

ST. JOHNS COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL (HHSAC)
MEETING MINUTES
December 7, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT: Howard Hitzel, Vice Chair; Shannon Nazworth; Chip Cover; Charles Daly; Kathleen Patneau; Leslie Barstow

MEMBERS ABSENT: Tara Haley

STAFF PRESENT: Shawna Novak, Director, Health & Human Services; Katrina Tanner, Contract Coordinator, Social Services; Tracy Dillon, Manager, Social Services; Mary Garcia, Administrative Coordinator, Social Services;

BCC LIASON: Commissioner Krista Joseph – District 4 – sent regrets

VISITORS: Via Zoom – Amanda Jones; Fred Baker; Judi Dembowski; Patti Greenough; Sandi Jackson; Dawn Bell; Kelly Franklin; Debi Redding
In-person – Schuyler Siefker; Lana Sample

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL: Vice-Chair called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. Quorum was present.

MINUTES – November, 2023: Shannon Nazworth **motioned** to approve the November, 2023, general meeting minutes. Kathleen Patneau seconded the motion; minutes **approved unanimously** by the Council.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

REPORT FROM COMMISSIONER JOSEPH: Commissioner Joseph sent regrets.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

OLD BUSINESS:

- a) **Continuum of Care (CoC) Update:** No representative in attendance.

NEW BUSINESS:

- a) **St. Augustine Youth Services – Coaches Program:** Fred Baker explained the Coaches Program serves children/youth ages 6-21, and their families, and the care team consists of behavioral health case managers, therapists, peer advocates, and family advocates. Mr. Baker said their clients are those demonstrating risky behaviors and who are in need of mental health services anywhere from entry level to the highest level. Mr. Baker said the program is a tremendous help to families who are unsure of how to navigate the mental healthcare system, or who are facing excessive wait times to receive services. Mr. Baker said a six-to-nine month collaborative care plan is established using evidence based practices of wraparound services and trauma focused cognitive behavioral therapy, connecting families to mental health services and primary care physicians, employment assistance, educational services, and housing

providers. Mr. Baker said the program increases access to mental health services, community resources, and social supports, and in turn lessens risks of substance abuse, school disruptions, unemployment, delinquency, homelessness, and suicide. Mr. Baker went on to say the program diverts from much higher and more costly levels of care, such as Baker Acts.

b) January, 2024 Meeting: Attendance was discussed as the meeting falls on January 4th. All members present said they will be available to attend.

REPORT FROM COUNTY ADMINISTRATION: Shawna Novak talked about organizational changes made under new County Administrator, Joy Andrews. Ms. Novak stated Brad Bradley, Deputy County Administrator, will be taking over all community services departments, including Health & Human Services, and Sarah Taylor has taken on the role of Chief of Performance and Transparency. Ms. Novak said she will be providing a report on behalf of County Administration each month. Ms. Novak also reported department directors will be providing reports at BCC meetings on infrastructure and service delivery in an effort to maintain transparency and provide accountability to the public and to the Commission. Finally, Ms. Novak reported that Sarah Arnold has been named chair of BCC and said she expects new commissioner liaison assignments to County boards & committees will be made soon.

FUNDED AGENCY UPDATES:

Early Learning Coalition (ELC): Dawn Bell reported they have a waitlist of 38 families and she said this is quite low when compared with the waitlists of 3,000-4,000 that their counterparts are experiencing.

Council on Aging (COA): Amanda Jones reported Brian Robinson was on vacation. She did not have anything new to report in his absence.

Epic Behavioral Healthcare: Patti Greenough reported they are expanding their space in the northwest part of the county to include more room for the Mobile Response Team, prevention services, mental health and substance use disorder services, as well as a new psychiatric telehealth service. Ms. Greenough said she is also working with the legislative delegation team on an ask for continued funding for six residential treatment beds for females at the recovery center, as well as expansion of sober living homes through a funding request to purchase land on which to build homes

Good Samaritan/Wildflower Clinic: No representative was in attendance.

St. Augustine Youth Services (SAYS): Schuyler Siefker reported they will hold their Santa Run on December 9th, at the beach, and she said they will be supplying Christmas gifts to over 130 children this year. Ms. Siefker said they recently hired a care coordinator as required by LSF to provide service to youth that have experienced multiple Baker Acts.

Betty Griffin Center (BGC): No representative was in attendance.

Emergency Services & Homeless Coalition (ESHG): Debi Redding reported they will have their last two home renovations completed by December 31st and she said they will begin working on nine additional renovations next year with funding provided by TD Bank. Ms. Redding said they are partnering with Better Together to bring Santa to the campus on Saturday, December 9th, to meet the children and to pass out presents.

St. Francis House (SFH): Judi Dembowski reported that since it can be difficult to ensure follow up by clients, services are now being offered in-house from the Wildflower Clinic, Wellcare, the CAIR Center, the VA, and Changing Homelessness. Ms. Dembowski said they also have an MOU with Epic

for on-site care of mental health & substance use disorder issues. In addition, Ms. Dembowski said Wildflower nurses are accompanying street outreach workers to provide health care to the unsheltered.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

SMA Healthcare: Sandi Jackson had no updates to report.

Department of Health: Lana Sample, Assistant Director, reported that in September, 2022, they were serving 15% of families eligible for WIC and through increased efforts to expand the program they are now serving 50% of those families. Ms. Sample said effective January, 2024, program staff will be onsite at the Hastings Library twice per month in order to reach that community. Ms. Novak asked about expansion into the northwest area of the county and said she would follow up with regard to assisting to find space for the program in one of the libraries or another County facility.

Flagler Health +: No representative in attendance.

Health & Human Services Department (HHS): Shawna Novak reported the CBC division has sponsors for toys and gifts for 160 children for Christmas this year. Ms. Novak mentioned all those that donated and she also spoke about the recent foster and adoptive family dinner that was held at the Tringali Barn on December 3rd, and all the generous donors behind that event. Ms. Novak said that County libraries recently held a “Food for Fines” program and brought all donations to Social Services for distribution. Ms. Novak said that in addition, the Marsh Creek neighborhood held a food drive and made a large donation of canned goods to the department. Ms. Novak said an RFP will be put out for independent agency funding this year and it will be based upon a comprehensive needs assessment recently completed by Flagler Health and CareConnect. Ms. Novak said she is building a formal needs assessment and gaps analysis into next year’s budget as the last one was completed in 2010. Ms. Novak stated Jennifer Harvey, formerly with United Way, has been hired as the County’s new housing & community development manager, and her first day of employment was December 6th. Ms. Novak provided an update on the County’s emergency rental assistance program stating that as of mid-October, 541 applications have been processed and \$623,000 has been encumbered. Ms. Novak stated that the vendor’s contract does not expire until March 31, 2024, so the program will likely continue into late January.

Faith Based Community: No representative in attendance.

Public Safety: Sgt. Manning provided an email report and Ms. Garcia stated she would send that out to the Council

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Shannon Nazworth stated the groundbreaking for Ability Housing’s new project, Villages of New Augustine, will be on January 10th, at 1pm, and she said invites will be forthcoming.

Executive Meeting: Thursday, December 21, 2023, at 3:30 p.m., in the Kingfisher conference room, 200 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine, FL 32084.

Regular Meeting: Thursday, January 4, 2024, at 4pm, in the Muscovy conference room, 200 San Sebastian View, St. Augustine, FL 32084 and by Zoom

ADJOURNMENT: Meeting was adjourned at 4:46 p.m.