



DOUGLAS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Douglas County Courthouse
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December 14, 2018

City of Lawrence, City Commission
c/o Mayor Stuart Boley
6 East 6th Street
Lawrence, KS 66044

Dear Mayor Boley and Commissioners Soden, Larsen, Herbert and Ananda,

On behalf of the Board of County Commissioners I am providing a response to your letter dated December 4, 2018 regarding our request for City participation in these collaborative efforts: 1) To join a working group to identify unmet needs of children and youth in our communities specifically around issues of gaps in mental health and addiction services as well as examine intersections with the juvenile justice system; 2) To join a working group focused on the future sustainability of the Lawrence Community Shelter; and 3) Response to the Mayor's request to provide County input on the topic of community advisory boards and to set a path going forward for the collaborative work of updating our shared City/County service agreements.

1. Superintendents, school board presidents and upper level staff of all school districts in Douglas County (Lawrence, Eudora, Baldwin and Perry-Lecompton) have met twice in 2018 and will continue to meet in 2019 alongside County leaders, behavioral health service providers and juvenile justice leaders. Collaborative relationships are forming which will aid in collection of relevant data, mutual problem solving and, ultimately, creation and implementation of non-duplicative services to better meet the behavioral health needs of children and youth countywide. While the City is welcome to join this effort as originally conceived, it is reasonable to allow these superintendents to continue their formative work alongside the County, inviting the City and any other stakeholders to the table along the way as our efforts progress.
2. The County convened a new working group in 2018 to focus on the urgent need to stabilize the Lawrence Community Shelter (LCS) and identify a sustainable path forward for Douglas County's only 24-hour homeless shelter. Approximately 20 community stakeholders joined the meeting including high-level representation from USD 497, the Douglas County Housing Authority, Bert Nash, Family Promise, Heartland RADAC, Douglas County Health Department, DCCCA, Lawrence Chamber of Commerce, LMH Health, LPD, Salvation Army, Willow Domestic Violence Shelter, and the United Way. This working group will continue to meet through 2019 as LCS's governing board charts a new course for their organization—a course likely to require the collaborative efforts of related service providers who stand ready to help. The invitation for a City of Lawrence staff member and/or elected official to join this effort remains. We are encouraged by the results of your Study Session on 12/11/18 where City Manager Tom Markus committed to work with County staff and LCS to find a way forward together.

A correction is required regarding your comment, "We understand, from budget information on your website, that the County reduced its support for the Shelter." Our annual budget for LCS is \$115,000 and remains so. The \$54,059 difference you point out is the result of our response to a one-time supplemental request by LCS for the 2018 budget year. Our annual funding commitment never changed, thus our 2019 annual commitment remains \$115,000.

3. County Commissioner Gaughan volunteered shortly after September's joint meeting to meet with you, Mayor Boley, on the topic of our shared community advisory boards but that meeting has not occurred. Commissioner Gaughan is leaving the County Commission shortly. If this is still a topic of interest for the City in 2019, please know that the County will gladly oblige any requests for future meetings. We look forward to the work of Interim County Administrator Sarah Plinsky and Assistant City Manager Diane Stoddard as they formulate a work plan for updating our numerous joint service agreements, starting with our joint Fire and Medical contract. In anticipation of that work, the BOCC is working to schedule a study session on our shared Fire and Medical contract later this month or early in the new year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nancy Thellman". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Nancy Thellman
Douglas County Commission, Chair