



Staff Analysis

Homeless Services

#160652

(revised)

Presented by:

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CITY OF GAINESVILLE STAFF ANALYSIS

Legistar No: 160652

Title: Homeless Services

Sponsor:

City Staff Contact: Fred Murry, Assistant City Manager

Summary of Issue

Discussion on Homeless Services, including potentially issuing a new RFP and/or exploring other options for homeless services.

History/Background Information

On February 11, 2014, the City entered into a three-year contract with the Alachua County Coalition for the Homeless and Hungry (ACCHH) to provide homeless services at the Empowerment Center. That contract was originally scheduled to expire on September 30, 2016 however the City Commission extended it for one (1) additional year. The extended contract expires on September 30, 2017. The expiration of that contract gives the City Commission several new options for providing homeless services. Those options include transferring the direct provision of services at Dignity Village from City Staff to a more appropriate service provider. For these reasons, City staff is requesting policy direction from the City Commission regarding the provision of homeless services, beginning in FY18.

Options

1. Continuation of Existing Contract with ACCHH

Pros:

- A. There would be no disruption in services to the homeless. The provider has knowledge of the community and its resources that provide services to the community. The ACCHH has 37 private, public, and non-profit organizations currently providing services at GRACE Marketplace. A new provider would have to create these same relationships to provide services to the homeless community.
- B. The provider is currently participating in the Local CoC (Continuum of Care) which is promoting the Rapid Rehousing/Housing First Program and the center has now implemented a low barrier Emergency Shelter service at the center with the goal of finding affordable housing for the homeless.

- C. Existing Staff may have a better knowledge of the local resources to assist the homeless clients participating in the Rapid Rehousing Program. The existing provider has knowledge of which organizations can provide or is providing case management in the community.
- D. ACCHH also has a working knowledge of Dignity Village and a new contract could be negotiated with the City that insists that the camping site be added to the new contract for services.
- E. The City could terminate its lease with the State of Florida if camping was allowed inside the Empowerment Center.

Cons:

- A. The City would have to amend the existing contract with ACCHH to include Dignity Village in their contract. Thus there is a potential to increase costs for services.
- B. Dignity Village would transition to ACCHH if the City is able to negotiate an agreement with ACCHH to manage camping services. The City would no longer be responsible for the management of camping services and ACCHH would have the option of providing camping services on the campus or continue the camping services on the ten acres. If ACCHH agreed to manage the camping services on campus, the City would have the option of renegotiating or terminating its agreement with the State of Florida for the ten acres.
- C. Homeless residents living in the camping area may not want a structural approach to services thus the residents would scattered back to other areas in the City and the County.
- D. The cost of providing homeless services could increase despite the RFP for homeless services, since information relating to homeless services is available to the public via the City's budget.

2. **NEW RFP**

The City and the County staff working together could develop a new RFP for the Homeless Services at the Empowerment Center which would include adding Dignity Village to the Scope of Services.

Pros:

- A. The City could receive a new proposal for the homeless services at the existing cost or at a lower cost.
- B. Solicitation of the services state-wide could result in new providers with more experience in providing such services for our community.

- C. The Scope of Services for the homeless could be revised to reflect the changes in our community to implement the Rapid Rehousing / Housing First Model, as well as changes to implement a low barrier Emergency Shelter with emphasis on getting into permanent housing.
- D. A new Scope of Services could be divided into Emergency Shelter Services and the Rapid Rehousing/ Housing First Services with emphasis on permanent housing /supportive housing within our Community.
- E. A new RFP could include Dignity Village which would further the efforts to have a coordinated approach to services and thus reduce the City's involvement in homeless services.
- F. With Dignity Village included in the RFP, a new vendor may want to bring the camping services on campus or open another dorm to house the homeless.
- G. There is a potential that the City could negotiate with the State to terminated the lease agreement for the Ten (10) acres and restore the property to its natural state.
- H. A new RFP could include families in the new mix of services for the homeless at the Empowerment Center, with the same focus of identifying and relocating families into permanent Housing,
- I. The City would be no longer be involved in direct services for the homeless and resources could be redirected to other City needs.

Cons:

- A. Cost for services could increase with a new RFP and/or a new approach for services could be identified for the Community.
- B. Reallocation of \$874,000 (equally split between the City and County) whereby the City would fund Emergency Shelter Services and the County would fund Rapid Rehousing. This is a modification to the original idea of using the entire City and County funds to finance the Rapid Rehousing Program. This suggestion could lead to insufficient funding for the Emergency Shelter Service for Gainesville-Alachua County.
- C. Homeless Residents living in Dignity Village may not like a structural approach to services thus many of them will scatter throughout the City and the County.
- D. A structured approach could result in all services being housed on the campus. Some homeless residents currently living in Dignity Village may not want to engage in these services and may scatter back to other areas within the City and the County, including downtown.

- E. There may be homeless advocates who would not support having all services on campus, creating a split within the Community on how services are being provided to the homeless.
- F. Pets and families at the Empowerment Center create its own set of unique problems for the vendor.

3. Would a new RFP support the Strategic Initiatives and Plans adopted by the City Commission?

Pros:

Yes, a new RFP could include language to and for the new or existing vendor to encourage better coordinated services with community partners, including UF and other colleges and universities, to provide hands-on experience in various academic fields (Social Services, Mental Health, Medical Services, Dental Services, etc). A new RFP could support the language adopted in the city's Strategic Plan Framework which identifies "How Might We Foster Greater Equity?" as a guiding question, and more specifically the topic of providing access to housing, in the city's future.

There is an opportunity for the new vendor, or the existing vendor, to work with UF and other colleges and the universities in the area to develop a cooperative partnership to develop internships for students seeking on hands experience dealing with general social services.

Cons:

There is real no down side to the item since there is a potential to increase community involvement in the homeless, as well as other volunteer opportunities within our community.

4. Are there any new funding sources to assist the City and Alachua County to address homeless in FY17?

Pros:

- A. The State of Florida has allowed up to 15% of the Cities and Counties allocation of SHIP dollars to be used for the Rapid Rehousing Program. The City and the County have jointly agreed in concept to provide these dollars for addressing housing for the homeless in Gainesville and Alachua County. The total amount of funding projected for the Rapid Rehousing program between the City and the County is \$240,000*, which includes rent subsidy funding and case manager.
*Note: Projected to fund in FY 2017-2020, based on SHIP Program funding appropriation.
- B. The State of Florida, through its Florida Housing Coalitions, has offered a number of tax credit programs to assist non-profit organizations and developers with Supportive Housing Projects and Affordable Housing Projects throughout the State. The City of Gainesville submitted three (3) projects in the last application cycle for Affordable Housing Projects, Senior Housing, and Low and Moderate Housing. Alachua County also submitted projects under this category as well. Only two projects can be selected for Gainesville-

Alachua County. Last year the Alachua County Housing Authority was selected as the City project to address affordable housing in our community.

- C. The City of Gainesville through its CDBG and HOME funds has provided funding to assist non-profit organizations to provide funding for feeding.

Cons:

- A. The State of Florida SHIP dollars has varied depending upon the availability of funding in the Housing Trust funds and in the past the State legislature has used a portion of the funds to balance the State budget.
- B. The Florida Housing Coalition has provided tax credits for Affordable Housing Projects and Supportive Housing projects throughout the state; however, with the exception of the Gainesville Housing Authority, the organizations that have taken advantage of the Tax Credit Program have been primarily outside organizations. The Florida Housing Coalition has been providing Capacity Building training to local communities in hopes that local organizations will take on a more active role in developing and managing local projects in the Community.
- C. Currently, there are no proposed changes in the current Federal Homeless Strategic plan to address homelessness in the United States. The new Secretary of HUD will determine whether additional or less dollars will be added to the funding strategies to address homelessness. The Federal Government is currently operating under a continuing Federal Resolution for FY16 - FY17.

Staff Recommended Option

Committee members hear a presentation from staff on the pros and cons of each option; and provide policy direction.

Attachments/References

FY2016 Contract with ACCHH