurl.com/ICH-Attendance**](https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Ftinyurl.com%2FICH-Attendance&data=02%7C01%7CAmber.Lewis%40iowafinance.com%7C647d4999c28d4dcd8db208d73dc28981%7C0e7d394658c840c4b5ca04ab67de9145%7C0%7C0%7C637045778053829965&sdata=0DYp6cvDa%2B9RhYcLJ5fwJEFXlGNvu%2FkQe%2FJ7sW4rsP4%3D&reserved=0), achieving a quorum.

* **Introductions**
* **Approval of Agenda *(Action Item)***
  + Motion: Dax Oberreuter
  + Second: Ben Brustkern
  + Unanimously approved
* **Approval of Minutes from January 22, 2021** *(Action Item)*
  + Motion: Tim Wilson
  + Second: David Hagen
  + Unanimously approved
* **Committee/Task Force Reports**
* **Executive Committee** (*Ashley Odom*)
  + Ashley provided an overview of the justification and goals for seeking a consultant to assist the Council with strategic planning. A solicitation was completed recently and The Bronner Group was selected.
  + Introduction: Don Davis from The Bronner Group introduced himself and the organization. Don has worked extensively with homeless programs himself in the past. It’s an exciting time, with the various recovery funds coming out. Laruen Ricci also introduced herself; she will be the project manager for this initiative. Kaitlin Homan and Louis Makarewicz also introduced themselves as part of the project team.
  + An introductory presentation and background from The Bronner Group is included in posted materials for today’s meeting.
* **Nominating Committee** (*Tim Wilson)*
  + Tim provided a brief update. There isn’t too much new currently from this committee; the next meeting is April 14th. Current members with terms expiring and that are interested in reapplying should plan to do so soon. Will also be looking at new applicants for open seats.
* **Policy & Planning Committee** (*Crissy Canganelli*)
  + Crissy provided an update. This committee met last in February. Work included crafting a response and describing concerns regarding pending state legislation about source-of-income discrimination for tenants with Section 8 and similar types of federal housing assistance. Next project will be to work on the annual Letter to the Governor from the Council.
  + Karin asked about follow-up education and awareness, and what might be appropriate for next steps, regarding the source-of-income bill noted above. Karin also noted the new HUD Secretary commented recently on some concerns regarding the bill.
* **Public Awareness Committee** (*Alex Freeman*)
  + Committee met on March 15th. Alex provided an update and discussed the potential for an upcoming Virtual Day on the Hill, and what this might look like.
  + Crissy noted the importance of allowing sufficient time to pull together important information from the Institute for Community Alliances to support this work if the virtual day moves forward.
* **Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Report, Institute for Community Alliances** *(Gary Wickering or Pat Schacherer)*
  + Point-in-Time Count: Unsheltered count. Pat provided an update. He described a significant increase in this year’s unsheltered numbers. The final report is not yet ready.
* **Continuum of Care (CoC) Updates:**
  + **Iowa Balance of State CoC (96 counties)** *(Dennis Lauterbach)*
    - Dennis, chair of the Balance of State CoC board, provided an update as follows:
      1. The Balance of State just approved the permanent board for their CoC that will be seated April 1, 2021. For the past year, there has been an interim board in place to help build up the governance structure of the Balance of State. Seven of the interim board members will be returning to the permanent board and eight new members will be joining them to round out the (15 member) permanent board. A Chair and Vice-Chair will be chosen at the April Meeting of the board.
      2. The Balance of State CoC Board meets the second Thursday of the month at 2pm and is supported by staff members Courtney Guntly and Jessica Bleile.
      3. We are currently undergoing a strategic planning process with Homebase as our consultant. The process is currently engaging stakeholders in conversations and is convening a discussion with all CoC funded projects in the Balance of State next Tuesday, March 23.
      4. The Balance of State is split into 14 regions for Coordinated Entry and as part of the ESG-CV rollout, at least one agency in each region was awarded funds to support those families experiencing or at risk of homelessness in their region.
  + **Polk County Continuum of Care (Polk County)** *(Angie Arthur)*
    - Angie provided an introduction and background about the Polk County Continuum of Care (CoC). Angie is the Executive Director of this independent nonprofit organization. Much of the work also takes place through a volunteer board. 55% of the population of Polk County is outside of the City of Des Moines, so the CoC works with both the City and County/State initiatives. Angie provided an update on several areas of work including:
      1. The Emergency Solutions Grant and Continuum of Care programs.
      2. Covid-19 response including utilizing hotels and motels for shelter.
      3. New Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project, which was awarded $1.8 million last August by HUD.
      4. Current eviction and homelessness prevention work, including working with Iowa Legal Aid, providing education and information for tenants, including an informational flier with translations into 11 different languages.
      5. Eviction prevention work also includes a partnership with the Justice Center, responding to over 200 evictions per week, working in partnership with both landlords and tenants on the court day of eviction, to problem-solve, offer rental assistance to avoid eviction. Program was about six months long, ending in February, serving about 1,000 households.
      6. A new state legislative bill recently introduced, HF 820, about getting records expunged when evictions are dismissed, and also getting rid of eviction records that are more than three years old when certain conditions are met.
  + **Siouxland Coalition to End Homelessness (Woodbury County)** *Amy Keairns)*
    - Amy provided an update about several areas of recent work including:
      1. A recent move in the city’s outreach offices that will provide better community access.
      2. How the Coordinated Entry system is currently working, with pull meetings every other week.
      3. Utilization of new ESG-CV funds from the CARES Act, including hiring a new Housing Navigator, using a lot of the funds for Rapid Rehousing, and also trying a new initiative with Project-Based Rapid Rehousing. This new initiative involves partnering with landlords to secure a pool of available units for Rapid Rehousing.
      4. Not a lot of street outreach currently, while the warming shelter is open; the warming shelter will close soon for the season so this may change.
      5. Not a lot of Homelessness Prevention with ESG-CV funds currently, but have been using CDBG this way for security deposits, which has been very popular.
      6. Providing bus tickets to help individuals leave Sioux City when this would be helpful to reconnect with family members.
  + **Metro Area Continuum of Care for the Homeless (MACCH) (Pottawattamie County)** *(Randy McCoy)*
    - Bob Sheehan provided an update, in lieu of Randy. Bob noted one challenge is that, while the CoC there includes both Council Bluffs and Omaha, the City of Omaha also receives its own separate funding, so some programs and funding available in Omaha are not available in Council Bluffs.
    - City of Omaha just awarded MACCH $22 million to oversee a new rent assistance program, but only for Nebraska. Council Bluffs is still eligible for some separate private funding, and is also working with the City of Council Bluffs for some CDBG funding. Trying to help people stay in their own homes, and also using hotels as overflow shelters, utilizing warming centers, and more.
* **Update on the new Emergency Rental Assistance Program from the U.S. Treasury**
  + **Iowa’s program: The Iowa Emergency Rental & Utility Assistance Program:** <http://iowahousingrecovery.com> *(Terri Rosonke, Iowa Finance Authority)* 
    - Terri provided an update: The Iowa Rent and Utility Assistance Program is funded with $195 million received under federal legislation in December, and will also receive an additional $166 million in funds under the American Rescue Plan that was just passed this month. The City of Des Moines and Polk County applied as separate programs so are managing their funds independently from the state program. IFA will partner with Iowa’s Community Action Agencies for administrative services, similar to last year’s eviction prevention program. The program is only for renters, not homeowners, although there will be separate assistance under the American Rescue Plan at some point for homeowners. Terri discussed the main eligibility criteria for the program, including less than 80% Area Median Income, and other requirements. As for timing, IFA is on track to launch the online application portal at the end of March. Treasury guidance has been issued and reissued multiple times, so there are some moving pieces still. Our director, Debi Durham, plans to speak at the governor’s press conference next Wednesday, for more information.
  + **Des Moines & Polk County program**: <https://www.impactcap.org/> *(Anne Bacon, IMPACT Community Action Partnership)*
    - Anne was not present to provide an update.
* **Iowa-Nebraska Peer-to-Peer Virtual Symposium – April 28 – 29, 2021** *(Julie Sleeper, HUD)*
  + Amber shared the following information provided by Julie in advance:
    - The team is currently setting up the registration link and will be able to provide that to everyone next week. Exciting sessions planned include:
      1. Promising Partnerships in Providing Health Care for People Experiencing Homelessness
      2. Panel with Iowa and Nebraska Legal Aid
      3. Strategic Planning/Impact of COVID
      4. Impact of Brain Injury on People Experiencing Homelessness
    - Symposium dates April 28-29, 2021, morning sessions only
* **Old Business**
  + None
* **New Business**
  + None
* **Public Comments**
  + None
* **Next Meeting:** Friday, **May 21, 2021, current**
* **Adjourn**
  + Motion: Dennis
  + Second: Karin
  + Unanimously approved; the meeting adjourned at approximately 10:57 a.m.

*Draft minutes submitted by Amber Lewis*