

Highland Community Collaboration Council  
Hybrid Meeting (Zoom and In-Person)  
Meeting Minutes  
August 8, 2022  
9:30am

The Highlands Community Collaboration Council had a hybrid meeting on August 8, 2022

Welcome and Introductions

Chris opened the meeting at 9:30 and members introduced themselves. Chris asked for additions or corrections to the agenda. There were 16 members in attendance today.

- Review and approval of June 13, 2022 meeting. Matt motioned and Linda seconded the motion. All in favor. The minutes are approved.

Guest Speakers:

- Tim Williams: Workforce Development Specialist (Bland Correctional Center):  
Q&A with Inmate Nicholas Blair #1416641 (releasing to D17 PO C. Baird).  
Cancelled...the inmate got a job within the facility and was unable to participate today.
- D17 Senior PO Crystal Rife and PO Candace Baird: Homelessness in Bristol (Homeless Pantry). In 2017 had 20-30 homeless probationers. As of today there are 84 homeless probationers. 75 call Bristol their home. This has doubled in the past year. Most were not successful on probation. Those who did report stopped reporting after one month. Looked at what could be done. One person would supervise this group. Mental health and substance abuse are common. Lack of job skills, lack of family support are also issues. Several reasons for the increase. One is the casino. Once local landlords heard the casino was coming they increased rent. Vacant houses were condemned. Lots of AirBnB and long term rental. Lots of evictions. Rent is now \$800-1000 per month. There are two homeless shelters on the Tennessee side. There are tent cities that are active. Lots of couch surfers. There are places to take a shower and get a meal. There are several illegal camps in Tennessee. Bristol, Virginia is now following suit to make tent cities illegal. A majority of the police calls are now involving the homeless population. The homeless are walking in the street and are putting their faces on storefronts to scare people away.

There is a homeless pantry initiative. It is a food bag that is given once a week. The other is a hygiene packet. It is necessary for them to report once a week because many do not have phones. The packages has increased reporting and has decreased violations. There has been some success. They know that we are here to help them.

Candace says she has lived in Bristol for 28-years. The situation has spun out of control. 44-homeless on her caseload today. Bristol, Tennessee has made it a felony to camp on public property. Some recently found some campers in a public park. Some are staying with friends. 4 are in BLR. The remainder have nowhere to go. The Salvation Army and Haven of Rest are the two residences. Some live in cars and others in hotels when they can afford it. She created a spreadsheet that highlights the major issues. Substance abuse is the most prominent. She assists with getting driver license, Medicaid or health insurance, SNAP or referrals to housing. They also assist with transportation. They could use some donations for the hygiene bags.

Howard says homeless is considered a special population. The HERSA grants are about \$600k. The Daily Planet in Richmond is a recipient.

The priorities during month one is food, clothing and shelter. If they did not have these things, they were less likely to comply with reporting. The hygiene bags are provided on a schedule. Food bags are available as needed.

Matt says the WOIA program through the VEC offers transportation for those who are a part of the program. People, Inc. is currently the recipient of the grant locally. If the homeless population were able to apply for the services, they could potentially qualify for the transportation services.

Chris Snipes with People, Inc. said that they have a rapid re-housing program for those who are certified to be living in a tent. The funders for the program require a birth certificate and a picture ID. If it is a jail ID, it may contain an address of where they were arrested. Proof of Virginia residency is required. Schools or insurance companies can sometimes provide information.

Candace says maybe 50% of the homeless population are located where they could walk to employers. There is one who is currently sleeping in a tent that is seeking employment. There are 44 currently living on the sidewalk. Washington County has only six homeless people.

## New Business

### September 12, 2022 Council Presentations:

- Presenters NEEDED. Chris Snipes will invite the WOIA group to present.

## Sub-Committee Reports

*Housing Committee/ Service Integration Committee/ Grants/Finance Committee*  
(Matt, Emma, Andy, Felisha, and Linda)

*Employment Committee:* (Jimmy with DARS, Mike with VEC)  
None

*Mentoring Committee/ Substance Abuse Committee:* (Ruth, Teresa, Chris, Chuck)  
None

*Public Relations Committee:* (Manuel)  
None

*Executive Committee:* (Chris, Richard, Felisha and Chris).  
None

Re-entry Updates

Local Coalition Updates

None

Questions/Concerns/Comments/Announcements:

**Next meeting –September 12th: 2<sup>rd</sup> Monday**

<http://www.highlandsccc.org>

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**The meeting adjourned at 10:34am.**

If there is someone you would like for us to invite to a future meeting as either a guest or member, please let one of us know.

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Respectfully submitted,

Chris Austin  
Secretary