



Legislation Text

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General Homelessness Services - Oversight Board (B)

This item is to discuss the issue of General Homelessness and the recent letter forwarded to the City Commission from the Alachua County Board of County Commission regarding the effectiveness of the Oversight Board.

The Oversight Board consists of five (5) members: two City Commissioners, two County Commissioners and One member at large. The Board was created to provide a mechanism for discussion and make recommendations to the City Commission and the County Commission on site development, budget, homeless services and programs at the Empowerment Center. The Dignity Village Camping Site was never envisioned for the Empowerment Center complex; however, camping services became an unintended consequence after it became apparent that the One Stop Center was being established at this location. The City was now taking on the task of managing a camping ground site, which was directly impacting the One Stop Center. As such, the Oversight Board was given the authority to make recommendations to the City and the County on the operation of the Low Barrier Shelter Services/One Stop Center and the Camping services at Dignity Village.

Another major impact to homeless services was the shift from Transitional Housing/One Stop Services to the Housing First Model which emphasized Housing First with Case management services within the Community. The Federal Government no longer supported Transitional Shelter Services; and therefore, funding requests at the Federal level required the Continuum of Care (Coc) to shift its priorities in order to receive Federal Funding. The CoC Program is designed to promote communitywide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness; provide funding for efforts by nonprofit providers, and state and local governments to quickly rehouse homeless individuals and families while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused to homeless individuals, families, and communities by homelessness; promote access to and effect utilization of mainstream programs by homeless individuals and families; and optimize self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness. The CoC lead agency is the United Way of North Central Florida. The Local CoC consists of Five Counties - Alachua, Bradford, Gilchrist, Levy and Putnam.

Currently, the overall role of the Oversight Board is to provide oversight for the Empowerment Center and develop a long-term vision for the success of the Empowerment Center and the broad range of homeless and social/community services that are or may be provided at the Empowerment Center. The Oversight Board is advisory to the City Commission and the Alachua County Board of County Commissioners and has no final decision- making authority. The Oversight Board only makes recommendations to the City and County Commissioners. All final decision making, requires action by the City Commission and/or County Commission, as appropriate to the decision.

The item is for discussion only and the letter to the City Commission from the Alachua County Board of County Commission is included in the backup.

None

Discuss the Oversight Board effectiveness and provide direction to staff on the General Homelessness Concerns.