



## City of Richmond

900 East Broad Street  
Richmond, VA 23219  
[www.rva.gov/index.php/office-city-clerk](http://www.rva.gov/index.php/office-city-clerk)

### Minutes

#### Education and Human Services Standing Committee Special Meeting

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Thursday, March 25, 2021

3:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor – Virtual Meeting

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#### Committee Members and Staff in Attendance

The Honorable Stephanie Lynch – Chair  
The Honorable Ellen Robertson – Vice Chair  
The Honorable Katherine Jordan – Committee Member  
The Honorable Cynthia Newbille – Alternate Member (late arrival and early departure)  
The Honorable Andreas Addison – Councilmember (late arrival and early departure)  
The Honorable Michael Jones – Councilmember (late arrival and early departure)  
The Honorable Ann-Frances Lambert – Councilmember (early departure)  
The Honorable Kristen Larson – Councilmember (late arrival and early departure)

Joyce Davis, Interim Council Chief of Staff  
M. Janet Palmer, Deputy City Attorney  
Candice Reid, City Clerk  
Dominique J. Thaxton, Assistant City Clerk  
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

#### Call to Order

Chair Stephanie Lynch called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m., and presided.

#### Electronic Meeting Announcement

Assistant City Clerk Dominique J. Thaxton, in accordance with Ordinance No. 2020-093, adopted April 9, 2020, as most recently amended by Ordinance No. 2020-232, adopted December 14, 2020, announced the meeting would be held through electronic communication means. Assistant City Clerk Thaxton stated notice of the meeting was provided to the public through a public information advisory issued on March 18, 2021, and through Legistar on the city website in accordance with usual practice. She also stated there would be no opportunities for public comment and no public hearings during the meeting.

*Councilor Michael Jones joined the meeting at 3:03 p.m.*

*Alternate Member Cynthia Newbille joined the meeting at 3:04 p.m.*

#### Discussion Items

##### Update on Current Situation

Michael Rogers, Continuum of Care director with Homeward, and Marvin Green, Program Manager with Richmond Urban Ministry Institute (RUMI), provided an overview of the current homeless service situation in the greater Richmond area. Mr. Rogers shared an update on the Greater Richmond Continuum of Care (GRCoC) plans for additional emergency shelter capacity.

*Councilor Kristen Larson joined the meeting at 3:07 p.m.*

*Vice Chair Ellen Robertson requested clarification on the distinction between Homeward and the GRCoC.*

Mr. Rogers stated that the GRCoC and Homeward are two separate entities with differing boards. Mr. Rogers expanded that the GRCoC is a voluntary participatory entity and does not carry a staff or budget. He also clarified that Homeward is a private 501(c)(3) that provides operational assistance and board staffing at the request of the GRCoC board.

*Chair Stephanie Lynch inquired if there is an information brochure for participants and stakeholders regarding their options for when the safety net shelter (SNS) closes after April 14, 2021. Chair Lynch also inquired about the number of case managers currently on staff at the SNS, and if staffing is adequate enough to provide SNS participants the individualized care they need to transition out of the shelter.*

Mr. Rogers stated that there have been a number of materials distributed concerning the pandemic programs and that plans for participants will be discussed in person through individualized case management. Mr. Rogers expressed that the clients are made aware of the temporary nature of the SNS and that case managers continue to regularly engage with them.

Mr. Green stated that there are currently five case managers on staff at the SNS.

*Vice Chair Robertson requested clarification on the quality of the individualized assessment plans that SNS case managers are providing to such a high volume of participants.*

Mr. Rogers provided an overview of a typical assessment plan analysis performed and how case managers develop a timeline for helping clients find necessary resources.

*Councilor Michael Jones departed the meeting at 3:21 p.m.*

*Chair Lynch inquired about the additional resources that would be needed to ensure that each participant has a plan when exiting the SNS by the closing date of April 14, 2021. Chair Lynch requested that representatives from the GRCoC and RUMI be available for continued discussion of homeless services at future work sessions.*

*A copy of all material provided has been filed.*

*Councilor Andreas Addison joined the meeting at 3:32 p.m.*

### **Virginia Beach Housing Resource Center**

Andrew Friedman, Director of Housing and Neighborhood Preservation, and Pamela Shine, Homeless Services System Manager with the City of Virginia Beach, provided an overview of the Virginia Beach Housing Resource Center. Mr. Friedman shared the seven major goals of the Virginia Beach strategic plan to end homelessness and how critical the Housing Resource Center has been in enhancing homeless services. Ms. Shine discussed the success that the Housing Resource Center has had in delivering services.

*Member Katherine Jordan asked for a breakdown of the budget for the Housing Resource Center and how the metrics for the center were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.*

Ms. Shine stated that her office will provide information on the performance metrics and budget of the Housing Resource Center to the members of the committee.

*Councilor Kristen Larson requested a breakdown of full time equivalent (FTE) employees and case workers with the Housing Resource Center.*

Ms. Shine shared that information on employees and other support staff will be included in the materials sent to the members of the committee.

*Vice Chair Ellen Robertson requested information on the operation of the Virginia Beach homeless services hotline and further detail on the shelter bed capacity of the Housing Resource Center. Vice Chair Robertson inquired what percentage of the local homeless population is the Housing Resource Center able to service and information on the average length of stay.*

Ms. Shine provided additional information on the shelter capacity for the Housing Resource Center. Ms. Shine shared that Virginia Beach utilizes a contractor for operation of the hotline. She also shared that the hotline serves as the first point of contact to identify the type of homeless crisis individuals are experiencing. Ms. Shine stated that the hotline refers individuals to a coordinated assessment team through the homeless management information system (HMIS).

*Vice Chair Robertson inquired about the number of staff on the coordinated assessment team to service individuals experiencing homelessness.*

Ms. Shine provided information on the number of referrals that the coordinated assessment team receives annually and the number of staff members on the team ready to provide resources to individuals experiencing varying homeless crises.

*Alternate Member Cynthia Newbille reiterated the request to receive information on the Housing Resource Center budget and asked for information on various local partnerships. Alternate Member Newbille also inquired about the model used for the coordinated assessment team and the network of information systems that allow the various teams to communicate seamlessly.*

Ms. Shine stated that the development of the coordinated assessment model was provided through consultation with Tracy Flaherty-Willmott, Associate Director of OrgCode. Ms. Shine expanded that OrgCode is responsible for the creation of the Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (SPDAT), that is used by many organizations to gauge the vulnerabilities of individuals experiencing homelessness.

*Alternate Member Newbille asked if there are opportunities for employment and training for participants of the Housing Resource Center.*

Ms. Shine shared that there has been ongoing discussion of utilizing various operations of the Housing Resource Center as a social impact model for employing participants but that the model has not yet been implemented.

*Chair Lynch shared that further questions from the committee and Councilmembers will be shared with Ms. Shine.*

*A copy of the material provided has been filed.*

### **Virginia Supportive House**

Allison Bogdanovic, Executive Director of Virginia Supportive House (VSH), provided the committee with an overview of permanent supportive housing efforts of VSH across Virginia. Ms. Bogdanovic also shared information on the budget and fund sources for VSH and various programs.

*Member Katherine Jordan inquired about how many individuals experiencing homelessness can be assisted through scattered housing, compared to single-site housing communities.*

Ms. Bogdanovic stated that a major factor is the housing site's capacity to accept more clients. She expanded that the supportive housing sites subsidize rent for the residents and may simply not have enough funding secured to take on more individuals.

*Alternate Member Cynthia Newbille inquired if VSH has utilized Medicaid to underwrite some of the costs of case management services. Alternate Member Newbille also asked if the proposed resource center*

*would be partnering with any local agencies or organizations.*

Ms. Bogdanovic confirmed that VHS has in fact been able to utilize Medicaid to underwrite some of the case management services cost. She also confirmed that there are ongoing partnerships with a number of local non-profits and healthcare providers to assist with services at the proposed resource center.

*Vice Chair Ellen Robertson asked if there is a clear difference in the regional collaboration seen in the south Hampton Roads area, compared to the regional collaboration in the Richmond region.*

Ms. Bogdanovic stated that the collaboration seen in the Hampton Roads area came out of a regional commitment to end homelessness and that Richmond is in the beginning stages of a similar regional pledge.

*Chair Lynch underscored the timeliness of the Richmond area regional commitment to end homelessness and shared that the region is expected to receive grant funds from the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) through the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.*

*A copy of the material provided has been filed.*

### **Pathway Homes, Inc.**

Dr. Eleanor Vincent, Chief Operating Officer, Pathway Homes, Inc., provided an overview of the Pathway Homes, Inc. model of permanent supportive housing (PSH) that has been implemented across the country. Dr. Vincent shared that Pathway Homes, Inc. focuses on providing permanent affordable housing for individuals with serious mental illnesses, older and disabled individuals who tend to be on fixed incomes.

*Member Katherine Jordan asked if Pathway Homes, Inc. could provide input on how the city could proceed with PSH for individuals posed to lose services when the emergency safety net shelter closes on April 14, 2021.*

Dr. Vincent stated that Pathway Homes, Inc. has experience and capability to produce PSH shelters within a few months of a request. Dr. Vincent stated that a one month timeline is difficult but that the city may consider using single room occupancy (SRO) shelter services for emergency purposes if zoning regulation permits.

*Councilor Andreas Addison departed the meeting.*

*Vice Chair Ellen Robertson inquired about the cost of potentially providing SRO services for individuals experiencing housing insecurities.*

Dr. Vincent shared that subsidizing the leasing costs of SRO is the most expensive component and that when factoring in various supportive services, it could potentially cost \$1 million annually for 50 SRO units. Dr. Vincent stated that Pathways Homes, Inc. can assist the city with models of potential costs of utilizing their services for PSH.

*Councilor Kristen Larson departed the meeting at 4:41 p.m.*

Cheryl Burke, Chair of the Richmond Public School Board, inquired if any funding for Pathway Homes, Inc. was secured through the McKinney–Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987.

Dr. Vincent stated that only a small portion of funding is received through the McKinney–Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987, and that a major funding source is now the Continuum of Care Program (CoC) through the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

*A copy of the material provided has been filed.*

*Alternate Member Cynthia Newbille departed the meeting at 4:55 p.m.*

## **Q&A Discussion**

*Chair Stephanie Lynch stated the importance of ongoing collaboration with regional partners to eradicate homelessness in the Richmond area.*

*Vice Chair Ellen Robertson emphasized that it is imperative to have continued discussion and partnership to find the best solutions for affordable housing in the city. Vice Chair Robertson proposed a collaborative work session with Council, the administration, and local partners to discuss the next steps for emergency shelter services.*

*Chair Lynch concurred with the necessity of a collaborative work session that includes local government and nonprofit partners.*

*Councilor Ann-Frances Lambert departed the meeting at 5:11 p.m.*

## **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:12 p.m.