

**Homeless Solutions, Inc**  
**Board of Trustees Meeting**  
**Porzio Conference Room**  
**Minutes**

**September 15, 2022 6:30 pm**

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**Present:** George Goldman (Chair), Colleen Bondy\*, Scott Chilson, Mary LeBlanc\* (Vice Chair), Dan McGuire (CEO), Mike Gayda, Diane Mann, Sally Mulligan, Nuris Portuondo, Steve Schroeder\*, Ryan Spencer, Marc Steinman, Darla Wilkinson, Ling Yin.

**Also Present:** Stephanie Cicale, Shannon Muti, Awilda Perez\*, Kari Szary, Chris Schuette, Christine Sutherland

\*Participated by phone

**Excused:** Warren Estey, DaVon Gorman, Gary Pancoast, Georgia Papathomas, Megan Young

**Guest Speaker:** Kamille Freitas, HSI Emergency Service Coordinator

The meeting was called to order by George Goldman, Board Chair, at 6:33 pm.

**VOTE:** Minutes of the April 28th Board meeting were presented for approval. A motion was made and seconded, and the minutes were approved.

**VOTE:** The Board voted unanimously to ratify the e-voting approval of Scott, Nuris and Marc as Board Trustees. The Board extended a warm welcome to the new Trustees.

**Guest Speaker**

Kamille Freitas, Emergency Service Coordinator at the Shelter, presented a PowerPoint on the Overnight Center, which opened in May (the name was temporarily changed from the Warming Center to reflect that it opened during the summer months). The Center; which is designed to accommodate singles, not families; served 73 unduplicated participants and has averaged 14 participants per month. Utilization is generally higher during the week because individuals can often stay with friends over the weekend. A total of 2,789 meals were served from May through the closing in early September. Since COVID, the range of issues adversely affected participants has worsened. Their mental health, substance abuse and joblessness struggles have been exacerbated by the dearth of support that would normally be available from therapists and other providers.

Since the Center opened in May, there were 7 high level Incidents, which included 1 permanent ban of a participant from the Center, and 6 season suspensions. Shannon Muti explained that the permanent ban was due to the sexual assault of another guest. Most incidents were committed against other participants in the Center, not the staff. The participants were generally quite grateful to the Overnight Center staff.

Shannon reported that many participants prefer the Overnight Center to hotel stays paid for by the County because meals are served at HSI. Kamille noted the stress involved in housing people who were

not required to go through background checks. Overnight Center participants were at all times kept separate and apart from regular Shelter guests.

Kamille explained that the poor ratings for the security experience on the Participant Satisfaction Survey were directed at guards who are no longer welcome to work at the Center. Sensitivity Training was added for all hired security guards in order to address inappropriate behavior. The quality of the guards makes a huge difference in proper service delivery.

Ling Yin inquired as to whether there was an appetite at the County level to extend support of the Center to other times of the year. George Goldman pointed out that the county is only obligated to provide shelter in the winter, so there might not be interest in expanding funding to the summer months.

### **CEO Report**

Dan McGuire reported that he continues to work with Jonathan Villahermosa. Jonathan is working on the communications rubric for the Leadership Team and roles and responsibilities in Programs & Services, while continuing to partner with Kari Szary on HR issues.

Regarding the County funding situation, Dan indicated that any potential increase would most likely be communicated to HSI in November, when we normally are informed of grant allocations. George encouraged patience and noted that it was understandable that the county is giving no indication of which way they are leaning in terms of increased funding. Diane Mann commended the quality and completeness of the organization's June responses to the County's questions. In response to Scott Chilson's question regarding who makes funding decisions, Dan responded that community volunteers and Morris County Human Services staff are responsible for allocations.

Dan shared that the organization is actively considering what steps could be taken if there is no funding increase from the County. He has been joined in this scenario planning by Mary LeBlanc, Wes Gaynor and Christine Sutherland.

Kari Szary provided an update on the Organizational Health pillar. As has been well established, many HSI roles are too big. Kari has worked with Wes and Shannon to clarify each of their specific roles and responsibilities. Kari is looking to bring in a Program Impact and Data Manager, a position that would benefit Programs & Services, Finance, and Development (**update: the remote position has been filled**).

Kari reported that the results from the DEI survey were overall positive. It was striking that the biggest request staff had was for more resources to help clients, as opposed to asking for anything for themselves. Kari will be adding mandatory Unconscious Bias training for all people managers.

It continues to be a challenge to hire Residential Support Staff (RSS), which is the only area in the organization that is not fully staffed. The internship program has become a good feeder program, as evidenced by Kamille, who was originally hired as an RSS. The professional staff, on the other hand, seems to be on solid footing. Timeeka Milton in HD is a great example of a strong hire.

### **Expand Fundraising**

Colleen Bondy welcomed new Board member Scott Chilson to the Development Committee.

Woman's Day will be held on Monday, October 24<sup>th</sup> at Fiddler's Elbow Country Club. Tickets have been selling briskly.

The third annual A Night In the Cold (ANITC) will be held on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, and the goal this year is \$280,000. Colleen strongly encouraged the Board to support ANITC and to use the Prospect Sheet in the board package as a jumping off point. Ling and DaVon Gorman are chairing the event. Nuris Portuondo asked that the marketing materials be forwarded electronically. Stephanie Cicale shared that there will be a billboard in Morris Plains to publicize the event. Recently designed HSI vests will be available for purchase.

Colleen encouraged Board members to contact her if they are interested in helping with HSI's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration next Spring.

### **Sustainable Budget**

Christine reported that the organization continues to trend favorable to budget and that liquidity remains strong. The original deficit was budgeted to be about \$470,000, but actual deficit is now expected to be in the \$200,000 range, according to George.

There has been an increase in billable bed nights at the Shelter, as a result of increasing capacity.

We are currently undergoing a Capital Needs Assessment, which should be completed in about 6 weeks. The completed report will be shared with the Finance Committee and will assist in calculating our capital reserves.

### **Committee on Trustees**

Sally Mulligan welcomed the new Trustees. The mentor program will continue; Darla is paired up with Nuris, Mike Gayda is mentoring Scott, and Sally is paired with Marc. Sally asked that Trustees continue to consider their "pipelines" in an effort to recruit more members to the Board.

Ryan Spencer suggested we have a Board skills matrix in order to highlight the particular skills each Trustee brings to the organization. Sally seconded this idea and suggested the matrix be shared with staff.

Darla Wilkinson noted that the committee in the next few months will focus on revamping the Board survey, putting it online, and using it as development tool. Darla encouraged Trustees with experience on other boards to share how those boards conduct their self-assessments. Diane Mann will check with the National YMCA regarding how they conduct their self-assessment and report back to COT. Darla is interested in having a 3<sup>rd</sup> party compile the survey results.

### **Expand Impact**

Dan stated that there would be no report from the HD Committee.

### **Other Business**

Kari shared that meals are still being prepared for the Scott family. She will send dates and information to Trustees.

The meeting adjourned at 8:17.