

**City of Lawrence, Kansas**  
**HOMELESS ISSUES ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**July 10, 2012 Minutes (Lawrence City Commission Room)**

**Members present:** Hubbard Collinworth (at-large), Brad Cook (Bert Nash Homeless Outreach Team), Karin Feltman (LMH), Brent Hoffman (Family Promise), Shannon Murphy (Douglas County Sheriff's Office Reentry Program), Cary Strong (Lawrence Business Community), Elyse Towey (LDCHA)

**Members absent:** Trent McKinley (LPD)

**Staff present:** Danelle Dresslar, Margene Swarts

**Public present:** Jeremy Farmer (Just Food), CJ Brune, Pat Benabe, Craig Sweets, Crystal Camis (Willow Domestic Violence Center), Doug Wallace (Balance of State Continuum of Care), Rebecca Buford (Tenants to Homeowners, Inc.), Saunny Scott, Violet Smith, Hilda Enoch.

The meeting was called to order at 8:35 am by Chair Cook.

**ITEM NO. 1 Introductions**

The members of the HIAC and guests introduced themselves.

**ITEM NO. 2 Approval of the Agenda and the June 10, 2012 Minutes.**

Cook said Enoch mentioned adding transit to the agenda.

Swarts said this request could fall under the 'Miscellaneous' item.

Motion by Murphy **to approve the Agenda and the June 10, 2012 meeting minutes of the HIAC**; seconded by Cook.

Motion passed unanimously.

**ITEM NO. 3 Housing Vision Reports**

**A. Non-Housing – Food – Jeremy Farmer, Just Food Executive Director**

Farmer reported there was a lot going on at Just Food. Since he had last spoken to the HIAC earlier in the year the agency has added 15 new partners. Currently Just Food is working with 40 local agencies and is supplying things beyond the scope of food such as laundry soap. Recently Just Food worked with the mail carriers to distribute 20,000 lbs. of food. The agency has also been working with LDCHA, and is working towards doing more streamlining of distribution. Farmer said the agency is trying to look at even more effective collaboration in the community, and to work with agencies efficiently. He said they received quite a bit of produce this summer from local growers. Farmer said Just Food is looking at doing innovative projects to help people work to get out of poverty. Currently they are piloting three one night nutrition classes. The cooking classes will be the first step in this program, and the classes are open to all members of the community. If the citizen taking the class falls within 185% of the poverty level the class will be free. It is set up to be a six week program and the class will teach participants nutrition skills, how to cook, and offer instruction on basic kitchen skills. Just Food will be working with Rick Martin with Eudora High School, and he has created a program that caters to the needs of the community. Farmer said Just Food is also working with Lawrence originals on the project. There is only a certain amount of food an agency can give out,

and the hope is that this program will teach people to cook fresh food different ways. They will be piloting the classes on July 24, August 6, and August 8. After they announced the program, the response was high and the classes were fully registered in three days. The participants will be supplied with portable cooking units and all utensils will be included. Those that meet income guidelines will receive the utensils they worked with upon graduation of the program. Farmer said the agency is truly committed to thinking innovatively about how to make it so the agency can play its part in eliminating barriers to get folks out of poverty. Farmer said Health Care Access reports that they spend thousands of dollars treating people who are sick because they are malnourished. This will hopefully be a way to help people develop good eating habits.

Farmer said the next big distribution project for Just Food this month is the diaper drive. The goal of the agency is to raise 20,000 diapers. They have placed donation boxes at local grocers and around the community. He said he has been asked the sustainability question about why they are not focusing on cloth diapering. Farmer said people who that cannot afford food or diapers cannot afford laundry detergent either, and because of this cloth diapers might not be best idea. Farmer said Just Food is also beginning to think ahead to Christmas and Thanksgiving. He said last year Just Food fed 750 people on each holiday. They assisted 7,000 people in June, which was up 60% from the previous month. July's numbers are already up as well. He said this jump could be because of an awareness of resources and the perception as the word gets out about the issue of who are the people they serve. People do not need the services of Just Food because they are too lazy to get a job. There are single moms working two jobs making \$7.00 an hour and their kids are home alone. They have to have food that the family can eat. This causes a constant cycle.

Collinsworth asked how Just food is using programs for those with no access to car, are limited on walking ability, and bus limited. Will there be transportation to the classes offered?

Farmer said they are working on three things in regard to this. First, Just Food believes choice is huge, and people want to feel like they can choose what their food is. Just Food is working on ways to foster choice and empower folks to make decisions. The agency is using the community supported agriculture. They offer an exchange program so clients can exchange food. If someone gets something in their bag that they dislike they can change them out for something they prefer. Second, the agency has been getting requests for special dietary needs such as low sodium and gluten free, and they are working on that, but those types of products are expensive, and any time you vary the selection the cost goes up. Transportation is the third thing. Farmer said he was tackling it, but it is a very complex problem. He said in terms of the cooking classes, right now in the pilot stage the classes are held at the Just Food location. If it is successful they are hoping to move it around to other places.

Feltman added that Just Food does do food delivery.

Farmer said yes, and transit is difficult for the agency because of several reasons, the first being the agency has only two full time paid staff. Just Food delivers food on the last week of the month. They do not have the resources to do it every day. Just Food is also partnering with Meals on Wheels, and volunteers are assisting with deliveries. They are also offering a home-bound food delivery program, but this is a very transient population, and if they are not home or are out the volunteers cannot keep going back. There are 7,000 people that need food, and this is not a good system for that. Farmer said they are starting a pantry on Haskell's campus and on KU's campus this fall. They are trying to get food to where people are, and are also working to get a 24 hour site. They have been exploring partnering with a place like LMH because then people will have access to food all day, every day. Farmer said the agency is working on it, but it will take time.

Swarts asked how coordination is going with other entities that are providing food services.

Farmer said Just Food wants to be a partner with everyone who distributes food. They currently partner with two homeless entities in LCS and Bert Nash outreach. They provide free food to those agencies, and they are looking to add to that list. They also want to expand to start offering toiletries. Items like laundry soap, shampoo, and diapers are also hard to obtain for those in poverty because the same barriers to food exist for these things. Just Food is working with Ballard and Trinity Interfaith food pantries. Farmer said the community collaboration piece is very important, and the agency sees the need. Currently there is no methodology to track where people have gone to get assistance, and they are not trying to police who is going where. It is a problem to see how all the partner agencies are being simultaneously used. They are working on a database to see numbers that would show data such as "in total, these three agencies served x amount, and these places served this and that." No one really knows what the need is and all the agencies are just trying to figure that out.

Swarts said in utilizing services in different locations sometimes the geographical location will draw it because it may be it is more accessible.

Farmer said Just Food has a map in their conference room. They worked with GIS data to determine where the local food deserts are in terms of food pantries. There are very large gaps. From the Ballard Center in North Lawrence to Stull there are no pantries. Just Food cannot operate 300 satellite pantries in the county. They are aware of the issue; it is just a work in progress.

## **B. Emergency Shelter/Temporary Housing – LCS, Loring Henderson**

Henderson said he had nothing new to report on the shelter relocation. They do not yet have a signed contract, but they are signing the contract on July 17th. Construction will start immediately after that. The move-in date has been moved to six months from construction start, and they are being told that by the 21st of December construction will be done. The Special Use Permit (SUP) for the current location expires December 31, and they hope they could have a few days leeway with that since they will be in the process of moving. Where it stands now, they need to move by the 31<sup>st</sup> of December.

Cook asked if the SUP was granted for one full year.

Henderson said it was an SUP year. The SUP was granted on April 15, and the Planning office set the date of expiration for Dec 31. In order to change this date the shelter would have to go through Planning. Henderson said as soon as the shelter gets a signed contract they will better know where they are. Henderson said moving will not be that big of deal as many of the items in the new shelter will be new to the agency. There have been donations of beds, new desks, and furniture. LCS has been working with KU for donations. They are not going to move a lot of stuff from the current location other than files and clothing.

Feltman asked if LCS had secured all the funds needed for construction.

Henderson said yes.

### **C. Transitional Housing/Supportive Services – Elyse Towey, LDCHA**

Towey said on July 1, 2012 there was a new definition of homeless adopted by the Lawrence-Douglas County Housing Authority. Literally homeless is defined as an “Individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence”. This describes the nighttime residence being a public or private place not meant for human habitation, a publicly or privately operated shelter designated for temporary housing, or exiting an institution where the person has resided for 90 days or less and who resided in one of the first two situations prior to entering that institution. To be eligible for the LDCHA Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) Transitional Housing program the household will need to meet the definition of homeless and they must go through a service provider. LDCHA has a list of service providers who have signed agreements with the Transitional Housing program. Bert Nash is one of the main providers that they work with directly. There needs to be a certification of homelessness completed by the case manager. The certification that LDCHA uses is taken from the federal website. After this certification is met and a unit is available, LDCHA will place a family who is homeless in housing. While they are in TBRA transitional housing, LDCHA can work with them for a maximum of 24 months. LDCHA uses this time to help get the resident prepared for maintaining their own housing. After the 24 months or less are complete, the household may be eligible for LDCHA general housing. Several things may affect this. The household must be eligible for general housing. They must be able to obtain a good reference from their current landlord, and any disputes must be resolved before they can move into general housing. There are cases where the current contract with providers may or may not continue. The LDCHA Resident Services Department works with current residents of LDCHA housing. They use supportive services to work to keep people housed and try to help them resolve issues. Towey said an example would be if the resident has a need for food, resident services works with them to provide them the proper resources. Some participants in the TBRA transitional housing program have been homeless for many years. These people may need more support services than others. The City HOME program has been funding the TBRA program since 1993. Since 1993, LDCHA has housed 912 people. The City HOME program assisted 569 people and the balance were assisted with state HOME funds. Towey said LDCHA has been keeping statistics on families since 2000.

Feltman asked why the number of homeless assisted in the program has much higher numbers in the last eight years than previously.

Swarts said early on the program was not targeted specifically for the homeless population. At some point around 2000, TBRA was geared toward the homeless population.

Towey said the transitional housing wait list is a separate wait list than general housing. Before the homeless focus the wait lists were the same. The certification of homelessness verification form that social services fill out became required at that time. This form has to be filled out so they can be eligible for TBRA. The tenant is required to have a contract with one of the partner agencies. Towey said anyone using a Continuum of Care-funded program is using the new homeless definition. LDCHA is expecting to have 16 households eligible under the 2012 HOME grant. From the 2009 – 2011 grants they housed 48. Out of those families there are 22 remaining in the new grant year. Additionally, out of the 48 families 29 have gone into permanent housing.

Cook asked what the most significant change in the new definition was.

Towey said she was not sure but could find the answer. She said to this point she had not worked specifically with anyone who the change has affected.

Swarts said adding the category of doubled up will be a big change. In years past with the point in time count communities could not count those that were doubled up, but they were truly homeless. Being able to count that population will be important.

Murphy said the new definition expands the time in an institution to 90 days. Previously, if a person was in an institution such as jail for 31 days or more they were considered housed. The new definition gives them 91 days.

Hoffman asked what type of violations could be keeping a TBRA client from general housing at the end of their term.

Towey said there were several things that could happen, including the tenant violating the lease by having an undocumented resident. There is a guest policy in place under program rules, and once someone is past that established timeframe they are considered a resident. Other reason could include damage to a unit, drugs or gang activity, charges filed against the tenant, or someone at the address that has been arrested but is not on the lease.

Hoffman asked if there was anything else that could hurt the tenant from obtaining general housing.

Towey said basically if unit is not in good condition, had excessive damage, and they were not able to obtain a good reference from landlord. Late rent will hurt a program participant, which is why support services are very important.

Collinsworth requested a copy of the Low- Moderate Income (LMI) eligibility data for Lawrence.

The LMI chart is attached [here](#).

#### **D. Permanent Supportive Housing – Salvation Army Project Able**

Swarts introduced Lt. Matt McCluer, who has taken the place of Capt. Wes Dalberg with the Lawrence Salvation Army.

McCluer said he and his wife moved to Lawrence on the 26th of June. He said he grew up in the Kansas City area so this is close to home for him. McCluer said the Salvation Army has quite a few programs they are operating, and one of these programs is the Project Able Supportive Housing Program. Thus far there are three families enrolled in the program, and it started on July 1. Five other households began the program enrollment process, but either did not meet the program guidelines or decided to opt out. Since it is a permanent supportive housing program, there is a disability requirement. The program staffs one full time case manager, and the program director gives half time. The Salvation Army was able to provide emergency assistance to help a family of seven after the house they were living in was condemned by the city. The agency has seen an increase in first-time households needing help and has seen families enrolled and others in need.

#### **E. Permanent Housing – Tenants to Homeowners**

Rebecca Buford, executive director of Tenants to Homeowners, Inc. (TTH) was present to discuss their programs. Buford said TTH does permanent housing for households that meet an income guideline that falls between 60% and 80% of median income. This translates to around \$30,000-\$50,000 a year in income. Their programs include homeownership for those qualified families and they build workforce housing for people that have jobs and can get a loan but have a large finance

gap in order to close on the property. These families have an income, but the income does not support larger mortgage payments such as those seen in Lawrence. Currently TTH has 54 homes in the Lawrence Community Land Housing Trust that will always be sold to first-time, income eligible buyers. Buford said TTH also manages 50 rental units in the community. She said 60% of those rental units serve low income renters and most of the tenants make around \$600-\$1000 a month. TTH serves the entire spectrum of affordable housing in the community. Buford said 20 of the rental units are fully accessible, and most of the tenants are on fixed incomes. They recently finished a rehabilitation of the former Pelathe units at 15th and Haskell. TTH took over these units a year ago and provided new siding and new windows. TTH worked very hard to clean up the units as they had not been well cared for under the previous management. There are seven units including one three bedroom and the rest as two bedrooms, and most rent at under \$500 a month. The Lawrence fair market rent is around \$700. In their new form, the former Pelathe units are now called Eastside Estates. They look a lot better and there is a new sign that defines the property. Buford told the HIAC if they know of people that need housing send them to talk to TTH.

Buford said TTH also works with supportive services and they have built a great supportive network. The City was able to help fund additional rental units through securing additional Neighborhood Stabilization Program funding that was reallocated from the State. With this additional funding, TTH is building four rentals on a large lot at 848 Elm in North Lawrence. TTH tries to do infill development whenever possible and they are constantly looking for empty lots. This particular lot at 848 Elm was a large 36,000 square foot lot and they were able to split it into four developable lots. There will be an access easement and it will be a little community. Within the four, two units will be rented to tenants that fall under 50% LMI. Three of those four units are being built right now, and in four months there will be tenants in them. Buford said TTH will continue to build and they have a lot of new development in the pipeline. They are working on predevelopment for three tax credit projects that will occur a few years down the road. One will be phase two of the Poehler Building development, which the completed phase one units filled up in one week. The building currently has a wait list of 70 people. TTH is hoping to do phase two with another 40 units. There will be two transitional housing units in Poehler, and they are working to fit transitional housing units in other developments as well.

Enoch asked about the availability of senior housing.

Buford said TTH has received the lot behind the United Way building and are in the process of developing that area. The units there will serve seniors under 60% LMI. Buford said there really is not housing like this for seniors in Lawrence currently as there are mostly expensive units available on the west side. TTH hopes to have this project complete to meet that need in the next year.

Hoffman asked what the vacancy rate in the available rentals is.

Buford said currently there are two or three open. She said that for the homeless or transitional housing population \$500 rent is too much. Buford said TTH is a regular landlord in the sense that the tenant has to be able to pay the rent. TTH works with all the programs that help to house people, and they always seem to have a vacancy. Buford added the recently renovated units at Eastside Estates have a few that are now open and ready to go. They have been completely remodeled.

Hoffman asked if these units rented for around \$500.

Buford said for the most part yes, but some are available at \$485. She said TTH accepts applications all the time and they can keep a list. If a family is currently in an unaffordable situation they can fill

out an application, and it is a free application. Some of the units with similar rents have very little oversight and maintenance. Buford said TTH can honestly say they do that part very well and none of their units are substandard.

Hoffman asked if TTH is more relaxed on checkered rental histories.

Buford said in the past they were, but eventually some rules have had to be made. She said TTH will take situational explanations, but they can no longer allow a rental agreement with no upfront deposit. One staff member handles all the rental management for TTH, and the rental policy is very clear to the tenant.

Hoffman asked if they will take past eviction or other types of past rental issues.

Buford said as it is all case-by-case the answer would be a situational yes. She said there is no master list of items that disqualifies them from housing. If the tenant can explain the situation and TTH feels comfortable with the reasoning they will consider housing the tenant. Buford said since the agency works with federal funding felonies cannot be waived. These must be convictions and not just charges.

Murphy asked if one with a felony record would be rentable at any time.

Buford said a crime under sexual misconduct would never be eligible, nor would violent crimes. She said if the crime was beyond five years ago and was not a violent felony they can consider it on a case-by-case basis.

Hoffman asked if a first-time homebuyer had to be a true first-time buyer or if they have just not owned a home for a few years.

Buford said they qualify if the last time they owned was longer than three years ago. If a person has been displaced due to divorce then they are considered a first time buyer. TTH pays closing costs, but if a person just sold a house and they are income eligible they will not have access to the full subsidy.

Hoffman asked if a history of foreclosure would prevent a person from participating in the program.

Buford said TTH works with Capitol Federal and KU Credit Union for the buyer financing. The buyer still has to be able to get a bank loan. TTH will subsidize the price but the buyer still has to get a loan. If they do not qualify through the bank, the potential buyer will still be eligible to work with TTH in homeownership classes and credit repair. TTH will do what they can to help the buyer out, but if they cannot qualify TTH cannot help them. Buford said the agency does not believe those with bad credit should own a home as it is setting them up for failure. For this population, stable, safe rentals are better. If a potential buyer does not have more than \$600-\$800 available in a month for housing, homeownership is hard for them in Lawrence. If a buyer can only afford \$400 for housing, rental is where TTH will work with them. The potential buyer can work with TTH and while they might not be ready now, they can be in the future.

Towey commented that the Eastside Estates have really been cleaned up. The community is used to them being rundown. The units quickly went downhill when the prior management changed.

Enoch asked with the homeless families who lack deposits, was there any way to get them into housing.

Cook said there was a lack of money available to do that.

Buford said there used to be a Homeless to Housing program. TTH works with many agencies so they will look at that question.

Hoffman said what they have found at Family Promise the lack of deposit is not the issue and is not what is stopping people from obtaining housing. The barriers they see are credit history, rental history, and jobs. At Family Promise the families are guided through financial processes, and within a couple of months with a job they have saved up enough for deposit. That is not the issue.

#### **ITEM NO. 4 Miscellaneous/Calendar**

Swarts introduced Doug Wallace, the Balance of State Continuum of Care Coordinator. He has been working with regions to attend their meetings.

Wallace said he started this position in April. He said once a year NOFA funds become available, and in order for communities to apply for the funding they have to be defined as part of a Continuum of Care. Lawrence is included in the Balance of State (BoS) Continuum of Care CoC), which contains 101 counties in the State of Kansas. The regions within the Balance of State work to do strategic and year round planning, and participate in counts such as the homeless point in time and housing inventory count. There is a process to the Point-In-Time and Housing Inventory counts, and part of his job as a coordinator is to go out in the regions and work with them to support their efforts to gather this required information. Wallace said he has sat in on regional meetings across the state and the CoC is starting to meet to plan the 2013 counts. Wallace said the 2013 Point-In-Time count will count both sheltered and unsheltered homeless. In smaller communities this is harder to accomplish.

Enoch said she was part of a group that included LCS and Family Promise that met with City Manager Dave Corliss. The group talked about transportation in the community and spoke to the unmet need to help generate some ideas. Enoch said a large gap lies in the timing of the third shift. It is very hard for this group to find transportation to their jobs when they do not have their own to depend on. Enoch said Corliss listened to what the groups had to say and the item has been included on the budget discussions for this fall. The community has worked hard to get extra transportation, and there has been an improvement by adding the on demand shift. This is particularly useful to cover ground and two vehicles will be assigned to the shift. The community needs for a lot of people to come to the August 7 budget hearing. This transportation item will be one of the items discussed. Enoch said it is fact that it is available and the City Manager is recommending it as a funded program. The challenge is that there needs to be more specific information on the number of folks that need it. Enoch said it is very important to support the City's good intentions. She said there is a Study Session this afternoon and they will talk about this item but there is no public comment.

Brune said the item is on the City Commission agenda for July 10 as well.

Craig Sweets introduced himself as the editor of "Change of Heart" newsletter for the last 15 years. Sweets said he was having trouble finding articles and he was currently looking at a story on homelessness among Native Americans.

Feltman said she had talked to the folks at LMH and they will be able to assist with another printing. Sweets said the paper is very appreciative of the help that agencies have given in printing the paper.

Strong asked Sweets to explain the "Change of Heart" newspaper for those who were not familiar with it.

Sweets noted that Strong is the vendor coordinator. The papers are sold at places such as LCS and Aimee's Coffeehouse. Vendors that sell the papers are given buttons on their shirts that designate that they are selling the item.

Strong said there is an agreement with City that makes this an appropriate activity, and under that agreement the vendors selling the paper have to keep moving.

Feltman asked where the proceeds from the paper go.

Sweets said each paper is \$1, and for every \$1 the vendor gets in sales \$.75 is returned to them.

Strong said in addition the volunteer coordinator can work with the vendor. The vendor can make extra money each month.

Enoch asked how many papers are they able to sell on the street.

Sweets said one man sold 400 once. He said the paper has been getting subsidized printing lately.

Sweets said they used to operate from grants, and the printing was not always subsidized. Nearly all grants for homeless and low income newspapers across the country have been eliminated.

Hoffman asked how the printing schedule is set up.

Feltman said LMH would probably agree to one a year moving forward. That may be an idea to set this schedule up ahead of time.

Hoffman asked what the normal run typically was for printing.

Sweets said it was normally 1200 copies. There have been times where they have needed more and the City was able to print more in addition to the first run. Sweets said ideally they would like to have our own printer in the new shelter, but he did not know if that would happen.

Collinsworth said HIAC members needed to be aware of several important meetings coming up in both the City and County regarding additional funding that the LCS has requested. The City has tentatively agreed to the request, but the County is very temperamental about it because they bought the land to set the relocation in motion. Collinsworth said the HIAC also needed to be aware of changes proposed in the bus routes and how the City will be transferring money not necessarily from general fund to pay for this but from sales tax funds. He said there is a need to get more people coming into Lawrence to spend their dollars.

Hoffman asked if the City Commission received the HIAC letter regarding concerns about the downtown area.

Dresslar said they did.

Dresslar said the next meeting will be on August 14, 2012.

**ITEM NO. 5 Public Comment.**

There was no additional public comment.

**ITEM NO. 6 Adjourn.**

Motion by Strong to **adjourn the July 10, 2012 meeting of the HIAC**; seconded by Feltman.

Motion passed unanimously.

**Attendance Record**

| Members                 | 01/<br>12 | 02/<br>12 | 03/<br>12 | 04/<br>12 | 05/<br>12 | 06/<br>12 | 07/<br>12 | 08/<br>12 | 09/<br>12 | 10/<br>12 | 11/<br>12 | 12/<br>12 |
|-------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Hubbard<br>Collinsworth | +         | +         | +         | +         | +         | +         | +         |           |           |           |           |           |
| Brad Cook               | +         | +         | +         | +         | +         | +         | +         |           |           |           |           |           |
| Wes<br>Dalberg          | U         | +         | +         | +         | U         | + ^       |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Karin Feltman           | +         | +         | +         | +         | E         | +         | +         |           |           |           |           |           |
| Brent<br>Hoffman        | +*        | +         | +         | +         | +         | +         | +         |           |           |           |           |           |
| Trent<br>McKinley       |           |           |           | +*        | +         | +         | E         |           |           |           |           |           |
| Mike<br>Monroe          | +         | U         | U^        |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Shannon<br>Murphy       | +         | +         | +         | +         | +         | +         | +         |           |           |           |           |           |
| Cary<br>Strong          | +         | +         | +         | +         | E         | +         | +         |           |           |           |           |           |
| Elyse<br>Towey          | +*        | U         | U         | +         | U         | +         | +         |           |           |           |           |           |

X - Meeting Cancelled Due to Inclement Weather

E - Excused Absence

U - Unexcused Absence

() - Last meeting in term.

\* - First meeting in term.

^ - Last Meeting