

MINUTES

The meeting was held virtually, with the public invited to attend. The public was able to view the meeting via engage.buncombecounty.org

Committee Members Present

Amanda Edwards, Brownie Newman, Parker Sloan

County Staff Present

Jennifer Barnette, Stoney Blevins, Matthew Cable, Brandon Freeman, William High, John Hudson, James Shelton, Sybil Tate, and Don Warn.

Call to Order & Welcome

- Chairman Newman called the meeting to order at 1:03.

New Business

- Review AHC Calendar – Matthew Cable
 - No action taken by the committee.
- McKinney-Vento Presentation – Jessica Supik (ACS) & Shannon Boyd (BCS)
 - Comm. Edwards asked the committee to think about available methods to partner with agencies to prevent additional families experiencing homelessness.
 - Chair Newman asked what percentage of families experiencing homelessness can enter stable housing over the course of a given year. The answer is a difficult one to provide as many families are on the list of families experiencing homelessness remain on it year in and out.
 - Chair Newman asked what the County could do to positively impact this situation. Ms. Boyd answered for BCS is that many families do not want to move into the City of Asheville, and will wait for vouchers that would allow them to live in the less urban parts of the county. Ms. Supik answered that the awareness of the situation is critical.
- Homelessness Follow Up Questions – Sybil Tate
 - Chair Newman asked when an agency that denies voucher holders due to a criminal history, what does it mean when they refer those denied clients to another agency.
 - Chair Newman asked staff to explore Step Up's model. He added he would want to learn more about the Ramada Inn and the plans to move that forward, and whether there is a request to have the County partner with that project.
- Voucher Data Presentation – Sybil Tate (10 minutes)
 - Chairman Newman asked whether most existing voucher users live multi-family tax credit based projects. Ms. Tate said she would follow up with David Nash.
 - Comm. Sloan expressed a desire to expand availability of voucher rental units, and the available housing stock that accepts vouchers.
 - Chair Newman expressed a desire for both long term and short term solutions to better use vouchers.
 - Comm. Edwards expressed a hope for exploring methods to better expand voucher opportunities throughout the county, particularly in the less urban areas.
 - Chair Newman requested a map or a list of where tenant based rental projects are located through the county.

- Chair Newman asked what the income qualifications for vouchers are. Ms. Tate replied that it is for individuals or families that live at 50% AMI or below.
- Chair Newman asked staff to identify steps to better employ vouchers across the county. Comm. Sloan expressed support to try and zero out the number of unused vouchers.
- No action was taken by the committee.
- Affordable Housing Goals and Policies – Chairman Newman (20 minutes)
 - No action was taken by the committee
 - Comm. Sloan asked about the recent CDBG application. Mr. Cable replied the County was not among the recipients of the CDBG funds but planned on applying again.
 - Comm. Edwards asked when Chair Newman hoped for the committee to approve the financial recommendations. Chair Newman hoped to further continue the discussion at the committee level, and possibly putting it on the Commission briefing schedule. Chair Newman said he hoped to complete discussion at the committee level in the next 30 to 60 days.
 - Comm. Edwards asked when feedback on when the preliminary recommendations of a potential bond scenario would be available, as well as the analysis of the Ferry Road site. She additionally asked whether the county was considering the potential financial impacts to staff up in preparation for a bond scenario. Ms. Tate replied that the recommendations on the Ferry Road project were expected to be completed in March or April. She and Mr. Cable added that positions have been requested for the FY23 request, and that there are currently positions open as well.
 - The committee took no action.

Next Steps

- Revisit the items from Chair Newman as the February 1, 2022 meeting.

Announcements

- The committee is now broadcasting via engage.buncombecounty.org

Public Comment

- No public comment was received prior to or during the meeting.

Adjourn

- Chairman Newman adjourned the meeting to order at 3:16.