

COACHELLA VALLEY ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS

HOMELESSNESS COMMITTEE MINUTES OF THE MEETING November 28, 2007

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The Coachella Valley Association of Governments' (CVAG) Homelessness Committee meeting was called to order on Tuesday, October 16, 2007 at 10:33 a.m. by Chair Lupe Ramos Watson, at CVAG offices, 73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Conference Room 119, Palm Desert, California 92260-2516.

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

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Pro Tem Lupe Ramos Watson (*Chair*)
Councilmember Chuck Vasquez (*Vice Chair*)
Mayor Pro Tem Jesse Villarreal
Councilmember Yvonne Parks
Councilmember Patrick Mullany
Councilmember Lee Osborne
Mayor Pro Tem Jean Benson
Councilmember Ginny Foat
Councilmember Alan Seman
Leticia DeLara, Legislative Assistant

AGENCY

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

MEMBER SEATS VACANT - NOT COUNTED FOR QUORUM

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

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT

Claudia Castorena, Division Director
Darla Burkett, Executive Director
Tahlib McMicheaux, Director of Social Services
Jeffrey Kramer, Chief Financial Officer

Martha's Village and Kitchen
Coachella Valley Rescue Mission
The Well in the Desert
Shelter from the Storm

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Chuck Johnson, Program Manager
Dan Bass, Executive Director
Kathy McAdara, Executive Director
Frankie Riddle, Senior Management Analyst

AGENCY

Episcopal Community Services
Jewish Family Service of the Desert
SafeHouse of the Desert
City of Palm Desert

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OTHERS PRESENT

Betty Fernandez, Executive Director
Veda Brooks, Destiny Outreach Manager
Jessica Meza, Regional Coordinator
Edie Hylton, Community Services Director
Dale Cook, Community Development Administrator
Linda Hodge, Housing Specialist
Lyn Garcia, Community Program Specialist
Kim McWhorter, Program Coordinator
Deborah Blaske, Housing Resource Specialist
Erika Frescas, Housing Resource Specialist
Barbara McEwen, Nurse
Elsa Garcia, Community Program Specialist
Ken Graham, Fair Housing Commissioner
Noel Loughrin, Youth Advisory Council
Tes Ayenew, Director
Jim Knabb, Community Resource Specialist
Judy Shea, CEO
Linda Barrack, SOS Coordinator
John Wolohan, Executive Director
Jim Hicks
Rochelle Lewis, Executive Director
Eva Gueuther-James, Senior Program Officer
Bill Young, Vice Chairman Advisory Board
Claudia Galvez, District Representative
Barbara Barba
Linda Starr

Bridges of Hope
Calvary Christian Outreach
Catholic Charities
City of La Quinta
City of Palm Springs
City of Rancho Mirage
Community Action Partnership
County Animal Services
County Mental Health
County Mental Health
County Public Health
County Public Social Services
County of Riverside
County of Riverside
211 Riverside County
Desert Hot Springs Police Dept.
DHSCTF
Jewish Family Service of San Diego
Martha's Village and Kitchen
Palm Springs Homeless Task Force
PW Enhancement Center
Regional Access Project Foundation
Salvation Army
Senator Ducheny's Office

SUPPORT STAFF PRESENT

Ron Stewart, Administrative Manager Homeless Projects	County Public Social Services
Jody White, Staff Analyst	County Public Social Services
John Wohlmuth, Executive Director	CVAG
Aurora Kerr, Director of Community Resources	CVAG
Catherine McMillan, Governmental Services Director	CVAG
Amanda Keil, Management Analyst	CVAG
Valarie Franklin, Program Assistant	CVAG

2. FINALIZATION OF AGENDA / ADDITIONS & REVISIONS

None.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Linda Starr invited everyone to the Well in the Desert's Christmas Event at the Palm Springs Convention Center, December 25th from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

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4. HOMELESSNESS COMMITTEE MEMBER AND DIRECTOR COMMENT

•Chairwoman Ramos Watson announced that cake will be served during the meeting in honor of the Homelessness Committee's One-Year Anniversary: October 30, 2006 CVAG's Executive Committee redesignated the Homeless Subcommittee to a standing committee with elected officials as members. November 1, 2006 the Homeless Subcommittee selected a name for the new standing committee to be: Homelessness Committee. December 6, 2006 the new Homelessness Committee members elected a chair and vice chair. January 17, 2007 the Homelessness Committee appointed eight ex-officio members to the Homelessness Committee.

•The Chairwoman also congratulated those members/agencies that have held a perfect attendance record over the past year: County of Riverside, Cities of Palm Desert and Indio.

•Claudia Castorena reported on the Continuum of Care Steering Committee Retreat and the upcoming Project Homeless Connect.

•Councilmember Chuck Vasquez reported that on Thanksgiving Day, at the Cathedral City's Community Center, Bridges of Hope put on their annual Thanksgiving Day event for the homeless and the families, and seniors and over 300 people attended. They are seeing an increase of new younger homeless in Cathedral City, especially in the lower cove area (across from city hall). Councilmember Vasquez spoke to seven people that were all in their 20s, that have migrated there. Four were from Riverside. They heard there were more services and more opportunities here in the Coachella Valley for the homeless.

•Councilmember Ginny Foat apologized for needing to leave the meeting early today, due to a speaking engagement.

•Councilmember Yvonne Parks reported that the Food Now Distribution Center and the Bridges of Hope partnered to hold a Thanksgiving Day dinner for approximately 200 people in the City of Desert Hot Springs.

•Councilmember Alan Seman reported that the City of Rancho Mirage donated \$5,000 for Homeless Bus Pass Program and \$2,650 to FIND.

•Darla Burkett reported that the Homelessness Program Planning Subcommittee met on Monday and discussed the original wish list and the basic things that are absolutely needed in the Multi-Service Center (MSC) on the westside of the Valley. Ron Stewart will be working on the square footage of that MSC building. They will be meeting again on December 17th.

•Tahlib McMicheaux reported that for Thanksgiving, the Well in the Desert served approximately 1,000 people at the Palm Springs Convention Center. They also sent 200 meals down to the migrant workers in the east Valley, and when they arrived there were 3,000 people waiting to be fed. The Well is in need of sleeping bags for some of their clients.

•Jeff Kramer reported that Shelter from the Storm just finished major renovations on their emergency shelter living quarters.

•Aurora Kerr reported that there has been a request to have some additional input from the

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western Coachella Valley communities so there is going to be a Community Forum held in Palm Springs at the Well in the Desert on Thursday, January 24, 2008 at 6:00 p.m. We will make sure the word gets out to everyone.

- The Chairwoman reported that she attended a funding workshop held by Assemblyman Benoit last month in the City of Rancho Mirage. Also the Chairwoman and several other Committee members will be attending a homeless conference in Long Beach the first week in December 2007.

- Aurora Kerr introduced Amanda Keil, a new addition to CVAG. She comes to us from Olive Crest and has worked with homeless issues in the past.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

Chairwoman Ramos Watson reported that a reply letter from Jeri Taylor, a City of Indio resident, was included in the agenda packet.

6. MEETING MINUTES

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MAYOR PRO TEM JEAN BENSON, CITY OF PALM DESERT, AND SECONDED BY MAYOR PRO TEM JESSE VILLARREAL, CITY OF COACHELLA, TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 16, 2007. MOTION CARRIED WITH AN ABSTENTION FROM THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS.

7. WESTERN COACHELLA VALLEY MULTI-SERVICE CENTER

Aurora Kerr reported that CVAG's Executive Committee took action at their October 29th meeting to endorse the Homelessness Committee's selection of Site #1 on McLane/I-10, north of Palm Springs, for the Western Coachella Valley Multi-Service Center (MSC).

8. CONTINUUM OF CARE UPDATE

Dr. Ron Stewart reported that the Continuum of Care is mandated to be an intricate part of how the County plans for services and divides the federal funds that come into the County. The Continuum Coalition asked for facilitated conversation about what the future of the Continuum should be and how they can be better involved in helping plan for resources to solve homelessness. They selected Marty Fleetwood, architect of the State's Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness, to come and work with them to structure not only how the Continuum can be more effective but also how they can work together to advance the ten-year plan that the County has adopted and thus the plan that CVAG's Homelessness Committee has adopted. Most of the other reps across the County, outside of this valley, were extremely envious of what's being done in the Coachella Valley. They have been trying to figure out how to replicate the work that CVAG's Homelessness Committee has done, in other parts of the County. This Homelessness Committee has moved the issue of homelessness farther down the road than anyone else in the County.

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9. WESTERN COACHELLA VALLEY COLD WEATHER SHELTERS EXPANSION

Dr. Stewart reported that the County's Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) has responded to a request from County Supervisor Roy Wilson's office to ensure that adequate capacity and resources would be available to meet demand during the coming cold weather sheltering season of December 1 through April 15. Managers from the Coachella Valley Rescue Mission (CVRM), Martha's Village and Kitchen, the City of Indio, and DPSS met in early October. It was learned that during the month of September approximately 52 people were turned away from the overflow shelter beds established at CVRM earlier in the summer. CVRM and Martha's reported that a number of those seeking shelter continue to come from the western Coachella Valley communities.

The sheltering capacity issue was presented to the Homelessness Committee at the October meeting. Following the meeting, DPSS approached Jewish Family Services of San Diego (JFS), and the current operator of the Coachella Valley Services and Overnight Shelter (SOS) Program, to consider expanding the SOS program during the cold weather period. In response, JFS has secured a temporary site in the City of Desert Hot Springs (DHS) and is planning to expand from the currently permitted 25 beds to 40 beds in one site. The doors will open this Saturday. Clients will be driven to and from the facility from designated pick up/drop off points within communities west of Cook Street. JFS will temporarily suspend the SOS rotation schedule and will remain stationed in DHS until the close of the cold weather period. JFS has asked for \$82,000 to provide this expanded service. To make all this happen Dr. Stewart went back to his director and she forwarded him \$20,000 to help get things going. DPSS respectfully requests that each of the nine member cities and the Agua Caliente tribe assist in sharing the cost of this cold weather shelter expansion with a contribution of \$6,200 from each of the jurisdictions.

Linda Barrack said that she will be contacting each agency on scheduling pickup points, and that Calvary Chapel, on the corner of Dinah Shore and Cathedral Canyon, has already offered their space as a possible site for pickup.

Councilmember Vasquez stated that it is difficult for him to go before his City Council without knowing the input from the local organizations within their city, he will need to see that before he can take it before his city.

Mayor Pro Tem Benson clarified that before they go to each of their cities they will receive packets with all the information, for them to take in January.

Councilmember Parks said that hopefully by the end of this meeting everyone can identify a preferred pickup spot within their community, that the organizations within that community will know, and be able to tell their clientele that at such and such a time, on such and such a day, the van will be there to pick you up to take you to a cold weather shelter and you will also be brought back to that same location the next morning.

Councilmember Osborne asked who the jurisdictions would be donating this money to. Will it be the SOS Program? It will be Riverside County.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILMEMBER YVONNE PARKS, CITY OF DESERT HOT SPRINGS, AND SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER PATRICK MULLANY, CITY OF INDIAN WELLS, TO RECOMMEND THAT THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE SUPPORT THE COUNTY'S REQUEST AND TO DIRECT STAFF TO DISTRIBUTE THE

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CONTRIBUTION REQUEST TO THE MEMBER JURISDICTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION AND ACTION. MOTION CARRIED.

10. COACHELLA VALLEY PROJECT HOMELESS CONNECT

Jody White with DPSS, thanked Claudia Castorena from Martha's Village and Kitchen; and Frankie Riddle from the City of Palm Desert; for their work in 2007 on Region D. Ms. White reported on the Continuum of Care election for the 2008 representatives being the re-elected Chuck Johnson from Episcopal Community Services, Linda Barrack from Jewish Family Service; and Dale Cook from the City of Palm Springs.

Ms. White reported that Riverside County's Project Homeless Connect will be held at Martha's Village on December 4th from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. With over 50 service providers and 50 volunteers coming in from within the community, they will not only be addressing the needs of the street homeless but also those near homeless (a paycheck or two away from being on the streets). Transportation for the homeless will be provided with pickup and drop-off points throughout the Coachella Valley.

11. MODEL RESOLUTION FOR ENDORSEMENT OF CVAG'S HOMELESSNESS COMMITTEE'S STRATEGIC PLAN

Aurora Kerr reported that as the Committee begins to move forward with the planning of the Western Coachella Valley Multi-Services Center (MSC) at the site on McLane Street in North Palm Springs; it becomes critical to have the member jurisdictions individually endorse the Strategic Plan. CVAG's Executive Committee endorsed the Homelessness Committee's Strategic Plan at their July 30, 2007 meeting. Endorsement by the member jurisdictions is important as it shows individual support by the cities on the goals and objectives as outlined in the Plan which provides for a collective and regional response to the growing homeless population in the Coachella Valley. Also, as elements of the Plan are developed and implemented, financial support will be needed from various financial resources including contributions from the member jurisdictions. Should the Homelessness Committee and the Executive Committee approve the staff recommended motion, the Model Resolution will be distributed to each member jurisdiction with a request that the jurisdiction agendaize the item for consideration and action. CVAG staff will track the outcome and keep the Homelessness Committee updated.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COUNCILMEMBER LEE OSBORNE, CITY OF LA QUINTA, AND SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER CHUCK VASQUEZ, CITY OF CATHEDRAL CITY, TO RECOMMEND THAT THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE DIRECT STAFF TO DISTRIBUTE THE MODEL RESOLUTION TO THE MEMBER JURISDICTIONS ASKING FOR THEIR ENDORSEMENT OF CVAG'S HOMELESSNESS COMMITTEE'S STRATEGIC PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS, WITH CHANGES. MOTION CARRIED

12. BUS PASS PROGRAM UPDATE

Amanda Keil reported that in July of 2007, it was determined by the Homelessness Committee that there was an immediate need for funding to be secured to help provide bus passes for homeless service providers. In response to this need, a letter was sent to

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SunLine Transit Agency from the Homelessness Committee, requesting assistance in providing bus passes for the homeless. The item was heard at the August 1st SunLine Transit Agency Board at which it was recommended that the Homelessness Committee approach the individual jurisdictions for contributions. Contribution requests were sent to each of the member jurisdictions in August. Based on feedback from the ex-officio members, it was determined that 350 day passes and 35 monthly passes would be needed each month. In order to fund this number of passes for the year, \$22,000 needs to be raised. A minimum of \$2,000 has been requested from each of the member jurisdictions. To date, \$19,798 has been secured to fund this program. The program has not yet received funding from the cities of Indian Wells and Palm Springs.

October 16th, the first round of passes were distributed to the Homelessness Committee's Ex-Officio member agencies. In addition, two non ex-officio homeless service providers (Catholic Charities and Calvary Christian) are also participating in this program making a total of eight agencies actively participating. All other groups that provide services to the homeless are encouraged to participate. A second distribution of passes took place October 31st. For the month of October, 133 of the 350 day passes and 25 of the 35 monthly passes were used. To date, 700 day passes and 70 monthly passes have been distributed. A formula was developed to help ensure that passes are distributed fairly to each service provider participating in the program. Each service provider is required to turn in a tracking form that reports the previous month's usage prior to receiving the next month's passes. The tracking forms allow the service provider to keep track of what each pass is used for and whether the individual using the pass is a youth, a senior, or an individual who has a disability. SunLine Transit Agency provides a discounted rate for each bus pass that is utilized by a youth, senior or individual with a disability. Distribution numbers and purpose of usage are being tracked by CVAG staff. All expenditures come directly from funds received strictly for the Bus Pass Program. A separate account has been established to hold these funds.

13. SUBCOMMITTEES REPORT

Amanda Keil reported on the status of the four subcommittees.

Finance Planning Subcommittee Members include: Ron Stewart, Administrative Manager, Riverside County Homeless Programs (Chair), Maria Marquez, Manager, Riverside County Mental Health Services; Leticia De Lara, Legislative Assistant to Supervisor Roy Wilson; Emilio Ramirez, Deputy Director, Riverside County Housing Authority; Jeff Kramer, Chief Financial Officer, Shelter from the Storm; and CVAG Staff. The Finance Planning Subcommittee will begin meeting concurrently with the Program Planning Subcommittee to help determine and recommend funding sources that can be utilized to complete the Western Coachella Valley Multi-Service Center (MSC) at the McLane Site. The first meeting will be held on January 9th at 1:30 p.m. Members of the Homelessness Committee are encouraged to invite their Finance Directors to be involved in the Finance Planning Subcommittee meetings. A meeting is being planned with Congresswoman Mary Bono and other federal legislators regarding future funding opportunities.

Program Planning Subcommittee Members include: Darla Burkett, Executive Director, Coachella Valley Rescue Mission (Chair); Councilmember Patrick Mullany, City of Indian Wells; Dale Cook, Community Development Administrator, City of Palm Springs; Dan Bass, Executive Director, Jewish Family Services; David Lundquist, Desert Regional Manager,

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Riverside County Mental Health Services; Chuck Johnson, Program Manager, Episcopal Community Services; Claudia Castorena, Division Director, Martha's Village & Kitchen; and CVAG Staff. The Program Planning Subcommittee has a meeting scheduled for December 17th at 1:20 p.m. The purpose of this meeting is to make further progress on identifying programs that will be included in the Western Coachella Valley Multi-Service Center (MSC), in accordance with Strategic Goal #3. The proposed services that were identified are:

- Day to Day Site Management
- Intake and Assessment
- Commercial Meal Preparation
- Child Care
- Laundry
- Showers and Personal Care
- Mailboxes
- Learning/Resource Center
- Physical Health
- Behavioral Health
- Dental Care
- Mainstream Benefits
- Cottage Industries
- Security
- Storage Lockers
- Food Pantry
- Clothing
- Job Training/Day Placement
- Transportation
- Kennel for pets
- Parking
- Sobering Unit
- Bus Stop
- Immigration Services
- Recreation Services

Public Relations Subcommittee Members include: Mayor Pro Tem Lupe Ramos Watson, City of Indio (Chair); Mayor Pro Tem Jesse Villarreal, City of Coachella; Mayor Pro Tem Jean Benson, City of Palm Desert; Kathy McAdara, Executive Director, Safe House of the Desert; Frankie Riddle, Director of Special Programs, City of Palm Desert; and CVAG Staff. The Public Relations Subcommittee held three public forums at sites throughout the Valley in September of this year re: the Strategic Plan and the potential sites. Following the approval of the McLane Site, it was brought to the Subcommittee's attention that there remained concerns among Palm Springs residents about the McLane Site. A Community Forum has been scheduled for January 24th at the Well in the Desert in Palm Springs. In accordance with the Strategic Plan, CVAG staff is updating the portion of the website regarding the Homelessness Committee. A PowerPoint presentation specifically regarding the Committee's Strategic Plan and the chosen site is being put together for presentation at City Council meetings, Chamber of Commerce meetings and other Community Forums. Dr. Stewart added that the County DPSS hopes to complete the selection of a marketing firm soon, that will help put together a PR Campaign that could be rolled out at various times across the County, to gender greater community support.

Site Planning Subcommittee Members include: Councilmember Ginny Foat, City of Palm Springs (Chair); Councilmember Chuck Vasquez, City of Cathedral City; Councilmember Yvonne Parks, City of Desert Hot Springs; Tahlib McMicheaux, Director of Social Services, Well in the Desert; Leticia De Lara, Legislative Assistant to Supervisor Roy Wilson; Jon Hutchinson, Deputy Director of Real Estate, Riverside County Facilities; and CVAG Staff. The Site Planning Subcommittee has identified a site for the Western Coachella Valley Multi-Service Center (MSC) that was approved by the Homelessness Committee on October 16th, and by CVAG's Executive Committee on October 29th. The Site Planning Subcommittee will begin to meet in the early part of 2008 to begin identifying sites for the Transitional Housing component of the Western Coachella Valley Plan, in accordance with Strategic Goal #1.

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14. ANNOUNCEMENTS

14.1 DONATIONS ACCEPTED

If Committee Members would like to make a donation (no large items please) to the homeless overnight shelter providers, please feel free to bring that with you to the monthly Homelessness Committee meetings.

14.2 NEXT MEETING OF THE HOMELESSNESS COMMITTEE

Due to the League of California Cities the regularly scheduled meeting of January 16th will be postponed to the following Wednesday, January 23, 2008 at 10:30 am.

15. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Valarie Franklin, Program Assistant
Department of Community Resources (DCR)
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