

**Homeless Committee Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, June 14, 2022 – 1:00 p.m.  
Cumberland County Department of Social Services  
1225 Ramsey Street, Fayetteville, NC**

**COMMITTEE MEMBER ATTENDEES**

Courtney Banks-McLaughlin, Council Member, City of Fayetteville  
Debbie Brown, Chair, Fayetteville / Cumberland County Continuum of Care on Homelessness  
Chris Cauley, Director, Fayetteville Economic & Community Development Department  
Tawana Dawkins, Data & Evaluation Analyst, Cumberland County Community Development Department  
Tracy Jackson, Assistant County Manager, County of Cumberland  
Sally Shutt, Assistant County Manager (Governmental Affairs), County of Cumberland  
Dee Taylor, Director, Cumberland County Community Development Department

**OTHER ATTENDEES**

Other attendees included staff from both the City and County and various stakeholders in the community.

**REGRETS**

Michael Boose, Board Commissioner, County of Cumberland  
Dr. Marvin Connelly, Superintendent (and designee Pamela Story, Social Work Coordinator-Homeless Liaison), Cumberland County Schools  
Dr. Toni Stewart, Board Commissioner, County of Cumberland  
Dr. Telly Whitfield, Assistant City Manager, City of Fayetteville  
Susan Williams, Board Member, Cumberland County Schools  
Larry Wright, City Council Member, City of Fayetteville

**AGENDA**

- Call to Order
- Approval of the Minutes
- Public Forum
- Approval of HAC Charter
- Veteran Homelessness
- Nonprofit Workshop Update
- Homeless Strategic Plan Update
- Reports / Updates
  - Continuum of Care
  - Day Resource Center Project

○ Homeless Shelter Planning

- Next Meeting
- Adjourn

	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>DISCUSSION / PROPOSED ACTION</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Call to Order</b>	Councilwoman Banks-McLaughlin called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.
<b>2</b>	<b>Approval of the Minutes</b>	A quorum was not present to approve the minutes.
<b>3</b>	<b>Public Forum</b>	<p>Councilwoman Banks-McLaughlin opened the public forum for speakers. Dee Taylor read the Public Forum policy and procedures. The public forum recognized the following speakers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Stuart A. Gleick</li> <li>2. Dr. Val</li> <li>3. Kimberly Nadeau</li> <li>4. Nia Williams</li> </ol>
<b>4</b>	<b>Approval of HAC Charter</b>	A quorum was not present to approve the Charter.
<b>5</b>	<b>Veteran Homelessness</b>	<p>Debbie Brown introduced two guest speakers to discuss veteran homelessness.</p> <p>Genene Hill and Tasha Roberson from Volunteers of America presented information on services provided to veterans facing eviction or who are literally homeless.</p> <p>Eligibility criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Must be 18 or older</li> <li>● Must be a veteran</li> <li>● Must meet income guidelines</li> <li>● Veteran must not have a dishonorable discharge</li> </ul> <p>Once the veteran is enrolled, the agency is able to provide the following assistance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● rental payment</li> <li>● security deposits</li> <li>● utility deposits</li> <li>● childcare</li> <li>● transportation costs</li> </ul>

- general housing stability (e.g. groceries, etc.)
- case management
- linkage to wrap-around services
- legal services (e.g. expungement, evictions)
- subsidies to assist with enrollment of up to 2 years to provide additional rental assistance (if needed)

Statistics:

2019: Served 236 veteran households in Cumberland County. Out of these households, 185 literally homeless veterans were provided rapid rehousing assistance and 51 veterans were provided prevention assistance.

2020: Served 303 veteran households. Out of these households, 229 literally homeless veterans were provided rapid rehousing assistance and 74 veterans were provided prevention assistance.

Those receiving prevention assistance are veterans who were not literally homeless but who were facing an eviction, couching surfing, or in a hotel.

2021: Served 118 veteran households and were able to place them in hotels during the pandemic. This helped to get the veterans off the streets.

As of May 30<sup>th</sup>: Served 217 veteran households in Cumberland County. Out these households, 159 are provide rapid rehousing assistance and 58 veterans were provided prevention assistance.

Volunteers of America would like to be part of the solution to end veteran homelessness and want to make the resources available to the community.

The next speakers were Don Garner and Christiana Elder from Veterans Empowering Veterans (VEV). VEV has been around for about 15 years now. The main population VEV serves are homeless veterans and their family members. VEV has about 6 transitional homes to serve homeless veterans temporarily. VEV's purpose is to empower the veterans to obtain the ability to take care of themselves and their families. VEV also provides counseling. A lot of the homeless veterans that are here are products of soldiers from Fort Bragg who either got of the military or considered Fayetteville their home.

VEV has gone out and provided food, housing, financial support, and utilities. VEV also conduct stand down events. VEV coordinate with churches and other entities such as Second Harvest, Walmart, Food Lion to be able to provide to the homeless veterans.

		<p>Mr. Garner stated it is going to take a village. It is going to take a partnership with the individuals, the community, and the City government.</p> <p>Debbie Brown stated that Mr. Gardner and VEV does partner with Fort Bragg for bridge housing. Mr. Gardner stated VEV has an office on Fort Bragg now. VEV support all veterans including those with other than honorable discharge. VEV tries to support any veteran who served and their family members. Homelessness is homelessness.</p> <p>The third speaker, Toyia Burgess from the Fayetteville Veteran Medical Center was scheduled to speak virtually. Due to technical issues with the audio, Ms. Burgess was not able to complete her presentation. She was invited to come back to another meeting.</p>
6	<b>Nonprofit Workshop Update</b>	<p>Tracy Jackson provided information on the Nonprofit workshop that was conducted on May 14, 2022, by the Fayetteville Technical Community College (FTCC). There were over 20 attendees that represented various groups across the City and County. Many of those attendees were interested in going further beyond the one-day workshop and participating in future courses offered through FTCC on how to organize a nonprofit. We are very thankful for the partnership with FTCC and others for helping with this effort. Mr. Jackson also thanked Councilwoman Banks-McLaughlin and Commissioner Stewart for coming up with the idea.</p> <p>Councilwoman Banks-McLaughlin stated there were individuals in the community that had the compassion to want to help but did not have an organization established or the organization struggled with the financial portion. We (HAC) partnered with FTCC to provide a workshop to give an overview of how to start a nonprofit organization. Councilwoman Banks-McLaughlin asked about the dates for future workshops. Tracy Jackson stated that information will be posted on the HAC website.</p>
7	<b>Homeless Strategic Plan Update</b>	<p>Dee Taylor provided background information on the Homeless Strategic Plan. Cumberland County hired OrgCode Consulting, Inc. to assist the County with developing a three-year strategic plan. OrgCode met with stakeholders in the community. The entities included representatives from the City, County, and those agencies and advocates from the Fayetteville – Cumberland County Continuum of Care (CoC) on Homelessness. OrgCode issued a survey to obtain input from residents in the community as well as agencies that serve homeless households. OrgCode prepared a gap analysis and three-year strategic plan. This plan focuses on addressing the four impacted areas which include improving access to assistance; expanding permanent housing options; improving coordination with supportive services and social networks that addresses employment, mental and physical needs; and creating community partnerships to help leverage funding and bring more resources in our community. Now OrgCode is still working with the CoC, City, and County to assist with implementing the plan and monitoring our progress. We have made some progress in addressing some of the objectives in the plan. The City is making progress in building the Day Resource Center. The County is still trying to get the homeless shelter in place. The CoC is still coordinating with various providers in the community to best use our limited</p>

		resources to address the needs of our homeless residents. The main challenge we have in our community is addressing the high demand for assistance with limited resources.
8	<b>Reports/Updates</b> <b>a. CoC</b> <b>b. Day Resource Center</b> <b>c. Homeless Shelter Planning</b>	<p><u>CoC Update:</u></p> <p>Debbie Brown thought it was a good idea to have a speaker provide a testimony of their homeless experience and share their success in coming out of homelessness. Ms. Brown introduced Nahlee Smith. Ms. Smith is originally from New Jersey. This is her second time relocating to Fayetteville. It has been tough. She has experienced homelessness several times during her lifetime, even as a child. She made the choice to grow up in the streets because she did not want to be in an abusive home. She was a runaway. She made choices as a young mother. She was not financially prepared. She and her children slept in her vehicle. It was difficult to explain to her children they had to go to a shelter in New Jersey which was about to shut down because they were not legal. Ms. Smith and her children had to sleep in parks, driveways, etc. She had friends to offer assistance. She declined the offer for certain reasons. She finally was able to obtain financial assistance to move to Fayetteville. She stayed with a friend in a trailer who eventually was evicted. Ms. Smith was referred to Dee Taylor by a case manager from Fayetteville Metropolitan Housing Authority for transitional housing assistance. She was eventually accepted into Robin’s Meadow Transitional Housing program. While enrolled in the housing program, the case manager helped with connecting Ms. Smith with educational resources at FTCC where she was able to obtain her Phlebotomy license. She enrolled in another course in the Aspire program. She was able to access public housing with the Fayetteville Metropolitan Housing Authority. Robin’s Meadow provided assistance with moving. Ms. Smith felt there was hope. She stated we definitely have to work together. She stated she appreciate the program was there to help her.</p> <p>Councilwoman Banks-McLaughlin thanked Ms. Smith for sharing her experience. She thanked Dee Taylor and Debbie Brown for connecting with Ms. Smith. She understands it takes a collaboration. Council Banks-McLaughlin asked Ms. Smith about challenges as it relates to resources. She wants to find out where is the gap. Ms. Smith stated that there are not enough programs like Aspire and Endeavors. The programs that do exist, are not being used properly. Ms. Smith felt as though the programs are designed as stepping stones. She felt there is still the need to put into place a step that is designed to ensure you do not return to homelessness. The second thing she notices is that there needs to be a flow when it comes to helping people with housing. She understood it is challenging with housing right now, but if we created a flow that included programs that helped a person get from homelessness to housing, then from housing to being a homeowner. She felt there are too many people taking up space in certain housing units that need to move on to a homeowner. If the individuals do not want to become a homeowner, then there are still conversations needed to be made with a homeowner (landlord) to see if they are willing to work with those with subsidies. She recently failed housing inspection despite how hard she worked to prepare for the inspection. Her mind is set on moving out of public housing into private housing. She asked where the programs are to help her to be able to move out of public housing. We have Habitat and Kingdom Community Development. She called Habitat but they are not taking applications until September and</p>

there is a waiting list. She does not know what is going on with Kingdom and do not hear enough about Kingdom. Where are the additional programs to offset the people that are in housing (targeting homeless or those at-risk) so that she can move on and we can then move people (who are in the streets) into these housing programs. We need to concentrate on more programs that will help people progress into the next stage so we can have that space open for other homeless persons in need of housing.

Day Resource Center Update:

Chris Cauley stated that last night the City Council approved to allocate \$1 million of the American Rescue Plan funding to the Day Resource Center project along with the \$1 million from the State's Office of Resiliency and Recovery. The additional funding is due to the cost increase. Construction projects are coming in higher. Construction will start in the next month with completion being around spring of next year. In the meantime, the City also issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to find a nonprofit to manage the center and invite other community partnerships into the center. The RFQ was issued on April 20<sup>th</sup> and ran through the end of May. The City received a couple of responses and will be evaluating and presenting to Council in August.

Mr. Cauley also provided additional information on the Stand Down event that was mentioned earlier by Veterans Empowering Veterans. The City partners with Veterans Affairs in order to support the event. The City will provide free transit for those who want to attend the event. The transit is still free during the pandemic. The Stand Down will be on Thursday, June 16<sup>th</sup>, from 10 am to 2 pm., at Festival Park (downtown). There will be resources available for veterans and others who are at-risk or experiencing homelessness. The FAST system has three routes that serve Festival Park which includes routes 4, 5, and 12. The event will have health screenings and housing assistance. Free lunch will also be provided. Military veterans should bring their VA card or DD-214.

Mr. Cauley stated that he recommended to City Council that they focus on the provision and expansion of affordable housing in order to assist with homelessness. The City also works with the CoC and the County on homeless policy across the board. There are still agencies in the community that help address homelessness but are not part of the CoC. Mr. Cauley stated for any agency who wants to know how to partner and plug into resources, the CoC is the place to go. He referred Debbie Brown as the point of contact for the CoC.

Mr. Cauley provided additional information on their partnership with Habitat for Humanity. The City built several dozen houses in the past couple of years to help low-income families. The City will continue that partnership with Habitat in the future by building at least four to five houses a year, depending on location, etc.

Mr. Cauley stated he also presented before City Council regarding \$12 million available through various federal, state, and local resources to help provide additional affordable housing. The City area alone has a 20,000-unit

		<p>deficit in housing that is needed at the lowest income. He has asked City Council for direction in expanding and creating affordable housing programs. They will have two public speakers this afternoon to talk about creating transitional housing. There are financial resources to help buy and build housing.</p> <p><u>Homeless Shelter Planning:</u></p> <p>Tracy Jackson stated the County is partnering with the Cape Fear Valley Medical Center to establish a new emergency shelter in Cumberland County, preferably downtown or near downtown on a transit line. There are certain qualifications and criteria the County is looking for in terms of location. The County looked at two sites so far that did not work out. The County is still searching for a site. The shelter is proposed to house men, women, and families. It is proposed to have up to 100 beds but will expand to 150 beds in an emergency situation. The County is still in its planning process, working with the hospital. The County is hoping to have more information to report at the next HAC meeting.</p>
<b>9</b>	<b>Next Meeting</b>	The next meeting will be 1:00 p.m., Tuesday, July 12, 2022, at the Cumberland County Department of Social Services.
<b>10</b>	<b>Adjournment</b>	The meeting was adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

Documents Distributed During the Meeting:

- Agenda for June 14, 2022 HAC Meeting
- Minutes from April 12, 2022 HAC Meeting
- Homeless Advisor Committee Charter

Approved: July 12, 2022