

Bitterroot Task Force on Homelessness and Housing
January 24, 2017
Meeting notes

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Our next meeting plans: February 21, 2017 9:00 to Noon

Agenda ideas:

- Choose a consistent meeting date
- Education about the County Commission budget process with Klarryse
- Provide a TF distribution list
- Hear the Point in Time results
- Hear the Needs Assessment plan update
- Steering Committee report on their strategy for our work with the County Commissioners – and progress.

Task Force Education Plans:

March: Property Management businesses education about their businesses, concerns and issues. Consider Cardinal Property Management and Greener MT Properties.

1. Our 3rd draft Task Force name, Mission Statement, and Vision Statements

a. The new and improved Task Force name, recommended by the Steering Committee, and decision

– Bitterroot Task Force on Homelessness and Housing was approved.

b. The new and improved Mission Statement, recommended by the Steering Committee, and decision

Mission Statements describe the purpose of our work, the reason we exist, what makes us unique in the County, and what we're all about.

2nd draft:

The Bitterroot Valley Homelessness Task Force exists to develop and facilitate affordable and safe solutions for Ravalli County's housing needs – from emergency to permanent and for citizens of all ages, abilities and circumstances.

The proposed 3rd draft for the Mission Statement from the Steering Committee is:

The Bitterroot Task Force on Homelessness and Housing exists to alleviate homelessness and prevent housing insecurity by supporting and facilitating affordable and safe solutions for Ravalli County's housing needs – from emergency to permanent and for citizens of all ages, abilities, and circumstances.

The 4th draft recommended today:

The Bitterroot Task Force on Homelessness and Housing exists to alleviate homelessness and prevent housing insecurity by supporting and facilitating affordable and safe housing solutions – from emergency to permanent, for Ravalli County citizens of all ages, abilities, and circumstances.

c. The new and improved version of the Vision Statements, provided by Richard, and decision (see below)

– Richard has not provided his re-write, so in the meantime we will use the Vision Statements found following the meeting minutes.

2. The Task Force's budget – Tim

– We have roughly \$3,500 for facilitation of the meetings through May, meeting refreshments, and marketing.

– Tim applied for a Steele Reese Foundation grant to hire an AmeriCorps Vista member.

3. Updates and news: Continuum of Care and Roaring Lion Fire Fund

a. Continuum of Care, and how it relates to our Task Force – Stacie, Tina and Casey
Stacie: Ours is part of a statewide Continuum of Care for the Homeless effort. There term is a HUD one, and is a community process involving many stakeholders focused on individuals and families anywhere on the continuum:

Not housed		Emergency		Permanent		Supportive
Locating	☹☹	Shelter	☹☹	Housing	☹☹	Services
People						Housing

This is the first year since 1999 that our community is NOT receiving funding. One element is the Point in Time Count.

Casey: I want to commend Tim on coordinating this effort and taking the lead!

Everything is solidly underway. We will have our very own data. Reports will be available to the Task Force posted on the CHRISinfodata.com website for all of us to access. CHRIS stands for Community Housing Referral Information System.

b. Roaring Lion Fire Fund – Casey

– During the Roaring Lion Fire, Lee Newspapers collected money for needs associated with the fire. A lot of the fire aftermath was covered by people’s insurance policies. The HRC’s 211 and the Red Cross received these funds because of the experience in distributing micro-grants. HRC’s agreement is to give the \$4,500 to community residents for direct service, rent assistance, rent deposits, etc. It was noted that this \$4,500 presents an opportunity raise matching dollars from grants, churches, the County Commission, etc.

4. Proposed Short Term Goals, developed by the Steering Committee

- a. Get the Ravalli County Commissioners to budget \$10,000 for emergency assistance to prevent homelessness and housing insecurity. This money would assist someone who currently rents with one-month rent in order to prevent eviction. This helps keep people stable. HRC will administer the program.
- b. Following approval, this would require the following:
 - I. Clarify the plan so that an immediate letter can be drafted and sent to the Commissioners to avoid any rumor or misunderstanding of the Task Force's intent.
 - II. Build a strategy to speak to the Ravalli County Commissioners. *Tim will request time on their next agenda.*
 - III. Shape what we do and how we do this.
 - IV. Craft a clear and effective message for the Task Force members to use.
 - V. Familiarize the task force on the County Budget Process via training by someone who knows the process. Budget hearings start in March.
 - VI. Prepare all of the Task Force to speak to the Commissioners and at the Budget Hearings.
- c. Discussion:
 - Jim Morton: This is an excellent concrete step and is very similar to the Missoula County allocation for homelessness prevention which is contracted to the HRC, Salvation Army and WORD. With this focus, we can say to the community and elected officials that prevention is taking place – and keep our own enthusiasm about progress, as well.
 - The average person needing assistance requests less than \$500 or \$1,000. Applicants must have income, and be able to pay subsequent month's rent. This moves us away from federal dollar constraints.
 - Casey: This effort also has the potential to educate and engage people on the subject of prevention during household's tough times and is phenomenally cheaper than re-housing.
 - Rachel: From a mental health perspective, this makes so much sense – a little bit of help during a short-term hard time.
 - We also want to do a similar approach and strategy with a funding request of the Town Councils as a long-range goal.

5. Proposed Long Range Goals, developed by the Steering Committee

- A. Educate the Task Force about homelessness and housing insecurity situation in Ravalli County.
- B. Educate the public about the homeless and housing insecurity situation in Ravalli County.
- C. Develop the Task Force into an inclusive, cross-sector collaboration similar to a Continuum of Care Committee.
- D. Identify what is currently being done about homelessness and housing situation in Ravalli County. (Needs assessment)
- E. Approach the cities/towns in Ravalli County for requests of funding, as well. (A longer-range goal)

6. Our official Needs Assessment

a. What purpose does a Needs Assessment serve?

- It can document an issue or a need.
- It identifies the details and gaps.
- It helps us prioritize and focus our energies among the obvious choices of:
 - Emergency
 - Rapid re-housing
 - Supportive housing
 - Prevention
 - Permanent supportive housing
 - Permanent supportive housing
- It can give us a good depth of understanding.
- It helps understand the perspective of the people affected by the issue(s).
- It contributes to better communication with the community.
- It legitimizes us and everything we say.
- It provides indisputable proof of our data and experiences.
- It results in a plan of action!

b. What do finished formal Needs Assessments look like?

- A Report document.
- Pages between 20 and 50.
- A specific targeted assessment, not of the whole community's assets, needs and service gaps, but instead a narrowed set of data on one subject.
- A description of the current assets of relevant programs and services.
- An Executive Summary of 1-2 pages.
- A document that is readable by non-experts and uses very little jargon and abbreviations.
- The document is attractive, with good formatting and photos or other graphics.
- The tone of the Report is optimistic, positive and solution-focused.
- It includes a few stories to illustrate the needs.
- There is a method to distribute the Report.
- An analysis of the data collected is done by the Task Force; we derive the conclusions.

c. Action Steps

I. The Point in Time data collection.

II. Use the CHRIS data.

III. Organize and conduct Focus Groups with people receiving services:

- Recruiting
- Food/dinner is served.
- Bus passes are provided/offered.
- Audio recording takes place.
- Gift cards and/or gas cards are used as incentives for attendees.
- Child care is provided.

IV. Select priorities (or appropriate combinations) of attendees for Focus Groups, the clients of or sometimes the employees of:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| - Section 8; | - Bitterroot Family Shelter; |
| - Office of Public Assistance; | - Valley Vets; |
| - SAFE; | - Summit; |
| - Energy Assistance; | - Job Service employees; |
| - Head Start; | - Church leaders; |
| - Mental Health Center; | - Isaac House; |
| - Council on Aging; | - Salvation Army; |
| - Native Americans; and | - Youth Homes. |

V. Collect available demographic information to provide context, history, and projections.

VI. Identify and itemize the available current resources, services and assets.

VII. Research and document the current housing availability, by inquiring with:

- Realtors;
- Property Managers;
- Landlords of 2-4 units who may not use Property Managers; and
- Newspapers and CraigsList.

Search for the number available, and the price range changes over time.

Consider a rent survey about vacancy rates.

7. Other Task Force members

a. What other service providers and constituencies do we want to invite to our January meeting?

- The Ministerial Association
- Bitterroot College Literacy Program people
- The Council on Aging
- Property management companies
- Habitat for Humanity
- County Commissioner(s)
- A2Z Personnel
- All Valley School Counselors.
- Also, we will check back with previous attendees.

Ideal vision for the future ... Second *draft* Vision Statements

(The outcomes we seek, the results we are striving for – in an ideal sense, what we want to accomplish for and in our community)

The community as a whole

- All sectors of our community – local government, state government, non-profit organizations, businesses, and citizens – are on the same page about the status of housing needs and gaps, and committed to finding solutions.
- Local government regulations allow for and encourage innovative approaches to meeting the housing needs.
- There is a face on homelessness; the stigma is reduced. People understand it and have overcome their fear about people who are homeless.
- Neighborhoods with a broad range of incomes are a norm.

Citizens

- No one experiences homelessness; a safety net for people in emergencies exist in adequate numbers and capacity for men, women, and families.
- People can access housing with their current income; affordable housing is available.
- People can age in place with caregivers nearby, the necessary adaptations, and services on-site or in close proximity.
- Housing exists for seniors and people of all ages who don't drive.
- There are housing options available for people coming out of incarceration.
- Supports are accessible to help people to avoid losing their current home or rental housing.
- Multi-income, un-related households can co-purchase and co-rent, are aware of the options to do so, and know how to go about it.

Housing stock

- The whole continuum of housing stock exists in adequate numbers.
- Emergency and short-term housing is available, and the local providers of such housing have sufficient capacity to provide it.
- Affordable housing is available to meet the needs; people with modest incomes can find and keep housing that costs no more than 30% of the income.
- New building incorporates accessible features that allow people to age in place.

Universal design concepts are a norm.

- Housing is located with walk-ability and public transportation in mind.
- In any new construction, energy efficiency and sustainable sources are a norm.
- There are multi-generational, synthesized housing complexes that resemble the European village look of housing. Neighborliness is encouraged through the design resulting in the sharing of perspectives, life skills and experiences.
- Auxiliary Dwelling Units (ADUs) are legal.