**DRAFT MINUTES**

Friday, September 15th, 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/](about:blank)

Tim Wilson opened the meeting at 10:07 a.m. A quorum of members was achieved.

**Attendance was reported through this link:**. [https://tinyurl.com/Sept2023ICH](about:blank).

* **Introductions** [**(member list)**](about:blank)
  + **Voting members:**
    - Ben Brustkern
    - Crissy Canganelli
    - Mariliegh Fisher
    - Rachel Geilenfeld
    - David Hagen
    - Mary Ingham
    - Dennis Lauterbach
    - Hope Metheny
    - Ashley Schwalm
    - Tim Wilson (chair)
    - Vacant
  + **Non-voting members (state agencies)**
    - Eugenia Kendall (Aging)
    - James Pender (Public Health)
    - Karen Hyatt (DHHS)
    - Lori Miller (Attorney General)
    - Katrina Carter (Corrections)
    - (Education)
    - Terri Rosonke (Finance Authority)
    - John Ralls (Veterans Affairs)
    - William Berning (Workforce Development)
* **Approval of Agenda** *(Action Item)*
  + Motion: Dennis
  + Second: David
  + Unanimously approved
* **Approval of July meeting minutes** *(Action Item)*
  + Motion: Dennis
  + Second: Ashley
  + Unanimously approved
* **Public Comment Period:** A public comment period for the full meeting will be held at this time to accommodate visitors. This period is limited to 2 minutes per person and 10 minutes in total.
  + None
* **Approval of Executive Committee:** Ashley Schwalm (Past Chair), Hope Metheny (Vice Chair), Ben Brustkern (Nominating Committee Chair), Crissy Canganelli, Dennis Lauterbach, Terri Rosonke (Non-voting Member) Tim Wilson *(Action Item)*
  + Tim made a motion to approve the Executive Committee members.
    - Second: Dennis
    - Unanimously approved
* **Committees**
  + Executive Committee:
* Discussion: recommendation of Boards and Commissions Review Committee
  + Tim provided a summary of the Boards and Commissions review committee recommendations.
    - Nicole Hansen, Policy and Partnership Manager for IFA, responded to the questions provided by Tim Wilson. She stated that the State Realignment Bill included the consolidation of some agencies and included provisions to establish the Boards and Commissions Review Committee. The review committee was required to submit a report with its findings. Nicole stated that IFA shared information regarding current staff responsibilities and duties as well as ICH responsibilities as described in Iowa Code with the committee. She stated that in the event that the ICH is eliminated, IFA could re-evaluate the roles and responsibilities of current staff and that staffing decisions will need to be made at a later date. Tim Wilson asked if a member of the ICH or representative or a person with lived experience could apply to be on the IFA board. Nicole stated that at this time, IFA is not currently aware of any recommendations for the creation of a new board or commission. Tim Wilson had asked if the four CoC’s should be combined. Nicole responded that IFA is not in the position to answer that question but rather it would be a question best answered by those four entities. The council also asked how service providers would maintain connection with the state government if the ICH were eliminated. Nicole responded stating that IFA’s homelessness programs team are engaged and will continue to be engaged with the USICH, NCSHA, and the NAEH and will be available for questions from the council. Tim asked the council if there were any other questions and encouraged the council to reach out to the review committee before the deadline. David asked the council if there was a need of having someone that could represent the entire state to help bring the vision of homelessness in all Iowa counties. John Ralls with the VA responded that his department does not have a position on this. He reported that they are hosting a veterans standdown in Des Moines to help address homelessness in veteran populations. John stated that they partner with many county offices to support any initiative to alleviate homelessness. He stated that Iowa is such a rural state that it is hard to keep it centralized and it is difficult to reach individuals in outlying areas and they rely on county partners to reach people outside of the metro. Karen reported that it is tough for state departments because those on the council are not authorized to speak for their respective departments because legislative liaison staff do that. She continued that as providers and community members, we care about these issues and fear that we will lose perspective if the council is eliminated. Karen stated that there is not a lot of state money available to supplement federal funding and states that the budget will not speak for the lack of the council. Eugenia stated that what the public doesn’t see is how much is happening already. She reports that there are many interconnections being made and reports that it is a very exciting time to be a part of state government. She states that she is extremely hopeful that the improved connections means better and improved services for all Iowans. James Pender stated that he has the same perspective. He stated that internally, staff are viewed as experts, and it is not uncommon for staff working on issues to reach out to staff within the department to gain perspective. Angie stated that as a CoC and service provider we need to have the ability to connect with each other from an advocacy and policy prospective. She reported that providers need to be able to connect, share information, and collaborate. Angie stated that she is concerned that not having the presence of the homelessness council will cause a lack of viewpoint and worries about the lack of advocacy perspective. Courtney responded stating that there is a need for the advocacy perspective statewide and that having those connections within the council is important. She continued stating that it’s important to have these conversations at the statewide level with voting members and statewide partners. Courtney stated that she does not want homelessness to get lost in the state conversation if the council no longer exists and fears that it will cause an increase in homelessness. Clara responded by stating that she echoes what Angie and Courtney stated and appreciates the advocacy of the council. She stated that she does not want homelessness to get lost and that we cannot lean on the budget to do the talking for us. Clara asked if they could explore if the council is the best use of advocacy in Iowa and if there is another way for the council to exist. She continued that maybe this could be moving towards better advocacy in the future. Dennis asked if IFA saw a lot of duplication of efforts or tasks or duties of what IFA and the council does. He also asked if IFA had the capability to periodically bring stakeholders together to discuss progress. Nicole stated that she will answer these questions later. David added that advocacy and policy is a critical piece and questions whether the council is better off separate from government.
* Consider vote on a position statement *(Action Item)*
  + - Tim Wilson emailed a statement to the council for review as a response to the Boards and Commissions review. Crissy provided updates to the statement and the council reviewed. Crissy proposed the submitted text with indicated revisions be considered and accepted by the council.
      * Second: Tim
      * Unanimously approved
* Update on Consultant RFP status
  + - Crissy and Mollie met and worked to create the RFP. Mollie will meet with legal at IFA to discuss further changes to the RFP.
  + Nominating Committee:
    - Ben stated that the nominating committee would like to recommend Maria Torres of Pottawattamie County for the council. He stated that she fills the geographical need and balances the council on female and male members. The committee would like to put forward Maria Torres to the Governor for review. Tim inquired if she applied through the portal. Ben responded yes. Tim asked if there are any other requirements that need to be met for a council member. Kristin stated no. The council voted on the recommendation.
      1. Unanimously approved
    - Ben stated that the committee will be meeting in person in Des Moines to discuss how to keep the strategic plan moving forward.
* **Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Updates, Institute for Community Alliances** *(ICA)*
  + Update on optional summer Point in Time Count
    - KarLee and Kasper provided an update on the summer point in time count for the Balance of State and Polk County. They stated that the information includes the regions that participated so not all regions are covered. They stated that there will be a mandatory training available on 10/1/23 on LMS. They will be collecting information on CE participation and RRH projects. John stated that some data points shows a trend of about an 80% increase in homelessness and asked where the data came from. KarLee stated the data came from the regions that completed the PIT and stated that they believe there was an increase in region participation in the count. Crissy stated that they have been seeing more unhoused individuals and states that there is an upward trend in their communities and across the state. Kasper responded stating that the data is a snapshot of one night and that everything they’re seeing in the system is that the current systems are at capacity in trying to those experiencing homelessness.
* **Continuum of Care (CoC) Updates, as available**
  + Iowa Balance of State CoC (96 counties)
    - Courtney reported that they are working on the consolidated application for the CoC funds. She reports that it is due 9/28. Courtney stated that they conducted a serious of focus groups across the BOS. There were 11 focus groups that discussed the Coordinated Entry assessment tool that is currently being utilized. She reports that they are in the beginning stages but are looking at re-evaluating the assessment tool. Courtney stated that they received stability vouchers and are working on finalizing the MOU’s.
  + Homeward (Polk County)
    - Angie reported that they are working on the NOFO and have undergone staff transitions. She stated that they adjusted the position to allow part time for someone with lived experience as a community engagement coordinator. Angie informed the council that Amy Kroll is joining the team next Monday. They have been having conversations with their downtown community employers regarding the unsheltered population. She stated that she was invited to participate at SAMHSA’s system administration meeting regarding incorporating housing first in recovery housing.
  + Siouxland Coalition to End Homelessness (Woodbury County)
    - Clara reported that they are working on finishing up the NOFO application. She stated that they have been working closely with two main shelters in their community to dive deeper into HMIS. Clara reported that the Warming Shelter was going to attempt being open all year; however, they did not have the funding to allow for that. She stated that they have also been working with Siouxland street projects to assist with getting more qualitative data on those experiencing homelessness.
  + Metro Area Continuum of Care for the Homeless (Pottawattamie County)
    - Not present
* **State Agency Representative Updates** 
  + Department on Aging *(Eugenia Kendall)*
    - Eugenia stated that Iowa is one of ten states that has been chosen to participate in a multisector plan for an aging collaborative. It will last 12 months and will go through May 2024.
  + Office of the Attorney General *(Lori Miller)*
    - Lori reported that they have been busy trying to get grant years closed and started.
  + Department of Corrections *(Katrina Carter)*
    - Katrina stated that she has been working on seamless transitions for those that are transitioning from prison to the community.
  + Department of Education *(Emily Teeter)*
    - Not present
  + Finance Authority *(Terri Rosonke)*
    - Terri reported that the Housing Iowa Conference was held last week. The thriving communities designations were Cedar Rapids, Charles City, Creston, Dubuque, Knoxville, Manning, Muscatine, Oskaloosa, Stanton, and Des Moines. She stated that Iowa HAF is still open, and they are continuing to take applications for homeowners experiencing foreclosure to provide mortgage assistance, property tax assistance, and homeowners insurance assistance. Terri stated that they are looking at launching a home repair program. *Looing to launch a home repair program.*
    - Mollie provided update on ESG, HOPWA, and SAF grants. ESG and HOPWA grants have been approved by the board. SAF will be presented to the board in October.
  + Department of Human Services *(Karen Hyatt)*
    - Karen stated that there have been some changes to the Community Based Crisis Services portion of their website. She reports that there are new maps and access information for all MHDS regions. She stated that there are also links to mobile crisis across the state and changes on the ACCESS centers and how to contact them. Karen reported that many have joined the statewide SOAR advocacy committee and states there is an option to add more people if anyone is interested. She stated that they have been tackling some issues with local Social Security offices and some of the problems that people are having across the state. Karen stated that if anyone knows of any issues, to please let her know so that she can take those issues to the local SSA representative. She reported that she has been working on the Governor’s challenge for suicide prevention. Karen stated to let her know if anyone is interested in helping in suicide prevention for miliary members and families.
  + Department on Public Health *(James Pender)*
    - Jim stated that current data shows that covid hospitalizations are at a total of 112. He reminded the council that flu season is coming, and that the CDC approved additional covid vaccines. Jim stated that there have been 11 positive flu tests. He reports that they just completed a five-part series on addressing brain injuries and all of those sessions have been recorded. Please reach out to Jim if you have interest in accessing those sessions.
  + Department of Veterans Affairs *(John Ralls)*
    - John stated that they are partnering with Polk County and the VA for the Veterans Standdown. He informed the council that the Standdown is open to everyone. Jim also stated that they are working with counties to assist with the transition of the merger.
  + Workforce Development *(William Berning)*
    - Not present
* **Old Business**
  + None
* **New Business**
  + None
* **Next Meeting:** Friday, November 17th, 2023, 10:00 a.m.
* **Adjourn**
  + Motion: David
  + Second: Dennis
  + Unanimously approved; meeting adjourned at 11:53

*Meeting minutes submitted by Mollie Brees*