

The Iowa Council on Homelessness

DRAFT MINUTES

Friday, March 17th, 2023, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL

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

Ashley Schwalm opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m. A quorum of members was achieved.

Attendance was reported through this link: <https://tinyurl.com/Mar2023ICH>

- **Introductions ([member list](#))**

- **Voting members:**

- Ben Brustkern
- Crissy Canganelli
- Marliegh Fisher
- Rachel Geilenfeld
- David Hagen
- Mary Ingham
- Dennis Lauterbach
- Hope Metheny
- Ashley Schwalm (chair)
- Gary Wicking
- Tim Wilson

- **Non-voting members (state agencies)**

- Eugenia Kendall (Aging)
- Lori Miller (Attorney General)
- Katrina Carter (Corrections)
- Emily Teeter (Education)
- Terri Rosonke (Finance Authority)
- Karen Hyatt (Human Services)
- James Pender (Public Health)
- John Ralls (Veterans Affairs)
- William Berning (Workforce Development)

- **Approval of Agenda (*Action Item*)**

- Motion: Dennis
- Second: Mary
- Unanimously approved

- **Public Comment Period:**

- None

- **Committees**

- Executive Committee:

- Advocacy clarification: Kristin Hanks-Bents, IFA legal counsel, and Nichole Hansen, IFA legislative liaison, provided guidance.

1. Gary provided an example of fentanyl testing kits, which are currently illegal, but which some individuals use to keep themselves safe. Another example is legislation addressing public intoxication laws that especially impact individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness. Nichole noted that advocating for certain policies in areas like this appears to be in line with the duties of the Council.
2. Kristin noted the Council could form a policy committee, or an advocacy committee (the rules are not prescriptive about what this

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may be called), and this would be fine. Kristin recommended it may be most effective to focus on just one or two issues at a time.

3. Gary asked if the Council had to go through IFA's legislative team for recommendations, or if it could do so on its own. Kristin noted that because IFA staff provide support to the Council, staff could help draft a bill request, for example. If the Council were to act independently of IFA, it would need to find a legislator to sponsor a bill on its own.
 4. Dennis asked what other boards and commissions do in this area. Kristin noted that in her experience, the relationship between boards and state agencies are more clearly established. Most boards and commissions have a particular program they oversee, for example. The ICH is a little unique, which makes it more challenging to figure out the best procedures in this area.
 5. Gary also asked about, for example, letters of recommendation, and what the process may be for advocacy of this type from the Council.
 6. Ben asked about current legislation that could protect persons fleeing domestic violence from losing their housing, and what could be done in this area, as one example.
 7. Nichole noted that one way to influence legislation is to reach out to legislators on an individual basis.
 8. Rachel noted her job is as a full-time lobbyist. Rachel asked about taking an educational approach. Perhaps engaging a small group with the Office of the Attorney General. This could also fit in with forming a policy committee. Gary asked if Rachel would be willing to join a policy/advocacy committee and Rachel agreed.
 9. Gary made a motion to form a Policy Committee. Ashley asked if Gary would be willing to chair or co-chair this committee and he agreed.
 - a. Hope seconded the motion.
 - b. Unanimously approved
 - c. Ashley asked anyone interested to email Gary:
gary.wickering@icf.com.
- Administrative allotment: Tim confirmed the central question here currently is whether the Council could contract with a former member of the Council and former state employee, to work on the Council's Strategic Plan.
1. Kristin reported that she has filed a question with the state's ethics and campaign disclosure board to determine if this is allowable. She thinks it is likely going to be okay, but would like further confirmation.
 2. Kristin recommended following an RFP process. She noted it would be fine to proceed with an RFP while awaiting a response from this board.
 3. Ashley provided some additional background. There is funding available to the Council every year; last year this was used to put together a Strategic Plan, working with the Bronner Group. This year,

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the Executive Committee has been discussing next steps, and one suggestion was working with someone who is a former member of the Council and also a former state employee.

4. Ashley confirmed the next step was to put together an RFP. Tim noted that IFA has helped in the past with an RFP. Tim noted that Crissy was also interested in this. Ashley noted that for anyone interested in helping with this RFP process, they should reach out to Tim: tslwilson@gmail.com.
 5. Tim noted there has been work within the Executive Committee to develop a template for proposing various policies or recommendations.
 6. Dennis suggested taking some time to vote on establishing certain committees. Dennis asked, since the Council had already voted to approve the Strategic Plan, would these already be in effect? Kristin noted that since the Council has changed membership and formation since then, would be helpful to vote to confirm them at present.
 - a. Dennis made a motion to approve a Public Awareness Committee, different from the Policy Committee.
 - b. Second: Tim
 - c. Unanimously approved
- Nominating Committee:
 - Tim noted the Council membership is full. Ashley noted the Governor's office sent out an email about terms ending. The status of committee membership was discussed.
 - Records were found for those members that had agreed previously during the Council's November 2022 meeting to participate with this committee. These are: Ben Brustkern (chair), Hope Metheny, Lori Miller, William Berning, David Hagen.
 1. Tim made a motion to affirm these members again.
 2. Second: Dennis
 3. Unanimously approved
 - Strategic Plan Committee: No report.
- **Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Updates, Institute for Community Alliances (ICA)**
 - Update regarding Point in Time Count: Kasper Kittredge provided an update regarding persons found unsheltered throughout Iowa, during this one 24-hour period in January. Sheltered numbers from this count are not yet available.
 - Polk County: 129 (last year was 94)
 - Balance of State: 313 (last year was 296)
 - Council Bluffs: 98 (183 total for the CoC including Omaha) (last year was only 15)

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- Sioux City: they have a different HMIS system and are therefore responsible for their own count and report.

- **Continuum of Care (CoC) Updates, as available**

- Iowa Balance of State CoC (96 counties)
 - Courtney Guntly provided an update. The CoC was recently awarded \$4.6 million for six new projects through a special HUD Rural NOFO. This includes three Permanent Supportive Housing projects and a couple Rapid Rehousing projects. The CoC helped coordinate a C3 De-Escalation training last month, and had over 200 participants join this training. Shout-out to Brandy Wallar, presenter for this training. The CoC Annual Meeting will be held in May in Ames. Some new board members will be joining in April. Continuing to work on youth homelessness. Also preparing for the upcoming annual CoC competition; if anyone is interested in volunteering as grant reviewer, please reach out.
- Homeward (Polk County)
 - Jim Cain provided an update. They have been working on eviction expungement legislation. This would call for records to be sealed, for example, if the defendant was found not guilty, if the case was dismissed, or if the landlord didn't appear at the hearing. The defendant could also apply for an eviction record to be sealed if more than five years has passed since the eviction was filed, and if another eviction had not occurred during that time, and if the defendant had paid all costs.
 - Homeward published a study on unsheltered homelessness in Polk County. They have been working with the Director's Council; will be holding two-hour facilitated meetings on how to implement some of these priorities. Also working on a by-name spreadsheet for the street outreach team where they document someone's location; enables focus on the most vulnerable individuals. As a result, have housed 11 households since October.
- Siouxland Coalition to End Homelessness (Woodbury County)
 - Clara Coly provided an update. The city is live with their HMIS and is working through various fixes. Coordinated Entry is also going well, and they have been working with providers and the community at large about how to best customize this system.
 - From the Point in Time recently: counted 18 persons unsheltered; up from six last year.
- Metro Area Continuum of Care for the Homeless (Pottawattamie County)
 - Not present.

- **State Agency Representative Updates**

- Department on Aging (*Eugenia Kendall*): The governor's alignment bill has passed; that agency will be folding under HHS as of July 1. At that time, they will be deferring to the HHS representative on the Council. Also working on a new state plan.

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- Office of the Attorney General (*Lori Miller*): They are in the process of grant review. They have been doing roundtables around the state. They are hosting a four-day sexual assault conference in April in Ames; reach out to Lori if interested.
- Department of Corrections (*Katrina Carter*): Not present.
- Department of Education (*Emily Teeter*): Emily was not present but sent an update in advance, which Ashley shared: Have seen an increase in students experiencing homelessness. Also high turnover in homeless liaisons. Districts have been spending ARP dollars to assist students experiencing homelessness.
- Finance Authority (*Terri Rosonke*): Ashley Jared provided an update in lieu of Terri. Ashley described multiple RFPs out currently. One RFP out currently is to show the impact of PSH in Iowa City. Recently received approval to allocate \$10 million for home renovations. An RFP will be out with responses due end of April.
- Department of Human Services (*Karen Hyatt*): Challenges exist with the PATH program and staff needing more support. Primary Health Care in Des Moines is looking to hire a part-time PATH worker to help with homeless outreach. There is a new drop-in center at Vera French in Davenport. One issue: last year Primary Health Care completed 2,000 intakes through Coordinated Entry, but only approximately 15% might actually get housed. This is a real challenge. Karen also described various free training opportunities upcoming.
- Department on Public Health (*James Pender*): Jim sent some materials focused on brain injury in advance of the meeting, which are posted online. This includes an upcoming webinar series.
- Department of Veterans Affairs (*John Ralls*): Not present.
- Workforce Development (*William Berning*): Current opportunity: register for offender workforce development specialist course. A language learner course available for employers, working with individuals learning English. Working to address childcare resources. Working with DART, doing a presentation March 23rd, helping to address transportation barriers to employment. Working in Central Iowa on a Resource Fair coming up March 30th with DMARC food pantry and partners.
- **Old Business**
 - Karen added one additional update: Muscatine Center for Social Action is opening a new respite house that will serve individuals experiencing homelessness.
- **New Business**
 - Ashley asked members to think about their availability to serve on a committee.
- **Next Meeting:** Friday, May 19th, 2023, 10:00 a.m.
- **Adjourn**
 - Motion: Gary
 - Second: Ben
 - Unanimously approved

Draft minutes submitted by Amber Lewis