

COACHELLA VALLEY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS

HOMELESSNESS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

February 26, 2009

1. WESTERN COACHELLA VALLEY MULTI-SERVICE CENTER (MSC) PROJECT ROLL OUT CEREMONY

The Coachella Valley Association of Governments' (CVAG) Homelessness Committee members and ex-officios came together on Thursday, February 25, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. at the Project Roll Out Ceremony of the Homeless Western Coachella Valley Multi-Service Center (MSC) at 19531 McLane Street, North Palm Springs, California 92240.

Master of Ceremonies Rob Field, Riverside County Director of Facilities Management, unveiled the name "Desert Resource Center" for the MSC as recommended by CVAG's Homelessness Committee. Dan Martinez, Riverside County Deputy Executive Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance. Speakers included Riverside County Board of Supervisors Roy Wilson and Marion Ashley; Jerry Wengerd, Riverside County Director of Department of Mental Health; Susan Loew, Riverside County Director of Department of Public Social Services; CVAG's Homelessness Committee's Chairwoman Lupe Ramos Watson, City of Indio Councilmember; Steve Pougnet, Mayor of Palm Springs; CVAG's Homelessness Committee Member Ginny Foat, City of Palm Springs Councilmember.

2. ADJOURNMENT

At the end of the Project Roll Out Ceremony CVAG's Homelessness Committee members and ex-officios adjourned from the MSC site and convene at the Palm Springs City Hall Council Chambers.

3. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The Coachella Valley Association of Governments' (CVAG) Homelessness Committee meeting was called to order on Thursday, February 25, 2009 at 11:15 a.m. by Vice Chair Patrick Mullany, Councilmember, City of Indian Wells, at the Palm Springs City Hall Council Chambers, 3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way, Palm Springs, CA 92262. Vice Chair stated that the Western Coachella Valley Multi-Service Center (MSC) Project Roll Out Ceremony was an extraordinary event. Probably the highlight of the event was the announcement of the money. A great deal of thanks was given to Amanda Keil by the Committee for her work on obtaining the funding. Upon the arrival of the Chairwoman, Vice Chair Mullany handed the meeting over to Chairwoman Lupe Ramos Watson, Councilmember, City of Indio.

A roll call of the voting members and ex-officios was conducted and it was determined that a quorum of voting members was present.

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MEMBERS PRESENT

Councilmember Lupe Ramos Watson (*Chair*)
Councilmember Chuck Vasquez
Councilmember Patrick Mullany (*Vice Chair*)
Councilmember Kristy Franklin
Councilmember Ginny Foat
Councilmember Alan Seman
Leticia DeLara, Legislative Assistant

AGENCY

City of Indio
City of Cathedral City
City of Indian Wells
City of La Quinta
City of Palm Springs
City of Rancho Mirage
County of Riverside

MEMBER ABSENT

Councilmember Emmanuel Martinez
Mayor Pro Tem Karl Baker
Councilmember Jean Benson

AGENCY

City of Coachella
City of Desert Hot Springs
City of Palm Desert

MEMBER SEATS VACANT

City of Blythe
Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians
Cabazon Band of Mission Indians
Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT

Darla Burkett, Executive Director
Chuck Johnson, Program Manager/Region D
Dan Bass, Executive Director
Linda Barrack, Director
Le McClellan, Case Manger
John Wolohan, Executive Director
Lothar Vasholz, Advisory Board Chair
Dale Cook, Community Development Admin./Region D

Coachella Valley Rescue Mission
Episcopal Community Services
Jewish Family Service of the Desert
Jewish Family Service of San Diego
The Well in the Desert
Martha's Village and Kitchen
The Salvation Army
City of Palm Springs

OTHERS PRESENT

Stefanie Frith, Reporter
Jim Hicks
Linda Hodge, Housing Specialist
Kevin A. Johnson, Rev.
Debra Loukatos, ECE Coordinator
Sue Meyers, Director of Operations
Sean M. Moore, Principal Planner
Thomas Peterson, Development Specialist
Frankie Riddle, Director of Special Programs
Vincent Yzaguirre, Director of Real Estate
Sly Zelnys, Chair

The Desert Sun Newspaper
Palm Springs Homeless Task Force
City of Rancho Mirage
Palm Springs Homeless Task Force
Coachella Valley Child Care Council
Coachella Valley Rescue Mission
City of Indio
County Dept. of Mental Health
City of Palm Desert
County of Riverside
Palm Springs Homeless Task Force

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SUPPORT STAFF PRESENT

Dr. Ron Stewart, Administrative Manager/Homeless	County of Riverside (DPSS)
Larry Parrish, Interim, Executive Director	CVAG
Aurora Wilson, Director of Community Resources	CVAG
Amanda Keil, Management Analyst	CVAG
Jacob Alvarez, Management Analyst	CVAG
Valarie Franklin, Program Assistant	CVAG

4. **FINALIZATION OF AGENDA / ADDITIONS & REVISIONS** - None.

5. **PUBLIC COMMENTS** - None.

6. **HOMELESSNESS COMMITTEE MEMBERS/EX-OFFICIOS & DIRECTORS COMMENTS**

- Chairwoman Ramos Watson welcomed new Committee Member Kristy Franklin, Councilmember for the City of La Quinta. The floor was opened for comments from Committee Members and Ex-officios.

- Dr. Stewart reported that the Homeless Count numbers are in the process of being entered. A preliminary report is due to Dr. Stewart on the 16th of March. Dr. Stewart has been asked to do a presentation workshop to the County Board of Supervisors on April 20th, so he will be working hard to get a final report completed by that time. He also reported that it was announced that the County will receive \$6.5 million through the 2008 SuperNOFA competitive process. The money will be used to fund all of the existing programs for one more year, as well as three new projects making 47 new beds across the County of permanent supportive housing added to the Continuum.

- Dan Bass reported that Jewish Family Service of the Desert received their third year of funding from the Desert Healthcare District to provide supportive case management services at the Nightengale Manor through January of 2010.

- Councilmember Seman requested that the Pledge of Allegiance be added to the agenda. This was second by Councilmember Patrick Mullany. There were no objections.

- Several Committee members spoke on the increasing number of solicitors from outside the area that camp-out in front of businesses, large grocery stores, etc. and ask for money. Local funds that are needed for the new Desert Resource Center are being taken out of the Coachella Valley. Three organizations were named: "Building a New Foundation"; "Restoring Every Soul to Christ" and "Community and Service" that are from the Fontana area and that have been asking for donations in the cities.

Chairwoman Ramos Watson said we might have to do something as simple as a PR Campaign to educate the supermarkets that these are not local agency representatives.

Councilmember Foat said that the City of Palm Springs is fortunate to have Stefanie Frith as the local representative from the Desert Sun and maybe she can speak with her Board

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about doing an article to make people aware that this is not helping the homeless in our Valley.

Staff was asked to research this issue and bring back for further discussion.

- Councilmember Vasquez thanked Linda Barrack and her staff for a job well done with the Cold Weather Shelter. Per the homeless providers in the City of Cathedral City the Cold Weather Shelter has been an amazing service to their people.
- The Chairwoman introduced Larry Parrish, Interim Executive Director of CVAG.

7. **CORRESPONDENCE** - None.

8. **MEETING MINUTES**

THE HOMELESSNESS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 21, 2009 WERE APPROVED BY A CONSENSUS OF THE COMMITTEE. THE CITIES OF CATHEDRAL CITY AND INDIAN WELLS ABSTAINED.

9. **RIVERSIDE COUNTY UPDATE**

9A. **MSC FACILITY DESIGN UPDATE**

Vincent Yzaguirre, Department of Facilities Management, reported that the MSC is well underway with the mental health component "SafeHaven," that is due to be completed April 1st. The DPSS portion of the facility, which are the four bays, they are still working on the program and the design aspects, and components within that shelter component of the MSC. The design aspect is due to be completed in the next 30 days.

Leticia de Lara stated that Mental Health is planning the opening of the SafeHaven Project for April 9th at 1:30 p.m. and that formal invitations will be sent as soon as the program comes together.

Councilmember Foat said that a gentleman, who has a business in the area of the MSC, approached her at the Project Roll Out and according to this man there hasn't been any contact with the business owners in that industrial park. Councilmember Foat asked if something could be put together, like a fact sheet of when the MSC would open and some of the services that would be provided, so that the business would know what was happening.

Larry Parrish said that Rob Field's office should be able to take care of this request.

Mr. Yzaguirre stated that during the acquisition phase the County did make contact with the businesses in the industrial park so that they would be aware of the project. Now that the project has moved into the design phase and with SafeHaven opening soon, it may be time to re-contact the businesses and let them know what the plans

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are for the opening of the MSC.

Mr. Yzaguirre said that as Mr. Parrish indicated, County Facilities will put together a fact sheet and get that out to the communities surrounding the MSC.

Councilmember Foat suggested that Program Planning Subcommittee take a look at having some sort of outreach team that could target homeless people that are camping out in front of businesses to come to the MSC and use the services. The Homelessness Committee hasn't talked about marketing the MSC to the homeless community, so that might be something to think about.

9D. COLD WEATHER SHELTER UPDATE

Linda Barrack, Director with Jewish Family Service of San Diego, reported that there have been no problems with the exception of the rain causing the roof on the restroom trailer to give way. The repair was made and the restrooms were up and running within the day. On the previous night the Cold Weather Shelter had 34 overnight clients.

Dr. Stewart reported that WRCOG has adopted the model, and his first meeting with them is set for March 16th.

Dr. Stewart said regarding the issue of outreach, the Department of Mental Health has been funding through an HUD grant to do outreach in the desert, that might be of help.

Dr. Stewart reported that the Cold Weather Shelter is scheduled to end April 15th. The decision now needs to be made if the SOS Program should go back to rotation among the churches, or should it remain at the McLane site until such time as the MSC opens. Rob Field designed the current bay so that the Cold Weather Shelter could stay there if that was the decision. Dr. Stewart said that the numbers are due to him today, on the cost of staying at the McLane site. He said given the County's current crisis of cash it's very challenging to find additional money to expand the program. The big cost is the shower and toilet trailers, which run about \$7,000 a month to rent. He asked the Committee if they had any concerns or preferences as to which way they would like to see the project unfold, until such time as the MSC opens.

Several Committee members spoke about how they would like to see the SOS Program remain at the McLane site.

Ms. Barrack, who runs the SOS Program for the County, said that she would like to see the Program stay at the McLane site for several reasons: it gives it stability; the sheer fact that they have showers; and for staff it's easier by having a spot for the case managers without having to move everything from place to place. Ms. Barrack said that they continue to maintain relationships with the faith-based congregations, and they come to the McLane site and continue to interact with the homeless.

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Chairwoman Ramos Watson said that she would like to find a way, early on, to keep the faith-based community involved. She suggested that we bring them all together and discuss a coordinated effort to best impact the homeless.

Dr. Stewart commented that he hoped that interacting with the faith-based community would be one of the things assigned to the Operator of the MSC, once selected.

Dr. Stewart said that the best solution he has seen so far is in the City of Missoula, Montana, where they had a marketing campaign which resulted in a small poster that almost every shopkeeper in town posted in the front of the buildings, that say they do not support these activities. And if they want to give there are parking meters turned into coin accepting jars where people can put quarters into the parking meters if they want to donate to the local cause as an alternative to these people seeking donations in front of stores. This has completely eradicated the problem.

Mrs. Wilson said that it seems like the consensus of the Committee is to see if the SOS Program can stay at the McLane site, should the cost figures workout that way for the County to do so, but that she would like to remind County staff that we are going out again with an RFP, should that be the action of this Committee, to look for an operator for the MSC, and not to make themselves too much at home at the McLane site.

10. PROGRAM PLANNING SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE

10A. REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR MSC OPERATORS

Ms. Keil provided a report that the Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for the Operators of the Western Regional Coachella Valley Multi-Service Center (MSC) were released on December 5, 2008 and were due to CVAG by January 19, 2009. Proposals were received by only one agency, Jewish Family Service of San Diego, which applied for all three components. At the January 21st meeting of the Homelessness Committee, a Subcommittee was created to review the Proposals. The Subcommittee, which included Councilmembers Mullany, Foat, Seman, and Leticia DeLara, met on February 17th. Each member was given an opportunity to review the proposals prior to the meeting. The Subcommittee recommended that the RFPs be re-released in an attempt to acquire proposals from other agencies. This will ensure that all interested agencies are given an opportunity to submit proposals and will allow the Homelessness Committee to make a comparison between two or more proposals. The Subcommittee emphasized that this recommendation is in no way indicative of any analysis of Jewish Family Service or their Proposals, but rather is based only on the need to ensure that an informed decision is made.

Councilwoman Foat said that she would like to make sure that Jewish Family Service doesn't have to go through the whole RPF process again, and that they can just resubmit.

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Mrs. Wilson stated that if Jewish Family Service is going to submit another proposal that they make sure to look at the application and their current proposal, and if there are any changes, to make sure they address those areas where changes have been made, that would be acceptable.

Ms. Keil reported that staff will complete the recommended steps before re-releasing the RFPs. Some consideration will be given to combining the shelter operations and food operations components, as well as to making other changes necessary to allow more agencies an opportunity to apply. Should any significant changes need to be made to the documents, staff will return to the Subcommittee and this Committee for approval prior to the re-release. Previously, the RFPs were only advertised locally and sent to a few agencies from out of the area that had expressed interest. Staff will reach out to more agencies outside the Coachella Valley through advertisements and research. The RFPs will be re-released no later than the end of March. There is sufficient time to complete this process as the opening date for the Desert Resource Center is not projected until December 1, 2009.

It was the consensus of the Committee for staff to make any needed changes to the RFPs without bringing it back before the Committees.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILMEMBER ALAN SEMAN, CITY OF RANCHO MIRAGE, AND SECOND BY COUNCILMEMBER GINNY FOAT, CITY OF PALM SPRINGS TO DIRECT STAFF TO:

- 1) RESEARCH WHY OTHER AGENCIES WHO RECEIVED THE RFPs FOR MSC OPERATORS DID NOT APPLY;**
- 2) CONSIDER MAKING CHANGES TO THE RFPs BASED UPON THE FEEDBACK FROM THOSE AGENCIES; AND,**
- 3) RE-RELEASE THE RFPs, WITH ANY CHANGES, TO AN EXTENDED DISTRIBUTION LIST. MOTION PASSED.**

10B. STRATEGIC PLAN REVISION

Ms. Keil reported that at the January 21, 2009 Homelessness Committee meeting, the Committee discussed and reviewed the changes to the Strategic Plan's goals that were recommended by the Program Planning Subcommittee. A few changes were recommended by the Committee and those changes have been made. Based upon these goals, staff updated the narrative and attachments with approval by the Program Planning Subcommittee.

Mrs. Wilson reported that the letters requesting funding for the Operation of the MSC, have gone out to the cities, to be taken through the City Councils. Staff is happy to attend the Council meetings to answer any questions. Staff has been meeting with the cities that voiced concern on the funding formula that was approved by the Executive Committee.

Chairwoman Ramos Watson said that transportation is not addressed in the Plan, should we add it as an objective? Councilwoman Foat said that she thinks there is

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some confusion about the transportation issue and that we should have somebody assigned to work on it.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILMEMBER LUPE RAMOS WATSON, CITY OF INDIO, AND SECOND BY COUNCILMEMBER GINNY FOAT, CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, TO RECOMMEND THAT THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE APPROVE THE REVISED STRATEGIC PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS, INCLUDING THE AMENDMENT OF MAKING TRANSPORTATION AN OBJECTIVE AND TO FORM A SUBCOMMITTEE. MOTION PASSED.

10C. FURNISHINGS FOR THE MSC

Ms. Keil provided a report that it is understood that the County will cover any fixed amenities within the MSC, leaving furnishings to be purchased through another source. It was suggested by Committee that the cost for the furnishings could come from private sources, such as individuals and foundations. Staff has contacted the City of Palm Desert who is donating surplus office furniture for about five offices and one small conference room. Staff will contact the other jurisdictions in search of additional surplus office furniture. The Program Planning Subcommittee created a preliminary list of furnishings and supplies that will be needed.

Chairwoman Ramos Watson said that the Convention Visitors Authority has a Hospitality Business Industry Council that would love to hear about our needs.

Councilmember Seman said that the City of Rancho Mirage has a surplus furniture catalog that staff is welcome to look through and choose what they like.

Darla Burkett offered a word of caution on taking just taking “anything,” as it just becomes a nightmare of trash. A shopping lists that includes windows, doors, etc. and their costs, needs to be created.

11. INFORMATIONAL

11A. BUS PASS PROGRAM UPDATE

Ms. Keil provided a report that on December 1, 2008 the Executive Committee approved that letters should be sent to each of CVAG’s member jurisdictions requesting a contribution in the amount of \$3,000 to the Bus Pass Program. As of February 17th, contributions of \$3,000 each have been received from the Cities of Coachella, Indio, La Quinta, Palm Desert, Rancho Mirage, and the County of Riverside. Changes have been made to the Usage Forms as requested by the Homelessness Committee. The agencies are now asked to specify success of the Program’s participants. Agencies must specify the number of jobs, housing, and independent transportation attained participants each month Only “10-Day” and “Daily” passes will be ordered. “10-Day” passes must be punched upon each use, allowing the agencies to track whether or not the passes have been used by the clients. Agencies can request that these passes be returned when all rides have

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been used, whereas there is no way to determine whether monthly passes have been used. The cost of the "10-Day" passes is \$12.50 for adults, as compared to \$34 for monthly passes. Because many monthly pass holders do not need to use the pass 30 days out of a month, purchasing "10-Day" passes will be more cost effective for the majority of individuals.

Chairwoman Ramos Watson said that she has learned that there are discount outlets for bus passes, as well as half-fare provisions, and she would like to know how the MSC can become one of these discount outlets. There are opportunities in SunLine's fare policies, where the MSC should be able to receive what is needed or at least be an outlet. More digging needs to be done.

Councilmember Vasquez asked about the Contribution List where Desert Hot Springs is listed as "will not be agendized." Does that mean they aren't even willing to put it before their Council to be heard? Staff stated that the City Manger of Desert Hot Springs sent an e-mail that said, at this time it could not be put in the budget and therefore will not be agendized.

11B. FISCAL SPONSOR UPDATE

Ms. Keil provided a report that a draft agreement was created by staff and CVAG's Legal Counsel, Toni Eggebraaten, and taken to the February 23rd Executive Committee meeting where they approved Regional Access Project (RAP) Foundation for the fiscal sponsor of CVAG's homeless Western Coachella Valley Regional Multi-Service Center. The agreement is set to be reviewed by the RAP's Board of Director's meeting in March.

Some of the requirements included in the agreement are:

- > Basic Accounting Services, including regular reports to CVAG;
- > Placement of CVAG funds in a separate account;
- > Establishment of procedures to ensure that all funds intended for CVAG's homeless efforts are placed in these accounts;
- > Distribution of funds at CVAG's discretion to the operator(s) of the MSC or other entities, as requested; and,
- > Investment of funds in accordance with CVAG's current investment policy.
- > The agreement is for three years and allows either party to terminate the agreement at any time. RAP has also proposed to provide some assistance with fundraising and marketing at no additional cost.

Ms. Keil reported that the agreement should be executed on March 9th, and on March 10th staff will be able to proceed with applying to foundations that require a 501(c)(3) designation. The California Endowment, the Weingart Foundation, and the Annenberg Foundation, will be the first foundations to be pursued for funding to offset the cost of operations and to help with the purchase of furnishings for the MSC. This agreement will also allow CVAG to provide a receipt for individuals who wish to receive a tax deduction. The costs of the fiscal sponsorship will be collected directly from the funds placed in the account and will be on a reimbursement basis. Projected first year costs are \$960 for a one time start up cost and \$520 per month, for a total of \$7,200.

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12. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The County's Continuum of Care Region D quarterly meeting will be held at 8:30 a.m. on Wednesday, March 18th, 2009 in CVAG's conference room 115.

The next regularly meeting of the Homelessness Committee is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, March 18th, 2009 at the CVAG offices, 73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 119, Palm Desert, California.

Councilwoman Foat announced that the City of Palm Springs has provided lunch for the Committee immediately after the meeting.

13. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Valarie Franklin, Program Assistant
Department of Community Resources (DCR)
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CVAG MEETING AGENDAS ARE AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET AT: WWW.CVAG.ORG
E-MAIL US AT: awilson@cvag.org akeil@cvag.org vfranklin@cvag.org