

**HOMELESSNESS COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING
March 18, 2009**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Coachella Valley Association of Governments' (CVAG) Homelessness Committee meeting was called to order on Wednesday, March 18, 2009 at 10:04 a.m. by Chair Lupe Ramos Watson, at CVAG offices, 73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Conference Room 119, Palm Desert, California 92260.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilmember Alan Seman with the City of Rancho Mirage led the pledge of allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

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

MEMBERS PRESENT

Councilmember Emmanuel Martinez
Mayor Pro Tem Karl Baker
Councilmember Lupe Ramos Watson (*Chair*)
Councilmember Patrick Mullany (*Vice Chair*)
Councilmember Kristy Franklin
Councilmember Jean Benson
Councilmember Ginny Foat
Councilmember Alan Seman
Leticia DeLara, Legislative Assistant

AGENCY

City of Coachella
City of Desert Hot Springs
City of Indio
City of Indian Wells
City of La Quinta
City of Palm Desert
City of Palm Springs
City of Rancho Mirage
County of Riverside

MEMBERS ABSENT

Councilmember Chuck Vasquez

AGENCY

City of Cathedral City

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT

Darla Burkett, Executive Director
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

AGENCY

Coachella Valley Rescue Mission
Jewish Family Services 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

Linda Hodge, Housing Specialist
Sly Zelnys, Chair
Jennifer DiCiano

Jessica Meza, Senior Case Manager
Deb Blaske
Erika Sanchez
Darlene Lowrey
Pastor Joe Nunziato
Jim Franklin

Charles Waltman, Deputy Dir. Real Estate
Pam Tuschner, Partner
Rizaldy Baluyot, Supervising Facilities Project Manager
Vincent Yzaguirre, Dir. Of Real Estate

City of Rancho Mirage
Palm Springs Homeless Task Force
Western Riverside Council of Govts.
Catholic Charities
RCDOMH-HHOPE Program
RCDOMH HHOPE Program

Palm Springs Homeless Task Force
County of Riverside
WWCOT Architects
County of Riverside
County of Riverside Facilities Mgmt

SUPPORT STAFF PRESENT

Dr. Ron Stewart, Administrative Manager/Homeless
Maria Marquez, Mental Health Services Administration
Larry Parrish, Interim, Executive Director
Aurora Wilson, Director of Community Resources
Amanda Keil, Management Analyst
Jacob Alvarez, Management Analyst
Valarie Franklin, Program Assistant

County Homeless Division
County Mental Health Services
CVAG
CVAG
CVAG
CVAG
CVAG

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

5. **PUBLIC COMMENTS** - None.

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

• Mayor Pro-Tem Baker spoke on a recent trip to Washington, noting Senator Boxer's federal funding request for the Desert Resource Center.

• Councilmember Benson stated that the City of PD donated \$125,000.00 to the Coachella Valley Rescue Mission as they are short on food. She hopes other cities will follow suit. Chair Watson added that they had relocated to the Riverside County Fairgrounds after a fire and were hoping to reopen facilities in Indio.

Chairwoman Ramos Watson introduced new Committee Councilmember Emmanuel Martinez from the City of Coachella.

7. **CORRESPONDENCE**

Aurora Wilson noted a copy of a recent Desert Sun Editorial article with comments from Councilmember Foat and Arlene Rosenthal of Well in the Desert as well as recent articles about the Coachella Valley Rescue Mission.

8. **MEETING MINUTES**

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILMEMBER GINNY FOAT AND SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER PATRICK MULLANY TO APPROVE THE HOMELESSNESS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 26, 2009. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY WITH THE CITIES OF PALM DESERT AND DESERT HOT SPRINGS ABSTAINING.

9. **RIVERSIDE COUNTY UPDATE**

9A. DESERT RESOURCE CENTER FACILITY DESIGN UPDATE

Vincent Yzaguirre, County Department of Facilities Management, reported that plans are on schedule for the April 9th preview opening of the Mental Health portion of the Desert Resource Center. He added that work continues on the second phase portion of the facility. Councilmember Ginny Foat requested that a program update be brought back so that members would be able to answer questions as to how it will operate.

9B. COLD WEATHER SHELTER UPDATE

Dr. Ron Stewart from County Homeless Division reported he had previously discussed leaving the cold weather shelter open after April 15, but had not taken into consideration air conditioning needs. He is waiting for cost estimates to ascertain if there is enough funding to use this space.

Dale Cook from the City of Palm Springs provided an update on the Continuum of Care group, stating that the steering committee met and was looking into exploring funds that might be available for homelessness issues through the federal stimulus package.

A discussion of federal stimulus funding and where homelessness needs might be addressed ensued. Chair Ramos Watson stated that she wanted to make sure that housing and homelessness needs were addressed.

10. **SOLICITATION FOR HOMELESS DONATIONS**

Aurora Wilson reviewed concerns expressed by this committee regarding homeless donation solicitations occurring at local businesses and noted cities (e.g. Rancho

Mirage, Palm Springs, Desert Hot Springs) that have ordinances requiring permits for such solicitations. Councilperson Foat stated that a legal opinion should be obtained as to what restrictions could be placed on soliciting organizations and noted that a public relations campaign should be undertaken to educate residents about the needs of local organizations and the possibility that donations may not be utilized here. Chair Ramos Watson stated that the three important components are: 1) are there similar ordinances amongst the cities; 2) are they being enforced (question for the Public Safety Committee); and 3) can we legally, as a region, restrict organizations that do not use the funds here. She also agreed with the need for a public education campaign.

11. PROGRAM PLANNING SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE

11A. REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Ms. Keil reported that based on the small number of responses to the request for proposals for the Desert Resource Center, a subcommittee created to review the RFPs determined that it should be re-released. This, after exploration as to why more agencies had not applied and review of the RFP to determine if it might be simplified. The RFP has been re-released with a due date of April 28th. It is anticipated that the subcommittee recommendations on the responses will be brought to the Homelessness Committee May 20th meeting, with final review by the Executive Committee taking place on June 1st.

11B. FURNISHINGS

Ms. Keil noted that a handout with cost information for furnishing and supplies for the Desert Resource Center had been provided as an informational item only. She stated that cities and the county will also be contacted regarding any surplus furnishings that might be available and reviewed other items that are still needed. Councilmember Foat stated that major donors should be approached. Chair Ramos Watson recommended calling Mathis Brothers, Marriott Corporation, WalMart, Costco, etc. It was agreed that Dale Cook and Councilmember Foat would meet with staff regarding fundraising ideas, and that electeds could accompany staff to any in-person meetings with potential donors.

12. FORMATION OF A TRANSPORTATION SUBCOMMITTEE

Amanda Keil stated that the creation of a subcommittee had been discussed, to address transportation issues including a van route from western Coachella Valley and a bus route by the Desert Resource Center. Discussion ensued as to whether the program subcommittee could address specific transportation items such as this or whether a new subcommittee was needed. It was agreed that the program subcommittee would address transportation needs.

13. FUNDING UPDATE

13A. FOUNDATIONS

Amanda Keil reported that the Fiscal Agent agreement had been approved by the Executive Committee with minor changes made by legal counsel. Ms. Keil stated that staff was in the process of re-contacting various foundations to discuss potential funding and reviewed the organizations involved.

13B. REQUESTS FOR FEDERAL APPROPRIATIONS

Amanda Keil reported that the 2009 Appropriations Request of \$475,000.00 for the Desert Resource Center has been approved with the assistance of Congresswoman Bono Mack and Senators Feinstein and Boxer. She noted that it was a capital request and would go to the County as they are covering capital costs. Councilmember Foat asked why the amount requested was reduced; Ms. Keil stated that Senator Feinstein's office had requested this.

14. BUSS PASS PROGRAM UPDATE

Chair Ramos Watson reminded staff to look into discount pass/outlet opportunities with Sunline as the City of Indio had received correspondence from Sunline indicating that the City could become a discount outlet. Amanda Keil stated that staff would work on this. Chair Ramos Watson noted that some cities had already moved forward with plans for contributing to this program.

15. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Ramos Watson reminded members that April 9th will be the soft opening of the County's SafeHaven program at the new Desert Resource Center in North Palm Springs. In response to questions, Dr. Stewart indicated that homeless population counts were still being conducted and that figures should be available late April.

Chair Ramos Watson noted that she would be in Sacramento with the League of California Cities on April 15th.

The next regularly meeting of the Homelessness Committee is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, April 15th, 2009 at the CVAG offices, 73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 119, Palm Desert, California.

16. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:38 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patty Nevins, Interim Program Assistant
Department of Community Resources (DCR)
COACHELLA VALLEY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS