

MEETING MINUTES

**Town of Waynesville
Task Force on Homelessness**

Thursday, June 3, 2021

5:30 PM—7:00 PM EST

**Location:
Public Services Building-129
Legion Drive &
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. Chair Murphy-Nugen introduced Abby Shuler, a MSW student from Western Carolina University, who was awarded a summer research assistantship to assist the Task Force.

Approval of Minutes from May 6, 2021

A motion to approve the meeting minutes from May 6, 2021 was made by Chief Adams. The motion was seconded by Joslyn Schaefer. All voted in favor of approving the meeting minutes from May 6, 2021 and the minutes were approved.

Federal Funding Update:

Alderman Sutton provided an update on federal funding allocated to Waynesville through the passage of the American Rescue Plan (ARP). The Town of Waynesville is estimated to receive nearly \$3 million dollars in ARP funds. The first allocation of funds, in the amount of 1.495 million dollars, was distributed in May 2021. The second allocation of funds, 1.495 million dollars, is expected to be available May 2022. Alderman Sutton clarified funding requirements and eligible expenditures. 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. Further, additional clarification indicated that ARP funds may support activities addressing homelessness. Consequently, Alderman Sutton shared that Helping Hands of Haywood submitted a proposal as a part of the 2021-2022 budget process. The purpose of these funds (proposed allocation of \$70K to be awarded over 2 years at \$35K/year) will be to support activities mitigating homelessness. Additional community organizations may submit proposals for ARP funds. Chair Murphy-Nugen reminded the Task Force that she submitted a "reserve request" of \$500K (allocated at \$250K/year over 2 years) that would be allocated to needs/opportunities as identified in the forthcoming community action plan.

Commissioner Ensley also provided a brief update to the federal funds allocated to Haywood County (\$6 million allocated in 2021; \$6 million allocated in 2022). It is anticipated the funding will be directed to ongoing obligations. Commissioner Ensley offered for County Manager Bryant Morehead to provide additional details and updates at a future meeting.

Chair Murphy-Nugen also reminded the Task Force that although ARP funds are generally dedicated to infrastructure needs and opportunities--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 an anticipated 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 are eligible for the 1.9-million-dollar funding.

In addition, the HOPE program is again accepting applications. Vicky Gribble, participant of the TF's Eviction-Foreclosure-Crisis Response-Winter Prep Working Group, shared an update of the program. The HOPE Program provides rental and utility assistance to qualifying individuals impacted by the pandemic. Individuals may apply by visiting hope.nc.gov or calling 888.927.5467.

Further, Vicky shared there would be another food distribution event on June 16 from 3:00 to 5:00 PM at the Pigeon Center. At a recent distribution event, Vicky noted 184 families, representing 354 individuals, were served.

Summary from Planning Committee Meeting:

Mandy was asked to provide a summary of the Planning Committee Public Hearing held on May 26, 2021. The purpose of the Planning Committee's Public Hearing was to consider amendments to Land Development Standards (LDS) Section 17 definitions and Section 2.5.3 Permitted Uses Table related to congregate living facilities and emergency shelters; consider definitions for shelter, emergency; shelter, homeless; shelter, temporary; and, soup kitchen; and, consider permitted land uses. Upon receiving public feedback, the Planning Committee indicated it would engage in further review. Even though the TF has not been involved in this process, Chair Murphy-Nugen noted there may be unintended consequences regarding some of the definitions and hoped the Planning Committee would both engage in discussions with existing providers (including shelters serving individuals experiencing domestic violence) and also consider the TF's findings/results of its data collection.

Data Collection Update:

Chair Amy Murphy-Nugen reviewed a revised timeline for the Task Force and provided an update on data collection.

The Community Feedback Survey—open to all members of the community to participate, provide feedback, identify priorities, etc.—opened on April 9, 2021 and closed on May 31, 2021. Three hundred and thirteen individuals completed the survey.

Survey with people who are homeless opened on April 17, 2021 and will close on Friday, June 11, 2021. To date, 31 surveys have been completed. Data collection was impacted by some recent actions—and we are grateful to our community partners (i.e. Haywood Pathways, EACH, Helping Hands of Haywood, REACH) for assisting our efforts. With their assistance, we are anticipating collecting at least an additional 26 completed surveys by June 11.

To date, three listening sessions have been completed (residents, Nov 12, 2020; faith leaders, May 24, 2021; and, people who are homeless, May 27, 2021). The listening session with law enforcement representatives is scheduled and we are working to schedule the remaining three sessions (housing providers; behavioral health providers; and, business owners).

In addition, the Economic Stability Work Group administered a survey to business owners in fall 2020. Chair Murphy-Nugen will be reaching out to request those findings/results to include in our data collection and report.

The rest of June will be spent collecting remaining data, facilitating the remaining listening sessions and analyzing data to identify community priorities and draft recommendations. Data findings/results and a draft community action plan are anticipated to be presented

to the TF in July. In August, the TF will host a community open house for the public to share feedback on priority areas. At the TF's September meeting, it is anticipated we will finalize the community action plan and present it to the Mayor and Board of Aldermen at their September 28 meeting.

Members of the TF asked Chair Murphy-Nugen to consider moving the July 1 meeting date due to the holiday. She will send out a poll to determine availability of TF members.

In addition, following a discussion of our neighbors who are homeless and particular populations for consideration (i.e. 1) individuals benefitting from support of shelter environment; 2) individuals who are struggling with mental health and/or substance use issues and challenged by a shelter environment; 3) individuals who intersect the categories of homelessness and criminal behavior; 4) individuals who are homeless and older adults; and 5) families with children who are homeless)—members of the TF requested that we set aside most of our July agenda for guest presentations: Judge Letts to discuss the pre-trial diversion program; Mandy with Haywood Pathways to discuss the shelter, programs, and guidelines; Nicole K. with Helping Hands of Haywood to discuss their outreach and support of individuals who are homeless; and, Richard B. or another representative from Bethel House to discuss their services to individuals who are homeless. The meeting time was also extended by 30 minutes.

Date	Time	Location	Purpose	Task Force Responsibility
Thursday, July 8	5:30—7:30 PM	Town Hall, 16 South Main	Regular business meeting	Presented with draft findings, results, CAP; review & provide feedback by 7.16
Thursday, August 5	5:00—8:00 PM*	TBA	Community feedback/prioritization open house	Staff feedback stations per schedule
Thursday, September 2	5:30—7:00 PM	Town Hall, 16 South Main	Regular business meeting	Finalize CAP
Tuesday, September 28	6:00 PM	Town Hall, 9 South Main	Present CAP to Mayor & BoA	Attend meeting

Next Meeting

After hearing from members of the Task Force regarding their July availability—the meeting was scheduled for Thursday, July 8 from 5:30 p.m-7:30 p.m. Further, since the Public Services Building parking lot is under construction—future meetings will be held at the Town Hall Meeting Room, 16 South Main Street.

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 June 11, 2021.