

MEETING MINUTES

**Town of Waynesville
Task Force on Homelessness**

Thursday, May 6, 2021

5:30 PM—7:00 PM EST

**Location:
Zoom Meeting**

Meeting Facilitator:	Amy Murphy-Nugen	
TOW TFH Members Roster		
✓ Police Chief David Adams	✓ Patsy Davis or Brook Smith as proxy	✓ Amy Murphy-Nugen (Chair)
Juleah Berliner	✓ Commissioner Kevin Ensley	✓ Bob Cummings
✓ Wanda Brooks	✓ Keri Guidry	✓ Joslyn Schaefer
✓ Dale Burris	✓ Mandy Haithcox	✓ Alderman Anthony Sutton
✓ Nathan Cartwright	Jon Lynn McDermott	Brandon Wilson
Sheriff Greg Christopher or appointee		

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Amy Murphy-Nugen opened the meeting at approximately 5:30 p.m., welcoming everyone and completing roll call. The agenda for the meeting was reviewed. It was stated that Hannah Minick, MSW Intern, is finishing her internship and this will be her final meeting as the MSW Intern for the Task Force on Homelessness. Hannah's significant contribution to the Task Force was acknowledged.

Approval of Minutes from April 1, 2021

A motion to approve the meeting minutes from April 1, 2021 was made by Mandy Haithcox. The motion was seconded by Alderman Sutton. All voted in favor of approving the meeting minutes from April 1, 2021 and the minutes were approved.

Federal Funding Update:

Alderman Sutton provided an update on federal funding that will be coming to Waynesville through the passage of the American Rescue Plan. On March 11, 2021, the Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) of 2021 became law. The Town of Waynesville is estimated to receive 2.97 million dollars in ARP funds. The first allocation of funds, in the amount of 1.48 million dollars, will be distributed May 15, 2021. The second allocation of funds, 1.48 million dollars, is expected to be available May 20, 2022. Funding requirements that dictate how funds can be spent are different for municipalities than they are for counties and states. Eligible expenditures for municipalities include response to the public health emergency with respect to COVID-19 and its negative economic impacts, to respond to first responders and essential workers by providing premium pay to town employees who are performing such essential work, for the provision of government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue due to COVID-19, to address the public health emergency relative to revenue collected in the most recent full fiscal year prior to the emergency, and to make necessary investments in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure. It also allows the town to fund capital expenditure items that were budgeted in the previous year that they could not fund due to lack of revenue, or unable to fund, or were postponed due to revenue not coming in. Alderman Sutton shared that a significant requirement to this funding is that the money must be fully expended in full by December 31, 2024. The Town of Waynesville has identified capital items that have been postponed that the funding may be partially used for, one of them is the purchase of police cars that were supposed to happen last year, the other is the lowering of the water and sewer lines on portions of Main St. and Pigeon St. Alderman Sutton stated that it will cost almost \$700,000 to make water line repairs on Pigeon St. and \$200,000 to replace police vehicles. He stated that there is a provision that the Town of Waynesville could set up grants for local not-for-profits and set some of that money aside to help with the services to assist people who are homeless in Waynesville. Legality will still have to be worked out with what money can be spent where. Alderman Sutton reported he did believe the Board of Alderman was open to discussing ways in which the remaining money will be spent if it can be justified based on the criteria that the federal government provides. The money cannot be spent on payroll for a position that was not already created and funded prior to the passing of the ARP. Chair Amy Murphy-Nugen asked how the Town of Waynesville will decide to allocate the funds. Alderman Sutton replied that it is part of the budget process and that they have instructed the Town Manager, Rob Hites, to compile requests from the Alderman and present that during the budget process. Budgets for municipalities run from July 1st to June 30th. The budget must be approved by June 30th, 2021 at midnight, a month and a half away, and public hearings must be had on budgets prior to their passing. Alderman Sutton encouraged people to share their ideas and suggestions with the Alderman and encouraged not-for-profits to request money as well. Chair Amy Murphy-Nugen stated that not-for-profits have requested funds in the past to fill gaps in services in the community. Chair Amy Murphy-Nugen asked if some of the funding may be used similarly and Alderman Sutton was not sure. He stated that they may be able to use general funds for that if ARP funds cannot be used. An audit will be done in 2024 and if the money has

been spent in a way that does not meet the federal guidelines the town is responsible for paying the money back.

Kevin Ensley reported that Haywood County is getting 6 million dollars in federal funding this year and 6 million dollars in federal funding next year. The county manager is waiting until May 16th for guidance on how money can be spent. After May 16th, guidelines will be provided about exactly how the funding can be spent. The County Manager has asked department heads to go ahead and provide suggestions about how they believe the money needs to be spent. The town usually allots about \$250,000 from the general fund for local not-for-profits. Alderman Sutton reported that usually each local not-for-profit is awarded two to ten thousand dollars. The Town of Waynesville can also subsidize electricity for not-for-profits located within the town's jurisdiction and count it as in-kind. Chair Amy Murphy-Nugen shared that the ARP funds are dedicated infrastructure funds, and that there will also be federal funding allocated to communities specifically for housing as well. The Southwest Consortium is working to bring HOME funds (HUD funding for affordable housing development) to communities. There is a piece of the ARP that is working to provide supplemental HOME funds in addition to the roughly \$540,000 funding that is dedicated to this region. This funding is new dollars coming in to the region for the first time. In addition, there is 1.9 million dollars coming into the region to be used specifically for housing and to support people experiencing homelessness, who are at risk of homelessness, and/or experiencing intimate partner violence. There are six counties that will be splitting the 1.9-million-dollar funding. A committee is being created to decide how the funds will be spent. Options of low-barrier non-congregate shelters were discussed. HOME funds will be available in addition to the infrastructure funds that Alderman Sutton and Commissioner Ensley discussed. Kevin Ensley stated that counties will be competing for funds. The Task Force members discussed the fact that the funding is limited and shared ideas about ways to use the funds that will result in long-term positive impacts for the community. More information is needed from the federal government on how specifically the funding can be used. Keri Guidry stated that it could be beneficial to use some of the funds to pay to shelter people in a hotel. Keri stated that a low-barrier shelter would likely take more money than the Town of Waynesville or County could provide through the federal funding available at this point. Suggestions that community members have about how any of the funding can be spent should be given to any Alderman for the Town of Waynesville and Commissioner Kevin Ensley or County Manager Bryant Morehead for Haywood County.

Law Enforcement Update:

Lieutenant Trantham provided an update from law enforcement. He reported that calls for service in response to Bethel House in the past month have been for suspicious persons, warrants, arrest, a DWI at one point, which he stated does not bode well. A fire inspection happened on site at the Bethel House and addressed some issues related to code enforcement. The Bethel House has

responded and addressed the issues related to the code violations. Lieutenant Trantham stated that warmer weather seems to effect people who are unsheltered. He reported that they see people who are suffering from mental health and substance use issues on a daily basis. Resources such as transportation to a doctor's appointment, as well as other resources are needed in the community. He stated that being homeless does not make someone a criminal and that having the data about who is homeless in the community, and understanding why people are homeless, will be important to finding solutions to address the issue. Chief Adams stated that affordable housing will not address issues that a lot of people who are unsheltered are dealing with. The Task Force discussed the importance of wrap-around services for people to be successful in housing and the high numbers of people who have serious mental health and/or substance use disorders. Community resources to meet the needs of people who need services for mental health and substance were discussed and the fact that they are not substantial enough to meet people with high needs. The Haywood Healthcare Foundation has a charge to meet the unmet healthcare needs in the community. The Dogwood Foundation also has funding for communities to help meet unmet health needs in the community.

Data Collection Update:

Chair Amy Murphy-Nugen reviewed the timeline for the Task Force and provided an update on data collection. The plan is that recommendations will be presented back to the Mayor and Board of Alderman in July and August. Chair Amy Murphy-Nugen acknowledged that the target goal of 80 surveys with people who are homeless may not be reached, yet remains the goal. Currently, there are 20 surveys completed with people who are experiencing homelessness. The Task Force discussed ways in which more people can be reached who are experiencing homelessness, such as partnering with Pathways to reach people who are incarcerated. The survey is going to be reassessed mid-May and will likely close in a couple weeks. Dale Burris stated that the number of people who are staying outside is growing in Allen's Creek and that that may be a place to focus outreach. Nicole Kott from Helping Hands stated that she would be happy to help complete surveys as well.

The community feedback survey is a community feedback survey that includes community member's perception of homelessness, what should be prioritized in terms of services, and what supports people believe should or should not be offered. Currently, there are approximately 300 community feedback surveys completed. The hope is to get 500 completed community feedback surveys, which would provide statistical significance for a town the size of Waynesville. The community feedback survey will likely close mid-May. The remaining listening sessions are starting to be formed this month and will likely continue into mid-June. By the end of May, the Task Force will be heavy into data analysis. Data will not be analyzed by the June meeting, and is expected to be analyzed and ready by late June and July.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday June 3th, 2021 from 5:30 p.m-7:00 p.m. and will be held both in-person and on zoom.

Additional Information:

The Task Force on Homelessness is committed to providing opportunities for community feedback.

Community members: Please feel welcome to provide feedback here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TFHSept3Feedback>



Minutes respectfully submitted by Amy Murphy-Nugen on May 11, 2021.