

# MEETING MINUTES

**Town of Waynesville  
Task Force on Homelessness**

**Thursday, July 29, 2021**

**5:30 PM—7:30 PM EST**

**Location:  
Police Training Room, 9 South  
Main Street**

<b>Meeting Facilitator:</b>	Amy Murphy-Nugen	
<b>TOW TFH Members Roster</b>		
✓ Police Chief David Adams Proxy: Lt. Tyler Trantham Both attended	✓ Patsy Davis Proxy: Brooke Smith, both attended	✓ 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. The agenda for the meeting was reviewed.

## **TF Discussion: Homelessness Needs Assessment & Draft Recommendations**

Mark your Calendars, Important Upcoming Dates: August 5 Community Open House (updated to note cancelation of event in consideration to COVID19 precautions);

September 2 Task Force Meeting; September 28 Town Board Meeting

In responding to questions concerning preparation of the draft plan, Chair Amy Murphy-Nugen reviewed her credentials and professional experience in building the capacity of not-for-profits and local units of government to strategically respond to housing, homelessness, and community economic development issues and opportunities. Chair Murphy-Nugen also acknowledged the expertise and experience of Task Force members—and their cumulative contribution to the process and plan over the last year.

Chair Murphy-Nugen explained the draft results and findings include data from:

- U.S. Census Bureau on socio-economic community characteristics
- Community feedback survey completed by 224 residents
- Comprehensive survey of people who are homeless completed by 56 individuals
- 7 listening sessions attended by 31 key stakeholders representing business owners, faith leaders, law enforcement, people who are homeless, providers of housing and allied supports, providers of behavioral health and allied supports, and residents impacted by homelessness.
- Business survey that was conducted by the TF's Economic Stability Work Group in partnership with the Haywood Chamber of Commerce in which nearly 60 businesses participated.

In total, 370 individuals provided data and feedback.

The complete draft results and findings are included in the TOW's TF on Homelessness Needs Assessment and Community Action Plan, which is posted on the town's website at:

<https://www.waynesvillenc.gov/task-force-homelessness>

Based on this comprehensive feedback and data analysis, a draft action framework is being proposed—Waynesville Community CARES. CARES is an acronym for a five-point comprehensive strategy to address homelessness in our community.

Homelessness is a multifaceted and complex issue that impacts the individual experiencing being unhoused, individuals living near homelessness, businesses situated near homelessness, and the community at-large. Consequently, an effective response will require various partners and resources that span the social determinants of health. The Community CARES framework proposes an asset-based approach to strengthen existing services for people who are homeless and addressing concerns communicated by neighbors and businesses impacted by homelessness.

Chair Murphy-Nugen emphasized the focus on systems change and innovation—noting the holistic response embedded in the proposed CARES framework. Chair Murphy-Nugen walked through each area of the framework—connecting it to data findings and providing rationales for each action item. Following this overview, discussion was open for TF members to provide feedback, which is noted below for each section of the proposed plan.



## C.A.R.E.S

**C:** Coordination, Collaboration, Community-Building & Civility

**A:** All neighbors are known

**R:** Residence, A place to call home

**E:** Education (prevention & Early intervention)

**S:** Supports (SDOH--education, financial capability, workforce development, integrated health [i.e. behavioral & physical], social capital, transportation, policy innovation, etc.)

The draft action steps for consideration are found below:

### Proposed Community Action Plan

#### C: Coordination, Collaboration, Community-building & Civility

Goal: Strengthen existing partnerships and service provider capacity & deepen community connections among neighbors for the purpose of both meeting needs and creating opportunity for our neighbors who are homeless, and, neighbors & businesses who are impacted by the issue of homelessness

Action Steps	Year				
	1	2	3	4	5

**Coordination & Collaboration**

TOW hires Community CARES Director & 2 neighborhood CARES outreach workers	•				
Community CARES Director establishes a care coordination team of community-based providers	•				
Community CARES Director, on monthly basis, convenes CARES coordination team to connect PWH to service providers/services	•	•	•	•	•
Neighborhood CARES Outreach Workers engage with & connect PWH to services, engage with neighbors & businesses and respond to issues associated with homelessness	•	•	•	•	•
Neighborhood CARES Outreach Workers host monthly meetings with neighbors and businesses impacted by homelessness, communicate needs & opportunities to appropriate officials, implement actions	•	•	•	•	•
CARES Director & Neighborhood CARES Outreach Workers track aggregate data & outcomes for success measures & reports quarterly at BoA meetings	•	•	•	•	•

**Community-building & Civility**

Annual Community Picnic	•	•	•	•	•
Establish and Implement Community-Building & Engagement Mini-Grants	•	•	•	•	•
Identify Facilitator & Convene Community Study Circle(s)			•	•	•

## A: All Neighbors are Known By Name

Goal: By using an evidence-informed and baseline “by-name-list,” cultivate community, increase prevention of homelessness, and/or expedite neighbors to services and opportunities

Action Steps	Year				
	1	2	3	4	5



CARES Coordination Team establishes shared “by-name-list”	•				
CARES Coordination Team meets every month to review “by-name-list” & connects PWH to services	•	•	•	•	•
CARES Director, in partnership with coordination team, tracks aggregate data & outcomes for success measures & reports quarterly at BoA meetings	•	•	•	•	•

## R: Residence, A Place to Call Home

Goal: Strengthen individual well-being and community quality of life by rapidly connecting individuals at-risk of homelessness to housing, and supporting efforts to expand & develop low-cost affordable housing in safe neighborhoods including rental units and home ownership programs.

Option 1: Maintain Current System

Action Steps	Year				
	1	2	3	4	5



TOW and community continues to support service providers, PWH, neighbors and businesses impacted by homelessness at current levels	•	•	•	•	•
Service providers continue providing service and supports at current levels	•	•	•	•	•
TOW assesses homelessness after year 3 and year 5, determines if progress is acceptable			•		•

Option 2: Strengthen and Expand Capacity of Current System

Action Steps	Year				
	1	2	3	4	5



CARES Director either provides or secures capacity-building and team-building professional development for CARES coordination team	•	•			
CARES Director facilitates expansion of provider participation and PWH access to Coordinated Entry, Rapid Rehousing, LIHTC, Section 8 Vouchers, PSH units	•	•	•		
CARES Director evaluates capacity-building, team-building, & access of Coordinated Entry, Rapid Rehousing, LIHTC, Section 8 Vouchers, PSH units			•		•
TOW increase affordable housing units: Rental & Homeownership Opportunities	•	•	•	•	•

- CARES Director facilitates expansion of partnerships with landlords • •
- CARES Director tracks aggregate data & outcomes for success measures & reports quarterly at BoA meetings • • • • •
- TOW assesses progress, makes modifications as needed; after year 3 and year 5 determines if model is working or additional shelter is needed • • • • •

Option 3: Develop Additional Emergency Shelter

Action Steps	Year				
	1	2	3	4	5

- Explore feasibility of additional emergency shelter options •
- Develop operations and capacity plan to apply for funding FY2022 •

\*ESG requires low barrier model

## E: Education

Goal: Expand prevention and early intervention education strategies that prevent or mitigate homelessness

Action Steps	Year				
	1	2	3	4	5

Individual-level education: Work with community agencies, schools, partners to support teaching positive coping skills and building resiliency among youth	•	•	•	•	•
Community-level education: Quarterly and annual reports on homelessness issues at BoA meetings	•	•	•	•	•
Community-level education: Quarterly speaker series on issues related to homelessness, housing, & community building		•			
Macro-level education: Annual housing fair	•	•	•	•	•
Macro-level education: Poverty simulation hosted every other year		•		•	

## S: Supports

Goal: Identify community assets and build network capacity to connect people who are homeless, other neighbors, and businesses to services and opportunities

Action Steps	Year				
	1	2	3	4	5



CARES Director builds network capacity between/among housing and other providers/resources: Behavioral health, physical health, dental care, education, workforce development, peer support, transportation, pro-social & affordable recreation, basic services, spiritual, governmental services, etc.	•	•	•	•	•
Care Coordination Team uses network capacity (& possibly NCCare360) to connect PWH to appropriate service and support mix	•	•	•	•	•
Neighborhood Outreach Workers identify & map support services assets for both people who are homeless and businesses	•		•		•
Explore Policy Innovation in support of CARES Action Plan:					
TOW affordable housing set-asides (inclusive zoning)					
Landlord incentives for affordable set-asides, Rapid Rehousing and/or Voucher participation	•	•	•	•	•
Child Development Accounts—particularly for youth who are under 5 & identified as living in poverty					
Map and identify vacant land/property that may be used for housing development—including affordable units					
Access to mental/behavioral health services					

Remaining Meeting Schedule

MEETING SCHEDULE				
Date	Time	Location	Purpose	Task Force Responsibility
Thursday, August 5	5:00—8:00 PM*	Waynesville Recreation Center, Community Meeting Room 550 Vance Street	Community feedback/prioritization open house	*TF members staff feedback stations per sign-up schedule
Thursday, September 2	5:30—7:30 PM	Town Hall 16 South Main Street	Regular business meeting	Finalize CAP
Tuesday, September 28	6:00 PM	Town Hall 9 South Main Street	Present CAP to Mayor & BoA	Attend meeting

**Task Force Feedback**

**Coordination, Collaboration, Community Building and Civility**

- acknowledges existing strengths in current system—focuses on further strengthening partnerships and capacity
- work with businesses, providers, people who are homeless
- recommend to hire a CARES Director, 2 CARES outreach workers to more quickly connect people who are homeless to services (particularly individuals who intersect homelessness, substance use & involvement with the criminal justice system—a noted gap in the data findings) as well as provide an immediate feedback and action loop for neighbors and businesses impacted by homelessness
- systems change (including leveraging additional funding to providers to address service gaps; acknowledging trend in funding/support for multi-sectoral, multi-jurisdictional partnerships; increases town commitment and responsibility for implementing solutions—particularly those that are systemic; addresses community-building and civility)
- CARES Director

**TF Feedback:**

Some TF members propose shifting the CARES Director from being at the Town to being housed with one of the service providers. The rationales offered for this modification include: concerns with adding layers of bureaucracy, belief that solutions are found at provider-level not government, and spreading existing resources for providers into smaller levels of support. Concerns expressed about

this modification include clarity regarding who will respond to the issues raised by neighbors and businesses impacted by homelessness. Additionally, a discussion about the scrutiny a service provider may experience by assuming this implementation role, which could divert attention and focus from fulfilling their primary mission.

Another suggestion was housing the CARES Director with a service provider and one of the outreach workers who would focus on connecting people who are homeless to services. The other outreach worker could be situated at the Town and focus on connecting with and responding to neighbors and businesses impacted by homelessness.

Questions were also raised by the level of compensation the Town may consider for the proposed positions. The discussion noted the exceptional qualifications that would be required of the CARES Director. A suggestion was put forth to recommend a hiring committee for the CARES Director. It was also suggested the TF draft a proposed list of qualifications for the position.

### **All Neighbors are Known**

----"by name list" is a common homeless management & response system

--people who are homeless (PWH) go to providers, get entered into the system by their name

--know who our neighbors are to understand what an effective service connection looks like

--CARES outreach would help to build the by name list, and also address significant limitations with official Point in Time Count

--Purpose is to expedite connection to individuals so they can return to stable housing and improved well-being/quality of life as quickly as possible; not a surveillance model

### **TF Feedback:**

A concern was expressed about having multiple lists and a suggestion was made to use current list generated in HMIS (HMIS is HUD's Homeless Management Information System). It was noted to be included in HMIS, an individual must come into contact with a provider who has access to the system. Further, Chair Murphy-Nugen noted the finding from the homelessness needs assessment that indicated 80% of participants had never been contacted by an outreach worker—which means they would not show up on any current list. She also noted expected hesitation among the homeless sub-population who intersects the criminal justice system and potential hesitation of being documented in HUD's HMIS. Law enforcement are noting their contacts on a separate list—interest was expressed in combining that information into a single document. While there was agreement that one single list makes sense, there remains issues with the current database. Keri has recently become the regional coordinator for the Region 1 Continuum of Care (CoC) and noted that the group has been meeting once a month. Others

recommended more frequent meetings. She will keep us updated as she transitions into that role.

### **Residence, A Place to Call Home**

-three options are being considered, feedback will be solicited from community at August 3 meeting

-this feedback will be considered by TF at its Sept 2 meeting

-overall goal is to rapidly connect people who are homeless with shelter to not only help individual experiencing homelessness but also mitigates impacts to neighbors and community

#### **3 options:**

##### **Option 1. Keep doing what we are doing**

--it is working, but data from our needs assessment indicates gaps

--will not fully address the issues that have come out of the data

--30% of community feedback survey participants want this, or to limit services

##### **Option 2. Strengthen & expand capacity of current system**

--community support for providers (includes leveraging additional funds to support providers in service provision)

--increased coordination of care to help fill the gaps (SUD, criminal justice cases, etc.)

--expanding capacity to respond to issues more effectively

--we have resources that we are not able to use efficiently—housing vouchers, rapid rehousing funds aren't getting used because there aren't enough rentals

--use what's been given to us and use it more effectively

##### **Option 3. Develop additional emergency shelter**

-a lot to consider with this option

-acknowledge that Haywood Pathways and REACH are existing effective emergency shelter models

-existing community concern over a low-barrier model—need to also acknowledge a significant amount of misinformation is being shared about this model (e.g. often communicated as “chaotic,” but effective LBS requires substantial structure and coordination of care—which also means, a significant amount of technical expertise and funding supports are needed for effective implementation)

-federal funding often requires LBS model because it is recognized as “evidence-based”

-as noted above, we currently have resources we are not fully utilizing—which suggests it would be challenging to be competitive for funding

-while 20-30% of the community is not in favor of this option—the overwhelming response to the community feedback survey indicates 70-80% support for additional housing services—including a low-barrier emergency shelter

### **TF Feedback:**

The TF discussed the current level of funding support to service providers. Chair Murphy-Nugen noted the overall inaccurate impression that providers are receiving more town financial support than they are. For example, one provider received \$1,000 last year to support their mission to respond to homelessness. TF members would like to see a specific action item requesting the town increase their financial support to providers and ensure more transparency in the proposal process.

### **Education, Prevention & Early Intervention**

--we share a goal to prevent homelessness; however, this framework reflects the reality that there will always be neighbors who experience crises

--efforts aimed at youth, supporting schools

### **TF Feedback:**

No feedback was provided on these action items

### **Supports**

--wrap around services to move people to more stable housing, quality of life, community cohesion

--proposing CARES Director to help with policy design & innovations

--ie. expanding inclusive zoning like at the BILO Complex

--20 units set-aside for affordable housing

--LIHTC (i.e. Low-income Housing Tax Credit) is the largest supply of direct affordable rental funds, hard for rural areas to compete for those (but former hospital development will be coming available soon)

--not a viable long term strategy, likelihood that inclusive zoning will address the creation of additional affordable housing units quicker

--ie. exploring landlord incentives to take housing vouchers, in lieu of Air BNBS

-- What incentives can we offer that address market realities?

--prevention—Child Development Account

- federally assisted savings account for children to generate wealth
  - investment in youth to prevent homelessness (savings used for asset-generating activities once they reach 18 years old—i.e. start a business, purchase a house, pursue trade school or higher education)
- where would we put additional housing in Waynesville?
  - suggest that we map and identify vacant property, remove blight, turn them into affordable units, get them back onto tax paying roles
- significant need to address behavioral health for people who are homeless
  - Currently, Representative Pless is exploring on opening a treatment center

**TF Feedback:**

TF members discussed including policy recommendations in response to the pre-trial release program—document summons, citations; more effective communication & partnership between LEOs and magistrates; considerations of more effective monitoring and supports for individuals on release (i.e. check-ins, connections with providers), support for a recovery court in Haywood County.

There was a recommendation to highlight workforce development distinct from the other wrap-around service areas noted in the action steps.

A suggestion was made to further articulate specific details regarding the need to increase access to and services for mental health and substance use treatment.

Chair Murphy-Nugen thanked the TF members for their feedback and encouraged them to send specific, written recommendations by email so that she could be sure to accurately reflect the ideas into the draft plan.

**Preparation for August 5 Open House**

The next TF meeting will take place in tandem with the August 5 Community Feedback Open House, which is scheduled from 5:00 to 8:00 PM at the Waynesville Recreation Center, Community Meeting Room. Each TF member has been asked to sign-up for a time slot to staff the open house. A request was made for Chair Murphy-Nugen to send out detailed instructions regarding the community open house.

**Actions Between Now & Next Meeting**

Review homeless needs assessment & draft recommendations; provide feedback to Chair as soon as possible but prior to September 2 meeting

Sign-up for time slot for August 5 community open house

Share invitation for community members to attend August 5

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Chief Adams, Brandon Wilson seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.

**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 August 5, 2021.