

The attached document was submitted to the
Community Homelessness Advisory Board during
the meeting held on January 6, 2020.
by Clerk's office
for Agenda Item No. 4
and included here pursuant to NRS 241.020(8).

**COMMUNITY HOMELESSNESS ADVISORY BOARD
WASHOE COUNTY, NEVADA**

MONDAY

9:00 A.M.

DECEMBER 2, 2019

PRESENT:

Bob Lucey, Chair
Neoma Jardon, Vice Chair
Marsha Berkgigler, Member
Vaughn Hartung, Member
Oscar Delgado, Member
Kristopher Dahir, Member
Ed Lawson, Member

Nancy Parent, County Clerk
Paul Lipparelli, Assistant District Attorney

The Community Homelessness Advisory Board convened at 9:01 a.m. in the Washoe County Commission Chambers of the Washoe County Administration Complex, 1001 East Ninth Street, Reno, Nevada. Following the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of our Country, the Clerk called the roll and the Board conducted the following business:

Chair Lucey thought this holiday was challenging for many homeless individuals who sat out in the snow and rain. He said these people had no place to go to get out of the weather and stated this issued needed to be addressed.

19-115C AGENDA ITEM 3 Public Comment.

Mr. Jeff Church spoke about mental health emergency committals found in Nevada Revised Statute 433A. He said a better job needed to be done to help the mentally ill and noted it needed to be coordinated. He stated every person who was detained for an emergency committal received access to a Public Defender and all their rights were respected. He spoke about Million Dollar Murray and said to search it on the internet if people were not aware of him. He stated he dealt with dozens of individuals like him and noted they cost taxpayers millions of dollars in jail time, court fees, hospital bills, and emergency medical transportation. He thought there were better alternatives, such as jail, to get them off the streets and get them the help they needed. He spoke about how happy and productive some individuals were in jail, though he felt court-ordered treatment was a better bargain. He asserted apartment rentals were cheaper in other areas and suggested relocation assistance for the unemployed. He supported the idea of providing a camping area. He said the Wells Avenue overpass homeless camp was cleaned out and people needed a secure camping area.

Ms. Kim Barghouti from the Reno Initiative for Shelter and Equality (RISE) spoke in support of a safe campground. She said OrgCode Consulting, LLC stressed the

importance of the community working together to devise a plan to end homelessness. She noted multiple agencies were working together on the overnight tent and meal programs and said they were making progress. She thought agencies putting their resources together could result in a safe, secure, and sanitary campground. She said the City of Reno proposed to spend \$250,000 to clean areas along the river but she felt that did not make sense because individuals would just relocate. She emphasized the need for a better solution.

Ms. Catherine MacIntosh from RISE said she went to the meal service site for two hours and, although she was dressed for the weather, she was freezing when she left. She stated the people at the site were not as privileged as she was to get into her warm car, drive to her warm home, and take a hot shower to warm up. She thought something different needed to happen instead of pushing people from one location to another. She indicated the City of Reno had plenty of property on 4th Street they could utilize, which would keep people away from the river. She asked the Board to research Safe Ground programs that had been successful in other states where people could be safe to sleep.

Ms. Iris Jehl-Peppard, One Truckee River Partnership Coordinator, said she believed focus should be on the short term by developing an urban campground for individuals who were currently homeless along the Truckee River. She stated this would not solve the issue of homelessness but would provide a centralized place away from the river that was not a shelter facility. Shelters had a 90-day policy and offered a centralized place for individuals to be located and notified when services became available for them. She thought there was value in working together to address this challenge and the paths that lead people to homelessness. She said drug addiction was a health issue and she hoped an agency was willing to take responsibility for finding resources to help individuals.

Mr. Jay Kolbet-Clausell spoke about a Reno City Council agenda item which proposed the approval of \$250,000 to perform homeless sweeps in Reno. He expressed concern this action would cause people to relocate to Sparks, construction sites, and the streets. He noted people lost their belongings when they moved and said it was extremely difficult to claim lost items from the Community Assistance Center. He said the County offered to purchase a solar light for the meal service location, but it required approval from the City of Reno. He expressed frustration that the City of Reno was not engaged with this program. He wanted political differences to be put aside so all entities could focus on the real issues. He indicated there was a debate over who the Housing and Urban Development lead agency should be for the Continuum of Care; he noted it was currently the City of Reno. He said there was no representation from the County at the last Reno Area Alliance for Homeless meeting. He opined the County should be the lead agency because it was responsible for providing social services in the area. He stated the community needed coordination from all entities.

Ms. Lisa Lee, Foundation for Recovery Program Director, spoke about an agenda item for the Reno City Council's next meeting. She expressed concern about the proposed contracted job to clean up the City of Reno. She said the answer to end homelessness was housing. She shared a story about a woman, Mary, who lived in the bushes at Paradise Park; Mary received transitional housing, became a recovery support

specialist, and was working on achieving her State certification. Mary worked to overcome years of domestic abuse but could not have done it without safe and secure housing. Ms. Lee stated hundreds of people like Mary were able to get off the streets. She provided a document for distribution to the Board, a copy of which was placed on file with the Clerk. She referred to a budget document, which included a full-time peer support person to assist people with housing, benefits, mileage, and housing scholarships for one year of rent to benefit 15 households. She indicated the total budget for this was \$244,191.20. She opined money allocated to end homelessness for neighbors on the river could be better spent on a safe campground. She announced National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day was December 21 and cited statistics which proved people in homes lived 20 years longer than those who were homeless.

19-116C AGENDA ITEM 4 Approval of minutes of the November 4, 2019 meeting.

Vice Chair Jardon wanted staff to explain about what the City of Reno was contemplating and said staff was present to provide details.

Deputy District Attorney Paul Lipparelli stated the item was not related to any items on the current agenda. He stated Agenda Item 9 was Board Members announcements and it could be brought up then, although the agenda was not styled for back and forth discussion on the topic.

On motion by Member Dahir, seconded by Member Lawson, which motion duly carried on a 6-0 vote, it was ordered that Agenda Item 4 be approved.

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On motion by Member Berkgigler, seconded by Member Lawson, which motion duly carried on a 6-0 vote, it was ordered that Agenda Item 9 be opened next.

19-117C AGENDA ITEM 9 Board members announcements, reports and updates to include requests for future board agenda items.

Vice Chair Jardon asked for City of Reno personnel to speak about the proposed agenda item for the next Council meeting.

Reno Chief of Police Jason Soto spoke about the proposed clean and safe team and the thoughts behind the process. He said many challenges existed community-wide with homelessness and safety was the most concerning with the growing homeless population. He asserted it was important to him that the City of Reno do a better job at providing safe and healthy resources to individuals but there were not enough resources in place for the homeless population. He noted he had reallocated resources within the past six months to include a full-time team of police officers who offered resources such as family reunification and shelter assistance. He indicated hazardous waste was left behind when homeless were provided transitional housing and the safe and clean team would

dispose of the waste and restore areas affected by homeless camps. He said individuals would be provided new clothing and sleeping bags, and expressed it was not the intention to dispose of their belongings. He stated housing was the biggest issue and wished he could do more to provide those resources, especially during inclement weather. He mentioned crimes against homeless individuals had increased and said he would do whatever it took to bring those statistics back down.

Reno Assistant City Manager Bill Thomas spoke about issues related to homelessness and said staff had no choice but to respond if a situation was discovered or the Health District issued a violation for a public health concern. He said the City of Reno had taken resources from other areas to deal with these situations and determined that funding was needed to solve this issue. He stated the agenda item for the upcoming meeting was about cleanup and the funding was to make areas safe again. He commented this action was not about pushing homeless people out of camps, it was about public health issues the City was obligated to respond to.

Chief Soto said cleanups were scheduled every year for the Truckee River corridor and many times areas were vacant but trash and unsightly items had accumulated. He indicated the intent of this item was not to disturb the homeless, but a simple cleanup to improve the living situation. He thought this would have positive effects on people in the community and said region-wide efforts were needed.

Chair Lucey stated no action would take place on this item at this time and indicated he would re-open the agenda item later in the meeting.

On the call for public comment, Mr. Jay Kolbet-Clausell expressed concern about the Reno City Council agenda and wondered why this was the first time the public had heard about the proposal. He stated he was not disputing the importance of assisting the homeless, but this was a large amount of money. He spoke about how the Parks Department was unable to maintain staffing levels and the City was not able to field a full crew, which included one leader and three temporary positions, for more than a few weeks at a time due to the nature of the work and the pay rate. He stated he had been at camps and witnessed contractors cutting down brush in an area where people were still living in tents. He mentioned there were many meetings about homelessness and keeping people safe, but he felt this item came without notice on Thanksgiving weekend when no one was available to discuss the issue. He opined more overflow shelter space was needed and this money could be spent in many other ways. He asserted this item would not affect the budget because consolidated tax revenues were being used.

Mr. Jeff Church explained the Washoe County Health District issued a notice of violation to the City of Reno for trash along the river and various parks. The City was obligated to clean up those areas or be cited for criminal violation. He provided a copy of the violation, which was placed on file with the Clerk.

Ms. Catherine MacIntosh spoke unconscious biases that were present in the language used when speaking about homelessness. She preferred saying people worked

with the homeless, not dealt with them. She added these people were not the homeless, they were people experiencing homelessness. She said homelessness was not the problem, the lack of resources was.

19-118C **AGENDA ITEM 5** Update, discussion, and possible direction on a presentation of the annual Point in Time Count conducted by the Reno Area Alliance for the Homeless (RAAH). Hettie Read, City of Reno.

City of Reno Management Analyst Hettie Read conducted a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Point in Time (PIT) Count; PIT Reporting; Elements of the PIT; Unsheltered Count; Sheltered Count; Motel Count; Interviews; 2019 PIT Data; and Longitudinal Point in Time Data.

Member Berkbigler wondered what Congress did with the PIT report. Ms. Read stated it was used to determine funding for homelessness. Member Berkbigler asked whether it would be included in the 2020 Census results or if the homeless would be recounted then. Ms. Read said she was contacted by Census staff to get information about service providers in the area and work with the City of Reno, but as far as she knew this information was not used for the Census.

Member Berkbigler commented the 2020 Census would count every individual the government was responsible for, including the homeless. She stated it was extremely important to the County because it determined the amount of money allocated for additional services. As the homeless population continued to grow, this count would be very important to the Community Homelessness Advisory Board.

Member Dahir stated he served on the Governor's Census Board and they would review this report, as the count contained significant, important data. He said volunteers performed the counts, but the Reno Area Alliance for the Homeless (RAAH) could communicate with this Board if additional assistance was needed.

Vice Chair Jardon wondered whether individuals with cell phones or computer access participated in the count. She expressed some individuals might not want to publicly state they were struggling to maintain permanent housing. According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Ms. Read explained, someone staying with a friend would not necessarily be considered unsheltered; it was limited to the definitions provided by HUD.

Member Berkbigler wondered whether individuals who were incarcerated during the count would be considered homeless because they would be back on the street in a matter of time. Ms. Read indicated individuals incarcerated on the night of the count would not be considered homeless.

Member Delgado asked whether veterans residing in weekly motels were counted separately and if the demolition of motels had an effect on the number of individuals in weekly motels. Ms. Read stated veterans were not counted separately and

she had seen the motel counts decrease every year due to a decline in availability. Member Delgado wondered whether RAAH saw a correlation between the loss of motels and an increase in unsheltered individuals. Ms. Read said the trend indicated an increase in the unsheltered and a decrease in motels during the last count.

Member Delgado wanted more detailed information about the PIT and the data it would include. Ms. Read stated she could provide that information to the Board.

Chair Lucey stated the PIT count was required by HUD and the federal government but it was not suitable as a once-a-year count. Agencies made educated decisions based on the data provided and broad and vague information made decision making more difficult. He asked details about the process of the PIT count scheduled for January 30, 2020. Ms. Read stated the PIT volunteers consisted mostly of case management staff from local service providers, including the Veteran's Resource Center, Volunteers of America, Catholic Charities, and other non-profit organizations. Chair Lucey clarified the counters were not truly volunteers but paid staff from agencies. Ms. Read stated it was a mix of paid staff and volunteers. Chair Lucey wondered how volunteers were qualified to perform data collection. Ms. Read explained teams would be formed prior to the count and unexperienced volunteers would be paired with an experienced case manager and law enforcement. Chair Lucey stated the PIT count was less than 60 days away and asked whether teams had been established and the proper number of volunteers and staff had been recruited. Ms. Read said two PIT planning meetings had occurred and she expected 40 volunteers this year. She clarified the volunteers would be counting the unsheltered individuals and data would also be received from agencies who sheltered individuals.

Chair Lucey expressed frustration about the lack of structure for the PIT count. He thought it would not provide the broad base of information needed. He stated he would bring this information back to his Board and push for some changes to be made to the annual PIT count in the future. He opined better processes needed to be established to collect more accurate data so discussions about homelessness could be based on correct information.

Member Dahir hoped the counts would allow the entities to know what they were dealing with. He wanted this count to be accurate so decisions could be based on accurate data, although he thought the count should be performed more than once a year.

Member Lawson thought it was important for people to understand this was a one-day PIT count required by the federal government. He said it had nothing to do with data gathered the rest of the year. This count accomplished one task for the federal government but did not do much for the community. He mentioned OrgCode Consulting, LLC explained categorization of people and recommended ways to help individuals. He stated he now understood the reason why the PIT count was performed annually.

Vice Chair Jardon said she understood the functionality of the PIT count and the way it was administered. She thought the collective sentiment of the Board was that through contact with an unsheltered person, information as to why they were homeless

was data that needed to be collected to determine what kept them from a shelter. Many people avoided shelters because of a partner, a pet, or rules about smoking. She opined that specific questions needed to be asked of homeless individuals to better understand the contributing factors in the data collected.

On the call for public comment, Ms. Catherine MacIntosh indicated the PIT count was very important and many points had been brought up about where it was lacking. She said the PIT count for gender identity was not accurate and stated she participated in the motel count. She noted information about transgender and gender nonconforming identity was not collected at the motel check-in process. She said the biggest issue with PIT counts was Cities sweeping right before the count, which made it hard to find people because they were not where the teams expected them to be. She suggested not pushing people out of areas right before the count to obtain accurate information.

19-119C **AGENDA ITEM 7** Update, discussion, and possible direction regarding safety and cleanliness of the Truckee River. Washoe County Sheriff's Office, Chief Deputy Greg Herrera.

Sheriff's Office Chief Deputy Greg Herrera conducted a PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which was placed of file with the Clerk, and reviewed slides with the following titles: Statistics – Jan – Nov 2019; Abandoned Property Notice; 2018-2019 Clean-Ups; End of World Camp; Public Information; Where We Are Now?; Community Assistance Center; and various slides containing photos.

Chief Deputy Herrera noted the statistics provided in the presentation only pertained to homeless instances and not any other functions of the Washoe County Sheriff's Office. He thought the statistics had improved since the last time they were presented. He stated the Reno Police Department (RPD), the Sparks Police Department (SPD), and the Washoe County Sheriff's Office (SO) planned to utilize one analysis and said future statistics would include more detail and be more accurate.

Chief Deputy Herrera explained the process of handling illegal campers was to provide education about illegal camping on public lands, information about future cleanup efforts, notice of cleanup dates, and resources about transitional housing, meals, detoxing and treatment, medical services, and employment opportunities. He stated they also provided education about public safety and hazardous waste issues and their effects. He said they collaborated with other agencies prior to the cleanup events to determine the resources needed to best service the location. He indicated coordination of trash bins, equipment, and work crews occurred to ensure a successful cleanup effort. He mentioned discussions had occurred about solutions for landscaping that would dissuade illegal camping. He stated follow up at an illegal campsite was very important to ensure the cleanup was successful.

Chief Deputy Herrera spoke about the 2018-2019 cleanup efforts and said in 2018 the RPD removed 171 yards of debris. He stated in 2019, the RPD contacted 15 campers along the river and offered resources, which some accepted. The SPD collected

25 hypodermic needles on a bike path during cleanup efforts and three yards of debris, and contacted 11 campers, two of which accepted the resources offered. He stated the SO and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Rangers worked at the End of World Camp. They contacted campers at more than 15 campsites, where all individuals left the camp and two were successfully placed into transitional housing. He noted they also removed more than 160 yards of debris from the camps. He said the End of the World Camp was located east of Vista Boulevard behind businesses and there were reports of theft occurring at the businesses and large amounts of trash being dumped into the river. He said an individual who lived at the End of the World Camp for more than two years was familiar with available resources but chose not to go to the shelter because there were too many rules. He added this individual was a veteran and had an income of more than \$1,200 per month, a cell phone, a computer, a generator, and solar panels to power his equipment. They were able to move him and his belongings into transitional housing. People living at the camp were informed it was illegal to camp on BLM land for more than 14 days.

Chief Deputy Herrera displayed a photo of the Community Assistance Center where meals were served daily. He said the site opened on November 4 for overflow meal services. He stated it was cold this time of year and the site was not ideal, but noted he was proud to be part of the process. He asserted it was a collaborative effort with all entities playing major roles in making the site successful. He mentioned only 30 to 40 people a day ate there on the first week of operation, but they were currently serving 150 people daily.

Reno Police Deputy Chief Mac Venzon said much of what Chief Deputy Herrera spoke about regarding the cleanup efforts was what the clean and safe team would be doing, along with reaching out to provide services to individuals in need. He stated they worked with individuals to ensure they received information about the appropriate services for their needs. He mentioned the cleanup efforts would be a constant task and were necessary for the health and safety of the river and the people who utilized that area. He explained the clean and safe team would include law enforcement services to ensure the safety of the team. He stated the team would be among the homeless population on a regular basis, which would allow for the gathering of additional information about the services needed. This would allow the entities to make more informed decisions on where to allocate funds. He wanted the team to create a questionnaire or data-gathering tool to collect the best information.

Vice Chair Jardon expressed appreciation for the information provided. She asked what percentage of the people they encountered had pets. Washoe County Sheriff's Office Lieutenant Anthony Miceli estimated 30 to 50 percent of homeless individuals had pets and would not leave them.

Member Berkbigler wondered how people were tracked if they did not want services or chose not to use the available services due to having pets. She met a veteran who lost his leg and had a pet but did not want to go to the shelter without his pet. She knew there were plenty of homeless individuals that were in the same situation. Deputy Chief Venzon did not characterize the methods as tracking but said they saw the same

service-resistant individuals often at different sites. He stated it was very common for individuals not to want to leave their pets. He thought the team would become familiar with the individuals and develop a rapport with them; they would have a better idea of what services met the needs and wants of the people. He mentioned they would have a better idea after the PIT count of where people liked to be, which would make tracking them easier.

Member Berkgigler expressed concerns about citizens helping homeless individuals instead of referring them to available resources. She said that was feedback she received from constituents. Deputy Chief Venzon advised people to donate to volunteer groups and non-profit organizations because they were designed to take one dollar and stretch it further to provide for people who were in need.

Member Dahir thanked the entities and said he was pleased they were working together. He hoped it would continue.

On the call for public comment, Ms. Lisa Lee said it was traumatic to see the photos of homeless encampments. She stated several people went to the End of the World Camp for many years, including herself. She said a survey was designed years ago by the Community-Based Case Management Team which included questions covering many of the topics the Board had; data was available about why people did not access existing shelter services. She mentioned many agencies were providing transitional housing and said options existed outside of the traditional Community Assistance Center network. She opined it took the efforts of everyone to find solutions for everyone.

Mr. Jay Kolbet-Clausell stated he previously worked at End of the World Camp and was currently working closely with the Sheriff's Office. He indicated many people were working collaboratively to reduce harm to the community and said it was emotional, but worth it. He mentioned using words that protected humanity were a hard habit to get into. He said the term 'homeless people' was most commonly used to describe neighbors who worked together and relied on each other to survive. Neighbors that were evicted would leave a mess just like anyone else who was leaving home in two weeks with not enough time to get everything moved. He said the shelter only allowed people to stay for 90 days and they lost their belongings. He stated there was not a reliable meal service there except for specific hours, which were not long enough. He explained neighbors went back to areas they knew after 90 days in a shelter because they had no place else to go.

Member Lawson wondered whether the law enforcement agencies were looking for a task force for river cleanup. Sheriff Balaam stated they were working as a region to fill the positions to avoid pushing people from city to city.

Vice Chair Jardon said people mentioned this Board did not take any action and explained this was an advisory board to the other jurisdictions and members brought information back to their boards for action. She thought the Board was starting to gather enough information for members to discuss at their respective boards.

Chair Lucey stated all three municipalities had different areas of focus and different challenges, but they had been working toward a unified effort.

19-120C **AGENDA ITEM 6** Update, discussion, and possible direction on a presentation of the Eddy House as a local facility for homeless and at-risk youth. Diaz Dixon, CEO.

Eddy House Chief Executive Officer Diaz Dixon conducted a PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which was placed on file with the Clerk, and reviewed slides with the following titles: Our Goal is to be the Solution; The new 18,000 Sq. Ft. Facility; and Employment.

Mr. Dixon said the Eddy House had progressed very well with the capital campaign and moving forward with the new location open. He stated their initial goal when he started was to raise \$700,000 by December 2. He said they reached that goal thanks to the Pennington Foundation, who put up a \$1.5 million match. He thanked the many entities that supported them and expressed gratitude for the collaboration which led to the accomplishment of such significant goals. He spoke about meeting with Nevada Youth Empowerment Project (NYEP) Executive Director Monica DuPea, who she said was an invaluable source of information. He stated NYEP would be one of their main partners moving forward.

Mr. Dixon stated the new facility was located on Willow Street and would include 40 to 50 beds, 20 for drop-ins and 20 for short-term transitional housing. He said the short-term beds were for people participating in the six-month Community Living Workforce Development program. He noted any remaining beds would be for emergencies. He mentioned staff would work with community partners and law enforcement to provide individuals a safe place to sleep in an emergency. He said that, along with NYEP, the Eddy House was working with juvenile probation and the empowerment center. He indicated they secured two homes for transitional housing in addition to the Willow Street facility and NYEP would identify individuals who were appropriate for that stage of living.

Mr. Dixon said the Eddy House would continue to work with Northern Nevada Hopes and the Community Health Alliance, and she stated partnerships were very important in both the public and private sectors. He noted their programming would be changing significantly and would include working with youth who were aging out of foster care before they reached legal age. He stated preventive services were needed to ease the youth into certain programs before it became an urgent situation. He said those youth would be able to access the Eddy House's programming during the daytime as well as exposure to other agencies providing services. He mentioned partner agencies had shown interest in hiring the youth involved in the Community Living program. Safe housing was essential to gain stability and employers could count on the youth who had a safe place to stay. He stated it would take a while to get programs up and running, and they needed to hire more staff. They had a goal to raise another \$400,000 by the end of January. He commented they would focus on long-term sustainability programs once they were running smoothly.

Member Berkbigler was curious about meals in the additional two homes and wondered whether a housemother or father would prepare meals for the youth. Mr. Dixon said they were in negotiations with an individual who had a commercial kitchen and would donate space. He mentioned many groups had offered to donate time and bring people in to cook meals. He said the youth would be more independent once they were settled in their homes and would not necessarily need someone to cook for them.

Member Berkbigler said that even stable youth did not eat well. She wondered whether teaching them to live a healthy life was part of the goal. Mr. Dixon replied nutrition and diet were 100 percent part of the goal. He hoped to see all the Board Members at the fundraiser.

Member Dahir expressed gratitude to Mr. Dixon for the great progress he had made in a short time. He believed working with this age group was the first step to reducing the future of homelessness. He asked when the facility would open. Mr. Dixon stated he would obtain the keys on December 6 and their fundraiser was on December 11. He stated they would be hiring and training and were hoping to be ready to open in mid-January. He said it would be nice to open next week but the needed staff would not be in place by then.

Member Lawson expressed appreciation for the work Mr. Dixon was doing and said everyone wanted the same thing: to end homelessness and provide help.

Vice Chair Jardon asserted the facility would be open prior to the PIT count. She wanted to compare the impacts from the past year with the current year and wondered about the effect on the following year's PIT count. OrgCode identified the population and the areas of focus for significant improvements, noting that youth was the key. She was excited to see the impacts of this program. Mr. Dixon thought the PIT count would be accurate and there would be a clear vision of what the needs were.

Member Delgado was pleased with the partnerships Mr. Dixon had fostered and thought the focus on data was very important, especially programs focused on life skills. He looked forward to seeing the outcome.

Chair Lucey asked about onsite mental health and chemical dependency counselling. He said it was so important to mentor youth and provide a positive path to stay on. He asserted youth with families struggled with challenges in life and it was worse for youth without families. He wanted more information about the process for helping youth who were dealing with mental health and drug issues. Mr. Dixon stated housing an individual, feeding them, and getting them a job was not enough to help these youth. Suicide numbers continued to rise significantly because people thought those were the essentials everyone needed. He asserted a focus on mental health was so important to help youth understand where they were in life. Some individuals did not realize they had struggles and he said it was okay to recognize that. He noted people needed to feel whole, complete, and not homeless, which meant increasing self-awareness. He indicated his background was in counseling and no matter what field someone worked in, they wanted

to acknowledge these kids and help them. When a person was in survival mode and only thinking about where to sleep that night and where to get the next meal, they did not have time to think about getting the actual help they needed. He said the new facility would provide an opportunity to give these youth some space to get out of survival mode, but changes would not happen right away. He stated the beds were not going to just fill up when they opened, but when people heard about the success of the Eddy House and how people were treated there, it would encourage people to come. He noted they had a significant job to do to determine where patterns came from and the history behind them.

Chair Lucey told a story about one of his wife's close friends who started out her life homeless and had no family. He said she found a way through mentorship and programs to get out of where she was and she was currently a partner at a law firm because someone took the time to mentor her. The Eddy House was more than a brick and mortar facility to him, it was a place for people to go to find mentorship and a path forward.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

10:56 a.m. **Member Delgado left the meeting.**

19-121C **AGENDA ITEM 8** Update, discussion, and possible direction on a presentation by the Nevada Department of Veterans Affairs, Sierra Nevada Health Care System on the Healthcare for the Homeless Veterans Program. Elizabeth Pope, Coordinated Entry Specialist.

Nevada Department of Veterans Affairs Coordinated Entry Specialist Elizabeth Pope conducted a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed slides with the following titles: Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV); Eligibility; Programs Available to Veterans Who Are Homeless; HCHV Outreach (2 slides); Outreach Center; Coordinated Entry; Peer Support; Emergency & Transitional Housing; Transitional Housing Partnerships in Washoe County; HCHV Case Management; HUD-VASH; Supportive Services Veteran Families (SSVF); National Call Center for Homeless Veterans; Veterans Crisis Line; and Questions.

Ms. Pope stated there was a little confusion and said she represented the Federal Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). She displayed a map, which revealed the areas in northern California and Nevada where they provided services for veterans.

Ms. Pope explained some of the programs available to homeless veterans and said they had case managers to ensure people were provided with the appropriate services for their situation. She stated the Outreach Center was approved for a Homeless Patient Aligned Care Team (HPACT), which was a medical team specifically for veterans who were experiencing homelessness. The HPACT would be located at the Outreach Center on Capitol Hill. She said many veterans were not comfortable going to the VA Medical Center for care for a variety of reasons.

Ms. Pope spoke about the Million Dollar Murray story that was brought up earlier along with the cost of homelessness. She said the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) was designed to be first-option housing, which meant they did not have to be sober or be stable with mental health issues to get into housing. She explained details of a study that determined costs related to jail stays and medical treatment were dramatically reduced when a person was provided with housing and case management support. She stated an estimate of a person in jail was \$130 per night or \$3,900 per month. She said it was more economical to provide housing and resources to people experiencing homelessness, even with rents on the rise. She noted the only way to measure the success of homelessness was to create an inventory of creative housing solutions. She asserted the point in time (PIT) count was critical for the resources the VA offered as well. Although the PIT was mandated by HUD, she pointed out, the VA used that data in addition to other data every year to determine the number of housing vouchers a community would receive. She hoped the PIT count number for homeless veterans would continue to decrease. She asserted suicide was a risk factor for homeless individuals and said they partnered closely with a suicide prevention team for veterans to provide additional services.

Member Dahir thanked Ms. Pope for the valuable information and asked whether they currently had beds available for veterans. Ms. Pope explained there was turnover everyday like the shelter. She stated some days a couple of beds were available, but other days there were not.

Member Dahir wondered how many veterans were being helped and how many could not be. Even if the beds were full, Ms. Pope said, that did not mean people could not connect with someone. She stated case management staff worked with individuals to exit homelessness when they were ready. The beds were nice because they kept people safe while they were there. As mentioned before, she asserted some veterans did not want to go into transitional housing.

Member Dahir asked Ms. Pope whether they worked with the shelter to help veterans. Ms. Pope said they had a veterans' dorm at the shelter and now a transitional living dorm. She noted the Volunteers of America (VOA) staff did the bulk of the work for them. She stated the VOA's goal was for veterans to leave the shelter for housing. She mentioned bi-weekly meetings were held with all the providers to review the housing plan for veterans experiencing homelessness.

Chair Lucey said the information provided was important because there was so much interconnection to the work done within the municipalities. He stated it was important to get the PIT count right. It was important to get all individuals to participate in the count. He opined veterans were a significant part of the vulnerable population.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

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Agenda Item 9 was opened earlier in this meeting. Chair Lucey requested the item be re-opened to complete the announcements, reports, and updates.

19-117C AGENDA ITEM 9 Board members announcements, reports and updates to include requests for future board agenda items.

Vice Chair Jardon brought up the importance of getting a more robust point in time (PIT) count on January 30, 2020. She said funding for many entities relied on programs that would start in 2020 and she wondered how they would impact the 2021 count. She thought halting any type of sweeps prior to the count was a good idea in order to obtain an accurate PIT count. She thought counting in the outlying areas was important because there were more homeless encampments there, away from the river and downtown parks. She wanted to see a sample of the questionnaire being used to gather data when contact was made with people experiencing homelessness, noting that Ms. Lisa Lee said she had a sample questionnaire. She hoped all agencies and groups could have a data collection questionnaire. She thought it was time to start looking at the concept of Safe Ground campgrounds like other communities were doing. She said the Board would need to know the impacts and how it would be managed so it could understand the feasibility of a Safe Ground campground and the possible issues the area could encounter.

Member Dahir wondered how other agencies collaborated and referred to the Veteran Affairs (VA) who had regular phone calls to establish plans of action. He thought the Reno Area Alliance for Homeless (RAAH) had similar conversations and could possibly help this group understand where to focus efforts for mental illness and areas of need. He thought it would be helpful for the Board to understand how the different processes connected and to establish a place to start helping individuals.

Member Berkgigler was pleased to hear the Eddy House was working with Ms. Monica DuPea and thought it could benefit the Board to understand how to serve those in need.

Chair Lucey proposed the Board receive quarterly reports from partner agencies instead of monthly reports because they were time consuming and he thought not many items changed significantly from month to month. He stated specific items that needed to be addressed could be brought to the Board monthly if needed. He asserted there were momentous events approaching, like the opening of the NNAMHS campus in April. He said it would be helpful to have an update about data collection before the PIT count and to be advised if assistance was needed. He thought the PIT count was unorganized. He wanted to know about incentivizing people to participate in the count and to ensure all locations were contacted. He noted the count was so important for budgetary purposes and said it needed to be a successful count.

Member Dahir asked for clarification from Chair Lucey regarding updates and wanted to ensure that would not change the meeting frequency from monthly to quarterly. Chair Lucey replied agencies would only present updates on a quarterly basis but meetings would continue monthly.

19-122C AGENDA ITEM 10 Items for possible consideration on the January 6, 2020 agenda:

Member Berkgigler wanted a discussion about starting a campground where people experiencing homelessness could continue to use drugs or alcohol in a safe place. She wondered about the impact to the three municipalities, where the camp could be located, the insurance impacts, and who would be liable. She asked for information about what other cities were doing and how they addressed liability issues. She stated Members of this Board could then take that information back to their respective boards for input.

Member Lawson stated he watched some YouTube videos and said there were many ideas for free camping; he thought they were worth watching. He noted a solution for a piece of property that would work best could already be out there. He said it was fine to use good ideas that others had come up with. He said Nevada Fiduciary had a successful model and thought this Board should consider adopting it.

Member Dahir wanted to ensure that helpful information was available to all veterans. He also wondered about how to get information to people about the Eddy House and other agencies who had resources to help people experiencing homelessness.

Chair Lucey also wanted information about the process of establishing and funding a safe campground. He thought other areas had tried this and were not successful. He said it was possible it might not work in this area. He said things were going in the right direction but it took time to get people connected with needed services.

Vice Chair Jardon said individuals and their pets were an issue and hoped some of the new opportunities for transitional housing included facilities that were pet friendly. She did not want people to experience going to the shelter and their animal going to the Humane Society; that was not a solution. She spoke about a woman that she and others helped, who had been living at Pickett Park for a few months. She stated the woman had accumulated many personal possessions and she had a pet. She noted the woman had an income and they were able to secure a storage unit for her belongings, but she did not want to leave her cat who was in a carrier. She hoped agencies would soon consider crated animals at the shelter. She stated there needed to be a solution for people who were resistant to going into a shelter because they wanted to keep their pet with them. She thought the percentage of people with pets was higher than estimated and currently no shelter sites allowed pets. Chair Lucey noted the new NNAMHS campus would allow pets.

19-123C AGENDA ITEM 11 Public Comment.

There was no response to the call for public comment.

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11:33 a.m. There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned without objection.

BOB LUCEY, Chair
Community Homelessness Advisory Board

ATTEST:

NANCY PARENT, County Clerk

Minutes Prepared by:
Doni Gassaway, Deputy County Clerk

Pending Board Approval