

**Minutes**  
**Homeless Taskforce**  
**MEETING DATE: October 3, 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 7:03 a.m. Minutes were approved.

*Self-Help Network Report*

Barry Carroll, a facilitator from Wichita State University's Self-Help Network, made a presentation of findings from the September 23 Town Hall meeting. There were 125 documented participants but this number does not include those participants that arrived late to the meeting. During the meeting, participants were asked to respond to four questions:

- What's your reaction to what you have heard in the presentation?
- Are there gaps that shouldn't be on the list?
- Are there gaps that are missing from this list that should be added?
- Which two gaps are most pressing?

Facilitators used flip-charts to capture participant responses. Recurring responses included:

- 24/7, all inclusive resource center in a centralized location
- Public transportation
- Increase service capacity for women and children

*Town Hall Meeting – what did we learn?*

After the report, TECH members were asked to provide information on what they had observed or heard throughout the meeting. Task Force comments included:

- Perception that TECH is not listening to what others had to say (allow more public comment)
- Next Town Hall meeting should be structured but allow input from citizens (citizens feel excluded from the process)
- Public sentiment that the process is too lengthy (Why is the process taking so long?)
- Meeting did not have public representation.
- Perception that Wichita is the place to be for homeless
- Transportation should be added to the gap list

After TECH feedback, Janet Miller stated that the gaps document will be refined and brought back to the Task Force at the next meeting. As the Task Force begins to develop solutions, it was reiterated that solutions must include all stakeholders. Specifically, the business and religious community must be involved in the process. Questions were raised about how to get the business community involved. It was stated that the chronic homeless issue is on the public agenda and TECH should ask the business community for a forum to speak. In addition, it was stressed that the business community is looking to the Task Force for solutions. As the Task Force develops solutions, the Task Force builds credibility with the

business community. It was suggested that the Task Force approach the business community one issue at a time.

As the discussion of stakeholder input continued, it was highlighted that decision-makers (elected officials) should be more involved. Many issues affecting chronic homeless also affect other groups in the community. It is critical that decision-makers develop solutions that consider all affected groups while also helping the chronically homeless. For example, there are community concerns about public transportation. It was emphasized that solutions should encompass the greater community. Also, Task Force members were reminded of the community needs assessment and TECH must be aware of the services that are currently available and being worked on in the community.

#### *Next Steps*

Next, discussion moved to how the Task Force should proceed. Some TECH members stated that it is critical that the Task Force move forward. It was suggested that the Task Force finalize the gaps document and develop a plan. Once a plan is developed, the Task Force should consider a variety of public forums to receive citizens input (i.e. town hall meeting, response sheet, and/or random scientific survey). The plan should be comprised of different components. Each component should include possible funding options. Currently, most funding for the homeless comes from the faith community. TECH members stressed the significance of finding alternative funding sources. For future meetings, it was recommended that the TECH subcommittee research other communities of comparable size to better understand how similar communities are funding the challenge of chronic homelessness.

As discussion continued on how to proceed, TECH members were offered several options for solution development. TECH members decided that the best option for developing solutions was to have the subcommittee create/draft solutions. Once the subcommittee develops a proposed solution, the subcommittee will report back to TECH for approval/suggestions for improvements. It was suggested that TECH members be notified of subcommittee meetings so that TECH members could take part in solution development if they are available.

Next, questions were raised about a timeline for writing/developing a plan. It was suggested that TECH be prepared to make a recommendation to the governing bodies by February 1. Next meeting, subcommittee members were asked to report back to TECH about whether or not February 1 was a feasible deadline. It was recommended that TECH select the top three from the gap list and focus on those gaps when developing the plan. It was stated that the plan was not meant to be comprehensive but to address the most critical needs facing in the community.

#### *Texas Shelter Report*

After TECH members decided how to proceed, Bishop Jones made a presentation about a Texas shelter he had recently visited. He indicated that the shelter was a drop-in shelter with wrap around services. In addition, he highlighted the services provided including case management, case workers, physicians, mental health professionals. Also, the shelter included a VA funded back-to-work training program along with other training programs. Furthermore, he noted that a \$23 million bond election was held to fund the operating costs of the nearly \$4 million shelter. Also, he indicated that the Texas shelter did not support "Housing First" because it is believed that resources are wasted on repairs when placing a chronic homeless person in housing before treatment.

#### *SOAR Training Update*

Next, discussion continued with a SOAR private training update from Debbie Donaldson.

Ms. Donaldson indicated that there was still an opportunity for local agencies and organizations to have SOAR private training with a tuition cost of \$1800 per trainee.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 a.m.