

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

WHEN: January 22, 2025

WHERE: Fairfax County Government Center
Conference Rooms 9/10
12000 Government Center Parkway
Fairfax, VA 22035

AGENDA:

1. Vote: December 4, 2024, meeting minutes.
2. Finalize NAACP Responses.
3. Discuss Proposed Committees (survey responses, meeting schedule).
4. FY2024 Continuum of Care Notice and Funding Report.
5. Discuss County Budget Process Timeline.
6. Hypothermia Prevention and Winter Seasonal Program Numbers.
7. Next Meeting.

ATTENDANCE:

Name	Attending (Yes/No)	Name	Attending (Yes/No)
David Meyer, Chair	Yes	Lisa Jones	Yes
Adrienne Hosein	Yes	Maura Williams	Yes
Aimee Garcia	Yes	Megan Goffney	Yes
Ashley McSwain	Yes	Michael Axler	No
Cathy Benn	Yes	Pamela Michell	Yes
Claire Keena	Yes	Penelope Rood	Yes
Douglas Dane	Yes	Randy Shusman	No
Fatima Khalid	Yes	Rena Alexander-Lewis	Yes
Gwenn Minton	Yes	Ruth Pearson	Yes
Janet Kedzie	No	Dianna Taylor	Yes
Julie Hendricks	Yes	Sue Armstrong	Yes-Remote
Kameron Wilds	Yes		

Non-Continuum of Care (CoC) Board Members

Organization	Name	Attending
Housing and Community Development, Fairfax County <i>Office to Prevent and End Homelessness</i>	Thomas Barnett	Yes
	Stephen Knippler	Yes
	Meghan Heaney	Yes

I. Call to Order.

- The meeting was called to order by CoC Board Chairman David Meyer.

II. Approve CoC Board Member Remote Participation

- Remote access to the CoC Board meeting was provided to CoC Board Member Sue Armstrong.
- CoC Board Chairman David Meyer presented the remote participation policy to the board and confirmed that a physical quorum was present.
- CoC Board Member Aimee Garcia made the motion for CoC Board Member Sue Armstrong to participate remotely. The motion was seconded by Penelope Rood. This motion was approved with no objections.
- CoC Board Member Sue Armstrong stated for the record that her reason for attending the meeting remotely was due to her presence being needed at an emergency meeting for the City of Falls Church winter shelter. This was the first time that CoC Board Member Sue Armstrong has attended a board meeting remotely.
- CoC Board Member Sue Armstrong stated that she was calling from Falls Church, Virginia. A motion was made by CoC Board Member Aimee Garcia that CoC Board Member Sue Armstrong can be heard adequately. This motion was seconded by CoC Board Member Penelope Rood. This motion was approved with no objections.

III. Approving Last Meeting Minutes:

- CoC Board member Penelope Rood made the motion to have the December 4, 2024, CoC Board meeting minutes approved. CoC Board member Ashley McSwain seconded the motion.
- The minutes for December 4, 2024, CoC Board Meeting were approved with no objections.

IV. Finalize NAACP Responses.

- Deputy Director, Office to Prevent and End Homelessness (OPEH), Thomas Barnett presented the NAACP responses to the CoC Board for review.
- It was stated that the draft response for recommendation number one is the only response that is still undecided and requires further discussion.
- It was stated that the responses for recommendation number four and recommendation number six still require the CoC Board's approval.
- Deputy Director, OPEH, Thomas Barnett, reviewed the drafted response for recommendation number four.
- Deputy Director, OPEH, Thomas Barnett, reviewed the drafted response for recommendation number six.
- Deputy Director, OPEH, Thomas Barnett, reviewed the recommendation and the response that had previously been drafted for recommendation number one, but requires further discussion and approval by the CoC Board. A CoC board discussion focused on whether a couple of nights stay at a hotel following an encampment closure is sufficient.
- A Board member stated that a couple of nights in a hotel is insufficient and does not have a meaningful impact compared to resources that would need to be spent. The CoC Board may advise the Board of Supervisors to support the homeless service providers that are located near an encampment being closed to mitigate the negative impact of the closure. It would be important that Fairfax County is strategically helping to fund providers when the utilization of their services increases due to a higher number of individuals accessing shelter space following the closure of an encampment.

- A Board member stated that there are some participants who are going to refuse to go into shelter. During encampment closures we have the ability to utilize those shelters that provide overflow. Members reflected that the County should utilize all available space in the current shelters when an encampment is closed. This would include utilizing floor space outside of the cold weather season.
- A CoC Board member stated that the utilization of the overflow space outside of the hypothermia prevention season is a change, as persons are not normally sleeping on the floor outside of that time. There needs to be flexibility with providers to be able to open overflow floor space and have it available year-round.
- A CoC Board member asked if it is asking too much to keep that floor space open year-round? It was stated that there is a lot that goes into allowing 50 additional people to sleep on the floor outside of the hypothermia prevention season. Providers will need extra staff, resources, blankets, food, etc. More people utilizing the space means more resources and staff are needed and more wear and tear on the building is going to occur.
- It was stated that the recommendation can include a phrase about providing floor space up to the capacity of the facility and the staff to serve individuals safely.
- A CoC Board member stated that there should be some freedom of flexibility and not necessarily a firm order that the shelters be required to provide overflow space. They suggested that there not be a number placed on capacity. Regardless of hypothermia season, there are individuals that are consistently seeking shelter. CoC Board members reflected that during potential budget cuts across County services, it is an important time for the CoC Board to express that there is insufficiency in the shelters to accommodate individuals and insufficiency in the county's affordable housing. They said the County should be encouraged to fund local providers that may have client increases due to these encampments shutting down. Members reflected on the importance of advocates expressing their support for local service providers.
- Deputy Director, OPEH, Thomas Barnett stated that he will draft an updated response for recommendation number one that reflects the CoC Board discussion.
- A CoC Board member asked why the board could not just recommend that an encampment not be shut down? Staff stated that shutdowns may be necessary due to health and safety concerns. In addition, the property sometimes becomes unusable for the general member of the public.

V. Discuss Proposed Committees (survey responses, meeting schedule).

- Deputy Director, OPEH, Thomas Barnett, presented on the different committees that have been proposed.
- Deputy Director, OPEH, Thomas Barnett reviewed the Coordinated Entry Policy Committee, the Lived Experience Committee, the Selection and Ranking Committee, and the System Improvement Committee.
- Deputy Director, OPEH, Thomas Barnett reported that there have only been eight responses back from CoC Board members regarding an interest in participating on a committee.
- A board member asked if there is an ability to have a virtual meeting for the committees and if so would they have to conduct the motions every time a meeting was held virtually? Staff will review the by-laws and see if they allow the committee meetings to be held virtually or if there is a need to alter the by-laws to make this accommodation.
- A board member stated that they do not see that these committees are in line with the bold moves that the CoC Board would like to see.

- A board member recommended that the description of the System Improvement Committee be expanded to include a long-term strategic plan. There could also be a separate committee that looks at the longer-term strategic goals and initiatives.
- A board member stated that they are trying to understand what is expected of them as an individual with lived experience.
- A board member made a recommendation to have someone with lived experience on each of the committees instead of having a dedicated lived experience committee. No CoC Board members contested this recommendation.
- A board member asked about changing the wording under the lived experience committee to not require that an individual have experienced homelessness in Fairfax County to serve on this committee, but to allow them to serve if they have experienced homelessness elsewhere. People with lived experience should be involved in the entire process.
- A board member asked that there be a committee that is forward looking that takes data from the other committees and data from programs around the country and makes recommendations to implement changes. Research should be conducted of best practices around the country.
- A board member stated that she agrees wholeheartedly with the lived experience recommendation across all committees. Recommended that a forward-thinking committee known as a strategic initiative committee be formed.
- CoC Board Chairman David Meyer asked the staff to take these recommendations and draft new committee options.
- A board member asked about the status of the formation of a strategic plan. It was reported that the solicitation has been drafted and is ready to be sent out. There is typically a 30 day period for offerors to draft and submit their proposals.
- A summary of the committee discussion was presented. The Coordinated Entry Policy Committee will stand. A Lived Experience Committee will not be created. The Selection and Ranking Committee will stand as suggested. A System Improvement Committee may evolve into the strategic enhancement committee or a separate strategic enhancement committee may be created.

VI. FY2024 Continuum of Care Notice and Funding Report

- Deputy Director, OPEH, Thomas Barnett reviewed the FY2024 award that was announced on January 17, 2025.
- It was reported that many of the projects saw increases due to the increase in Fair Market Rents.
- It was reported that one CoC-funded project, called the “2011 Pathway Homes Supportive Housing Program”, has lost all CoC funding. This program is estimated to currently house 25 individuals. The reason that the program lost funding was because it was the lowest ranked existing project in the ranking of local projects. All projects in Tier I were approved and increased based on Fair Market Rate. Projects in Tier II are at risk of losing a percentage or all their funding. HUD only committed to funding 90% of the annual renewal demand this year, putting those in Tier II at greater risk.
- Additional information will be shared regarding a plan to support those individuals in this program. Deputy Director, OPEH, Thomas Barnett requested that any vacancies in permanent supportive housing be prioritized for those individuals who are at risk of becoming homeless due to the loss of funding for this program.

- The floor was opened for any questions: What type of housing was this project? It is generally an apartment or townhome and some are shared units. The participants are all single adults. The housing needs of these individuals may be more personalized. Some could possibly move into a unit of their own with or without a subsidy. Some of the individuals may already be on the brink of being evicted. If these individuals become homeless again, they would lose their chronic status because they have been housed.
- A board member asked what part of the county these individuals are currently housed in? While no specific areas were mentioned, Deputy Director, OPEH, Thomas Barnett stated that Pathway Homes has units countywide. What are the implications of relocating those individuals to a new unit across the county? Just because a new vacancy is opened up for these individuals does not mean that they are going to accept the new unit. Progress that has been made with these individuals is in jeopardy if they become homeless again.
- It was stated that there is no indication of when this program is going to be closed. More information is forthcoming.
- Staff reported that they will bring back a breakdown of what the \$413,763 in funding that the program has been receiving was supporting, as requested by a CoC Board member.

VII. Discuss County Budget Process Timeline

- Deputy Director, OPEH, Thomas Barnett reported that the County's fiscal year begins on July 1 and ends on June 30.
- Deputy Director, OPEH, Thomas Barnett reviewed the budget process timeline and stated that February 18 is when the County Executive releases the FY 2026 advertised budget plan.
- On April 22 through April 24, the Board of Supervisors will hold public hearings on the FY 2026 budget.
- On May 13, the Board of Supervisors will adopt the FY2026 approved budget.

VIII. Hypothermia Prevention Numbers

- Deputy Director, OPEH, Thomas Barnett reported that the Hypothermia winter seasonal program has served 1,059 people as of January 22, 2025.
- Deputy Director, OPEH, Thomas Barnett provided an overview of the current numbers of total individuals served in each region.
- It was reported that in 2023, there were 1,018 people served during the entire Hypothermia season.

IX. Next Meeting

- The next CoC Board meeting will be held on February 26, 2025.
- There will be a Public Hearing on the Fair Ridge shelter opening at the Fairfax County Government Center on January 29, 2025.