

**Minutes**  
**Homeless Taskforce**  
**MEETING DATE: May 16, 2007**  
**United Way**

**Taskforce Members**

Rev. Cheryl Jefferson Bell  Sue Castile  Gypsy Claar  Connie Dietz  
 Jack Focht  Patrick Hanrahan  Lou Heldman  Bishop Michael Jackels  
 Bishop Scott Jones  Steve Martens  Janet L. Miller  Tim Norton  
 Marsha Stanyer  Mary K. Vaughn

Ex officio members:  Winston Brooks  Bill Buchanan  George Kolb  Ron Holt

**Welcome**

Jack Focht called the meeting to order at 7 a.m. Minutes were approved.

**New Business**

*Review of Atlanta Trip*

Jack Focht, Janet Miller and two County staff members went to Atlanta, Georgia on May 9 to tour the Gateway Center and meet with the Atlanta United Way. After going through a slideshow of pictures of the Gateway facility, Janet discussed the learnings of the trip. The main highlights follow:

- City of Atlanta owns the Gateway's building and leases it to the United Way for \$1/year.
- Annual operating budget for Gateway
  - FY06: \$2.1 million
  - FY07: \$3.2 million
  - FY08: \$2.8 million
- The Gateway looks like jail.
- Primary focus of Gateway is single men.
- Opened in July 2005 right before Katrina
- Not intended as a place for people to go during the day unless they are in a program.
- See Jenni Gluszek and Rachelle Moody's notes for more information from the trip.

**Positives of the Gateway**

- Single point of entry makes sense
- Day center services
- Each client has a case worker
- Opportunity for a period of stabilization

**Negatives of the Gateway**

- Very expensive- 4 FTE's per position
- The Center operates some programs (i.e. mental health) that should be provided by experts
- Women and children are largely left out of the plan

**Lessons learned**

- Supportive housing must be ready for people to move into after they have been released from a Gateway-type facility
- We still have a lot to learn from other cities
- We need to identify gaps. If gaps do not exist, we need to figure out how to plug people into the current system.

- We need to know how many homeless enter into homelessness each year.
- Suggested looking at grid from Kari Beddell and reviewing best practices.

### Questions

- Should emergency shelter beds be combined with a Gateway-type center?
- Should program beds be combined with a day center (following the Gateway model)?
- Does a low-demand philosophy work for a Gateway-type center? For example at the Gateway, those under the influence of drugs or alcohol are immediately dismissed.

Discussion followed after Janet's report. One question was how the Gateway Center affected the surrounding neighborhood. Because it was a rehabilitated jail in a government complex, and was not a heavily trafficked area there was not much impact. The area was easily accessible via the Metra railway and a nearby Greyhound terminal.

Conversation returned to the campus in Phoenix that Mary K visited a few weeks ago. Paul Bolster with the United Way of Atlanta was not supportive of that type of structure because it allows people to just lie around and not make life changes. Mary K. agreed that the Phoenix campus did not have a strong plan for permanently housing people. Some taskforce members questioned if there was something wrong with have a place for people to hang out. The rationale the United Way of Atlanta followed was that political will does not exist to help those who will not help themselves. Key decision makers (at least in Atlanta) prefer to help those who are ready to make changes. Philadelphia has answered this by creating safe havens which are low-demand and offer services whenever residents become interested. Wichita/Sedgwick County is not unique in having philosophical differences of opinion regarding how to tackle the homeless problem. It was noted that a *24/7 assessment center* opposed to a *24/7 shelter* may be more acceptable in the Wichita community.

One task member asked for the government's level of involvement in the Atlanta project(s). Besides owning the building the Gateway resides in, they also acquire and pass along the SuperNOFA funds. Additionally the City of Atlanta issued the bonds for the supportive housing projects (\$22 million).

Regarding the Veteran's Administration's role in the Gateway project, it was found they are renters of rooms for their tenants. They offer programs and counseling for their clients off-site and transport them to and from the Gateway.

Another question that arose was whether or not homelessness is a problem in other parts of Atlanta. The delegates who went on the trip were not sure as they remained in the same area of Atlanta. Cheryl Bell who has been to Atlanta multiple times stated there are homeless near their stadium as well. This led a taskforce member to ask the number of individuals dismissed for drugs and alcohol. The delegates did not have this answer but will follow up with the Gateway. Finally, the taskforce inquired how many clients (and the percentage of total served) are transitioned into housing from the Gateway and what type of housing is used? Staff will follow up with Atlanta contacts regarding this question as well.

### *Next Steps*

Taskforce members ended the meeting by discussing where to go from here. It was suggested that the topic for an upcoming meeting should be creating a timeline for this project. Additionally it was noted that it was helpful when drafts of sections of the report were created and brought to the taskforce, as this provided a starting point. Some members felt that a draft has to be based on fact and that those facts have not yet been determined (i.e. gaps, who the target is, the scope of the problem).

### **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 a.m.