



Town of Hilton Head Island
Community Services & Public Safety Committee

Monday, March 22, 2021 at 9:00 am

MEETING MINUTES

Present from the Committee: David Ames, Tom Lennox, Tamara Becker, Glenn Stanford

Present from Town Council: Alex Brown

Present from Town Staff: Marc Orlando, Joshua Gruber, Shawn Colin, Jennifer Ray, Jeff Buckalew, Marcy Benson, Anne Cyran, Brad Tadlock, Joheida Fister, Tom Dunn, Tom Bouthillet, Colin Fanning, Chris Blankenship, Cindaia Ervin, Karen Knox

Others Present: Fred Leyda, *Beaufort County Human Services Director*, Ben Boswell, Nanette Pierson, *Director of The Sandalwood Community Food Pantry*, Albert George, *Assistant*

Present from Media: None

1. Call to Order

2. **FOIA Compliance** - Public notification of this meeting has been published, posted, and distributed in compliance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act and the requirements of the Town of Hilton Head Island

3. **Roll Call** – Chairman Harkins was not able to attend the meeting. Council Member Stanford filled in as Alternate.

4. Approval of Minutes February 22, 2021

Council Member Ames moved to approve the Minutes of February 22, 2021. Council Member Becker seconded. The Minutes of February 22, 2021 were unanimously approved.

5. Citizen Comments

Public comments concerning today's Agenda items were to be submitted electronically via the Town's Open Town Hall Portal. The public comment period closed Friday, March 19, 2021 at 4:30 pm. At the conclusion of the Open Town Hall, there was no citizen comments. Citizens who wished to speak at the Meeting had to call in no later than noon on Friday, March 19, 2021 at noon. No citizens signed up to speak at the meeting.

6. Unfinished Business

7. New Business

a. Homeless and Insecure Individuals on Hilton Head island and Beaufort County – update from Mr. Fred Leyda, *Beaufort County Human Services Director*

Mr. Fred Leyda thanked the Committee for giving them this opportunity. I am the Human Services Director for Beaufort County. In that capacity, I serve as the Facilitator for a network called The Human Services Alliance. Some of you may be aware of this. It has been around for quite a while. We started it about 40 years ago and around 2000/2006 we began a community indicators project to begin looking at specific data around various topics of quality

of life in our Community. That process is called Together for Beaufort County. It has been in existence since 2006. We have about two dozen work groups that are all trying to have an impact in quality of life. One of those is called our Community Services Organization which has implemented a secure data base called Charity Tracker. As a means of being able to keep track of the folks who are indigent and looking for assistance from our Community from a variety of sources, whether those are Federal, State or local non-profit organizations that are helping them out. Charity Tracker gives us the ability to be able to keep track of the folks we are helping. This is not done so that we can have any kind of a punitive measure where we can wag our finger at someone to say you have gotten food for six times in the last month, but it is so that we can say hey, you have asked for food six times in the last month – can we have a conversation about what is going on so that we are going to get you the food, but we would like to have a conversation about what it is that is happening in your family – are you going to have to come back next month and ask for assistance again. That leads to an interview and a process that helps to better understand what the underlying problems are in that family so that we can begin to make recommendations and referrals for services that might be able to get them out of the situation, rather than just slapping a band aide and meeting the immediate crisis or immediate need. We try and look at the underlying factors. Over the years of doing that, we have been able to gather a considerable amount of data around the populations that we serve. My Assistant, Ben Boswell is here with me this morning. He has a lot of the data that we have been keeping track of now since 2006 and can give you a little bit of a picture of not only the numbers that we are talking about, but the definition of terms.

Mr. Ben Boswell said HUD defines homeless as you are either sheltered or you are unsheltered. Under that definition, from a layman's perspective you can still be homeless. They are only concerned about those people who are either living on the streets or in their cars or in abandoned or insufficient housing which would be considered unsheltered. Whereas individuals who are living in motels or other safer situations would be considered sheltered. When we look at our data we look more specifically at the scenario at which they are living. We have two definitions that we use – we look at homeless and these are the individuals who are completely unsheltered and then we look at housing insecure. Housing insecure folks are folks who are about to be homeless that either have an eviction notice active or they are living in a motel or they have lost their home and are living with friends or family. In either situation, tomorrow could roll around and they won't have a house or place to stay. County wide we have 54 homeless households. We consider household as one unit of individuals – so about 100 individuals who are completely unsheltered. If we expand that to include all of our individuals who are housing insecure, then we have 756 individuals of which 224 are children and 111 are senior citizens. Mr. Leyda said remember when he talks about these numbers, this data is coming from Charity Tracker which it means that this population has reached out for assistance. That means that we are not counting all the other folks who show up at food pantries and so forth that don't use Charity Tracker that are not being recorded as a part of that. Anyone who has worked in statistics knows that if you are doing some type of a survey of a population you are really lucky and doing well if you get 10%. The challenge with working with this population and being able to begin to move them towards more stability comes from having to look at why they are in the situation that they are in. Some of the folks that are in these situations are there by choice. They want their independence, they want to be separated from any other needs and they like that freedom. Often, they are aware of where they can go for assistance. They just don't want that assistance, either because they are dealing with a mental health issue, they are dealing with a drug or alcohol issue or they simply choose that they don't want to be getting assistance. The way you are going to make an impact in that population is by building relationships. You don't just walk up to somebody off the street and say I think you need drug and alcohol treatment or I think you need mental health treatment. That takes time. You have to build a relationship of trust and respect and over time you will be able to eventually begin to move that person towards recognizing that they have an issue and they need to get help and that they can even then get them into help. That is not the kind of thing that is going to happen

by just walking up to somebody. The other thing that has been learned by HUD and others around our Country is that in order to get a person from a homeless situation into a housing secure one – you can't just plop them down into a house. There is a whole lot more behind how they are in that situation and why they are in that situation. The other extreme is that folks will say that they have to get off the drugs or the alcohol – they have to get on their mental health medication regime before we are going to give them a place to stay. Statistically we know that just doesn't work. If you think about it anecdotally it makes sense, if someone is working on an alcohol addiction and they are going to their AA meetings regularly, you can only imagine the conversation that would be had when here they have built up this cohort of support people that they come and they meet with at meetings a their AA meetings and at the end of the meeting they are going to wave and say ok see you guys, I will be back – I am going back under the bridge. You are not going to solve that problem in that way. What we are looking at is trying to be able to develop a position. We are talking with County Council now to try and develop a position that would be a housing insecure coordinator/homeless coordinator. The concept would be that we would have a full time 40-hour position, a Social Worker who would be able to build those kinds of relationships. As you saw from the numbers that Ben described, there is a significant number of people in the Community who are in this situation. When you look at the most severe cases, and we did this by going to two sources. We went to the County Detention Center and we went to Beaufort Memorial Hospital – the County Hospital Psychiatric Ward. We asked each of these organizations to tell us how many people come in and out of your facility more than 3x in one year. The answer that we got, both from the Detention Center and from the Hospital Psychiatric Ward was exactly 47. They are just going back and forth between the two. If this new person is going to be effective, they are going to have to interface with all the various jurisdictions – law enforcement probably the most critical. As you can imagine, law enforcement deals with this population the most on a day to day basis. It becomes a really good mechanism for us to use to be able to take this Social Worker and have them work in conjunction with local law enforcement agencies to try and identify the individuals and begin to develop those relationships that will eventually help them to turn the situation around and become housing secure.

After some brief comments by the Committee, Council Member Lennox and the entire Committee thanked both Mr. Leyda and Mr. Boswell for their time and their report.

b. Sandalwood Food Pantry Lease

Anne Cyran stated staff recommends the Community Services and Public Safety Committee forward a recommendation to Town Council to authorize the Town Manager or his designee to execute a lease of a Town-owned property to the Sandalwood Community Food Pantry to build a permanent facility. I am joined here today by Nanette Pierson, Director of The Sandalwood Community Food Pantry and Albert George, Assistant.

The properties recommended for consideration include the former Beaufort County transfer station and the former Children's Center site. Staff recommends a condition for the Children's Center site: the Pantry will create a Type E, Option 2 buffer adjacent to Mathews Drive, a minor arterial street. This buffer is typically required for a major arterial street; it is wider and has more vegetation than a buffer for a minor arterial street. This condition is consistent with other Town land use agreements that required wider adjacent street buffers.

Staff does not recommend requiring a wider buffer for the former transfer station site. The property is set back 250 feet from Pembroke Drive and is screened by vegetation.

The approval of a lease agreement will allow the Pantry to build a permanent, resilient facility on the Island. The facility will be built to withstand damage from natural disasters so the Pantry can serve their clients at all times.

Development of the Pantry is consistent with Our Plan Inclusive Strategy 3.2, Connected Strategy 3.4, and Infrastructure Strategy 5.5.

The Pantry is a 501(c)(3), volunteer-based organization committed to reducing hunger on Hilton Head Island by providing an efficient, cost effective centralized system for collecting, purchasing and distributing nutritional food to those Island residents living below the federal poverty line. The Pantry serves 950 clients, including young children, the unemployed, the working poor, the mentally challenged, the physically challenged, senior citizens and the homeless.

Staff examined all undeveloped Town-owned properties in the mid and north Island areas, ruling out properties that are too small; covered in wetlands; designated for future uses; restricted by covenants; or located in areas that are incompatible with a Community Services use.

There are two undeveloped Town-owned properties that could meet the Pantry's needs: the former Children's Center site on Mathews Drive; and the former Beaufort County transfer station near Otter Hole.

The Pantry would prefer to use the former Children's Center site due to it having more building potential and better visibility.

After a brief discussion, Council Member Ames said he is in favor of the Children's Center site for a couple of reasons. One it is their preference and 2) staff seems to think it is good. Also, it is the former Children's Center site and the Children's Center has been dedicated to serving the same population that I think is being served by the Pantry to a large degree. It makes sense to me that we go in that direction.

Council Member Ames moved that the Committee recommend to the full Town Council that the Town Manager pursue a Lease on the Children's Center site. Council Member Becker seconded. The motion unanimously passed.

c. HUD/CDBG Entitlement Program 2021 Annual Action Plan Request for Project Approval

Marcy Benson, Senior Grants Administrator advised that Staff is recommending the Community Services & Public Safety Committee (CSPSC) forward a recommendation of approval to Town Council to select Patterson Park as the 2021 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) project for inclusion in the Town's 2021 CDBG Annual Action Plan.

Back in February, the Town received notification from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development that the 2021 CDBG allocation amount will be \$229,188. The Patterson Park project was originally included in the 2018 Annual Action Plan for CDBH and was designated to receive the remaining \$118,000 in 2018 CDBG funds after the Boys and Girls Club Pavilion Project was funded with \$200,000 from that year's funds.

Approval of the Patterson Park project as the 2021 CDBG project for inclusion in the Town's Annual Action Plan will allow this year's funding allocation to be paired with the remaining 2018 funding allocation and it will provide a total of approximately \$347,000 for the park project.

Approval of the Patterson Park project is consistent with the 2018 Annual Action Plan for CDBG funding as well as several Our Plan goals, strategies and tactics.

In order to meet the May 17th HUD submittal deadline, the draft plan is scheduled to be released for the required thirty-day public comment period on March 23rd based on the direction of the Committee meeting today. Approval of the final plan by Resolution is scheduled for the May 4th Town Council Meeting.

Council Member Lennox said we have a pretty short timeline to work. I would anticipate a lot of public comment during the next thirty-day period.

Council Member Stanford said we certainly support the concept of using these types of grant funds for these purposes. Mr. Stanford asked if there has been any sort of preliminary design for the facilities to be on that park site. Ms. Benson said there has been no design yet. Mr. Stanford asked if there will be cooperation with the Parks & Recreation Commission in developing the plan. Jennifer Ray said staff has looked at the site conceptually just to make sure that we could fit some park elements onto the site. What we need to do now and what we are working on is researching if there are any other uses. Initially we were talking about potentially a partnership with Habitat for that site and we have learned that the funding sources for purchasing that property won't allow that, but we are checking to make sure what other restrictions we might have to determine how big of a park would go there. Of course we will work with the community and through the Parks & Recreation Commission before a final design is brought forward for approval.

Council Member Ames moved that the Committee forward a recommendation of approval to Town Council to select Patterson Park as the 2021 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) project for inclusion in the Town's 2021 CDBG Annual Action Plan. Council Member Stanford seconded. The motion unanimously passed.

d. Fire Rescue Presentation of the 2020 Calendar Year Annual Report

Chief Brad Tadlock proceeded to give an in-depth review the 2020 Calendar Annual Report, a year that emergency services haven't seen such since 9-11.

Council Member Lennox thanked Chief Tadlock and said it is almost impossible to describe what you had to work through the last year and all that being said, without any interruption of service. Fantastic job!

Council Member Stanford said he wanted to echo what Mr. Lennox just said. We recognize that you went through an extraordinarily difficult time and did it very successfully and we appreciate the time and dedication of your staff, not only to that, but also all the services that you are providing to us. I feel very safe on Hilton Head Island because of the services being provided by your team. Mr. Stanford asked Chief Tadlock the total number of staff members you have in Fire and EMS. Chief Tadlock said the total number is 143. Mr. Stanford said I believe you said you lost 10 during the year and 8 through relocation. Do you do exit interviews to understand why certain employees are leaving? What I am getting at specifically is are they satisfied with compensation and benefits, as much as people can be. Chief Tadlock said HR conducts an exit interview and that is provided to me and the Deputy Chiefs. I have to say thank you to the Town Council – we had a Compensation Classification Study that you all approved during a Pandemic. We saw a trend - I think with the Pandemic and the stress placed on the Fire Fighters and Paramedics while they are at work and that associated stress at home, we saw some young members – a couple of them said this just isn't for me. The way the fire service operates and the team concept in the Fire Station everything was separate and we wore masks. The team work is different for a new person to come in. If they relocated to our Community, there was no way to get out and meet people. I think the need for everyone to separate – you couldn't go out with your friends or engage with other couples. It was everyone was separated. I think that added to the stress of the individuals and I think it seemed to me that it was easy to say I can't do this and move on. Mr. Stanford said I think a retention rate of something like 94% is a pretty darn indicator that you have a good and happy team there. That is great to know. Some years ago I heard a coronary success rate and I am

wondering if you have those numbers available about survival rate in coronary incidents here on the Island versus that nationally. If you do not have that readily on hand, if you could bring that in during your report to the full Town Council. Chief Tadlock said our out of hospital cardiac arrests survival rate plummeted. It shows you that seconds and minutes count because when we had to add questions to the dispatch side of it that slowed down the call being transmitted to the Station. All the safety we had to implement with the PPE and the gowns and masks and hoods to go into the home to safely operate – our numbers dropped dramatically.

Council Member Alex Brown thanked Chief Tadlock for his very good presentation and I echo the comments of my colleagues as the Hilton Head Fire Rescue being Class A. You mentioned the Fire Hydrant plan where two were implemented. What percentage degree are we completed there. Chief Tadlock said we have four on the table right now that we would like to do. At that point we would have to look at the program. We started with areas outside of 1,000 feet. We have hit all those then looked at areas between 750 feet and 1,000 feet. When we wrap up these last four or five with the PSD we will have accomplished that. I would say we are 80% done. Mr. Brown said he encourages Chief as we move forward in our budget season that you present to us where we are as far as completion is concerned. Mr. Brown also said you mentioned there is a total of 143 total members of Fire Rescue. Do you have any data to suggest how many of those individuals actually live on Hilton Head? Chief Tadlock said it has hovered around 40-50%. I would have to check exactly as I think it has dropped a little bit. Mr. Brown asked what the pay is for the line positions currently available – what is the pay for that? Chief Tadlock said it is \$44,700 for a Fire Fighter/EMT and if they are a Paramedic they would get 14.5% pm top of that \$44,700. Mr. Brown said that is in line with the 80% AMI that we have identified as we move forward in our work force housing challenge. Mr. Brown mentioned as you make these presentations to us Chief that you add that metric because if we can somehow show improvement and this is in line with the strategies that are outlined in the Affordable Housing recommendations – if we can show increases in that percentage of Fire Rescue that are actually living on Hilton Head then we are showing improvement in implementing our strategies. I commend your crew for all that they do outside of going out and putting out fires and saving people's lives, but the connection to the Community is huge and I think we burden that to a degree by asking people to travel "X" number of miles and "X" number of minutes to get here to serve. The better job we do at that, the better we are off as a Community. One last point that I want to make – the report Chief is giving us does not indicate all the little things that they do. They have identified the shortage and intake of applications which is something that a lot of us are experiencing. The way that Our Plan and particularly the strategy that is wrapped around education is relative to this is if Chief can start to develop a pipeline through our educational system very early on where home grown students look to Fire Rescue as an opportunity to stay here is so important. We have to do our part as a Municipality to support Chief in that – to really lean on the school district and even those elected officials that we are growing our own to a degree to fulfill these positions. It just makes us better as a Community long term.

Council Member Ames said he felt the need to make a comment where no comment is necessary because I wouldn't want to be interpreted as not appreciating the Chief and the Fire Rescue Team as much as my colleagues. Once again, Chief, I have to say thank you to you and your staff tremendously professional and you make us proud of what you do for the Community. I think that the message to our new Town Manager is that we are extraordinarily proud of what you bring to the table and what your staff provides the Community. Has there ever been a situation where 50 or 60% of commuting Fire Rescue personnel have not been

able to get to a Station on time? Is that ever an issue? Chief said it has happened resulting from traffic or accidents. We have had times where the personnel coming to work would be delayed. I think just as Alex was suggesting that we monitor the number and percentages of Fire Rescue personnel – I think we should be doing the same thing with educators and so on. I think that building the Community inside out will get us to a place where we can be proud of.

Council Member Becker thanked Chief for his presentation and thank you to each and everyone who work within Fire Rescue. They are above and beyond the best of the best. They are well trained, have great person to person skills. I am incredibly proud of all of you and grateful. Ms. Becker urged everyone to please have a way out safely in your homes. Know an escape plan so you can get out safely.

Mrs. Becker asked if the Town gives a stipend for Fire Rescue and Chief answered there is no stipend. As we talk about the items with regard to salary, being able to afford housing on the Island, I think that one of the places where maybe we should consider is also helping to provide maybe an additional stipend through out budget to allow more Fire Rescue who choose to live on Hilton Head who may need to bridge a little bit some additional dollars in that way that will help out a lot.

Chief Tadlock said there is no rental on Hilton Head and what is there is very expensive now. I do want to give a shout out to our Town Manager, Marc Orlando as part of this hiring process, we are recognizing people who come in with a Paramedic Certification with a bonus. We are recognizing them if they are already an EMT and a Fire Fighter certified we are recognizing them with a bonus. We will hire people who do not have experience, but at times when we get behind like we have this past year because the Fire Academy shut down last year. Trying to get people in the pipe line and getting them on shift was slowed down dramatically.

Marc Orlando said he is tracking exactly what Chief has said and he has some experience in just trying to recruit and retain First Responders. My philosophy is you always have to be on your toes. It is a constant full-time job to stay regionally competitive and regionally significant. A lot goes into that. It is the pay, the quality of life and their equipment. I am very impressed with Chief and we talk about world class and amazing leadership – an incredible department. I vow to stay focused and help as much as I can. Council Member Brown brings a good point – having that local pipe line at an early age and having people believe in the organization well before they are looking for a job is crucial. Chief, Angie and I just started comparing some notes on that. Great job to Chief – great presentation – you set the bar so high in our organization. We all will be successful if we follow your lead in the way you defined your department. Very excited to be a part of it.

Chief said I appreciate that, but I have a good team with me. I just try to keep the lanes out there and let them do what they need to do. I see my job as trying to keep the ethical standard and the goals to be a high performing organization. The team then can then roll down the street – I just try to give them the guidance to move forward and improving.

8. Adjournment

Council Member Becker moved to adjourn. Council Member Ames seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 11:12 a.m.

Submitted by:

Karen D. Knox

Approved: May 24, 2021