



**MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION  
JULY 10, 2018 – 3:30 P.M.**

The Mental Health Commission met in a regular meeting on Tuesday, July 10, 2018 at 3:38 p.m. in MHSA Administrative Office, 2001 North Garey Avenue, Pomona, California.

**CALL TO ORDER** Vice-Chair Perez called the meeting to order at 3:38 p.m.

**ROLL CALL** A visual roll call was taken.

**PRESENT:** Donald R. Perez, Vice-Chair  
Cheryl Berezny  
Ethel Gardner  
Jeanette Heitmann  
Anne Henderson  
Rubio R. Gonzalez (arrived at 3:43 p.m.)  
Joan M. Reyes  
Twila L. Stephens  
Wray Ryback  
David J. Weldon  
Davetta Williams

**ABSENT:** Toni L. Watson, Chair  
Arny Bloom  
Daniel Rodriguez  
Alfonso "Al" Villanueva

**STAFF:** Toni Navarro, Executive Director  
Rimmi Hundal, Director of MHSA and Ethnic Services  
Dana Barford, MHSA Projects Manager  
Mica Olmos, JPA Administrator/Clerk

**I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE JUNE 12, 2018 REGULAR MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION MEETING**

After a few typographic revisions, Commissioner Ryback moved, and Commissioner Reyes seconded, to approve the MHC Minutes of the June 12, 2018 Regular Meeting. The motion was carried by the following vote: AYES: Commissioners Gardner, Heitmann, Henderson, Reyes, Stephens, Ryback, Weldon, and Williams. NOES: None. ABSTAIN: Commissioner Berezny and Vice-Chair Perez. ABSENT: Commissioners Bloom, Rodriguez, Villanueva, and Board Liaison Gonzalez; and Chair Watson.

## **II. DISCUSSION REGARDING HOMELESSNESS IN THE TRI-CITY MENTAL HEALTH AUTHORITY REGION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ITS HOMELESSNESS STRATEGIC PLAN**

Executive Director Navarro reported that No Place Like Home (NPLH) is California Legislature that was enacted approximately 1-1/2 year ago; however, it was met with a lawsuit contending that NPLH was a misuse of Mental Health Services Act (MSHA) funds and it has been tied up in the courts since then. She explained that NPLH will create \$2 billion bond funds to the State in order to build permanent supportive housing for persons who are homeless, at-risk of homelessness, and also have a mental health diagnosis; that in order to expedite access to this funding, Governor Brown placed it on the November ballot to obtain voter approval; that since NPLH legislation was enacted, Tri-City staff has prepared for the deduction of approximately \$600,000-\$700,000 annually in MHSA funds for the next several years and the budget has already been adjusted for this year and is prepared for the following years.

At 4:43 p.m., Board Member Rubio Gonzalez arrived at the meeting.

Executive Director Navarro further explained that NPLH has a non-competitive portion, where every county will get a one-time allocation of a portion of their money back; and a competitive portion, where the counties based on their size, can put together a project and submit a request for funds; that Tri-City will obtain roughly \$1.3 million from the non-competitive portion, and that in order to obtain it, Tri-City has to submit a Region Wide Homelessness Strategy Plan, noting that Tri-City does not have one, that each of the three cities has its own individual plan but it does not meet the eligibility and criteria under NPLH; therefore, Tri-City hired Consultants Sadlon and Associates (Sadlon) to begin a stakeholder process to help Tri-City develop its Region Wide Homelessness Strategic Plan to qualify for the funding and to build consensus in the region about permanent supportive housing; and that Sadlon was in attendance to have a discussion with the Commission and hear its Members' ideas.

Elizabeth Sadlon spoke about what took place during the last Joint Meeting of the Governing Board and Mental Health Commission noting that she had distributed a flow chart that depicts the timeline of the work that Sadlon and Associates will be doing through January 2019 and how everything will come together during the process, and distributed it again; she then explained that Sadlon is currently on the data collection phase and is preparing for community dialogues in the fall when the Commission will have the opportunity to participate, pointing out that it is important to discern which strategies will be more important to raise up and ways to bring increased commitment and understanding to strategies to help end homelessness in the three cities.

Discussion ensued about how the community dialogues will be conducted, consumer engagement, and the participation on both sides of the issue to build consensus and come together as a Tri-City region instead of three separate cities.

Consultant Sadlon explained that she had four groups of questions for each Commissioner: 1) to introduce themselves; 2) to state their understanding of homelessness and why there is homelessness in this area; and 3) to share their perspective on forward looking solutions; noting that these solutions are about people coming together to care for other people, to build Yes in My Backyard (YIMBY) consensus, and to be ready for and to build strength of alignment in the community.

She then asked each Commissioner to share their name, city representing, what brought them to serve in the Mental Health Commission, and a word or phrase to describe their role in ending/addressing homelessness.

Vice-Chair Perez, representing City of Claremont, joined the Commission to help veterans; his role is that of support. Commissioner Reyes, representing City of La Verne, shared her personal connection that led her to be involved with NAMI and advocate for homeless persons. Commissioner Ryback, representing City of Pomona, said she is part of the patient advocate program as a Risk Manager at the Pomona Valley Hospital, has deep interest in mental health services for the community, and her role would be of an advocate. Commissioner Stephens, representing Pomona, having lived experience and a product of 'housing first' led her to serve in the Commission, and her role is understanding homeless' needs and their situation. Commissioner Weldon, representing City of Pomona, said that awareness about Tri-City motivated him to be part of the Commission, and his role is to make people aware. Commissioner Williams, representing City of Claremont, joined the Commission as a result of her desire to join her friends in volunteering and wanting to help others in the community, and that her role is to establish relationships in order to help. Cheryl Berezny, representing City of Claremont, shared that as a retired special educator in the City of Pomona she is aware of the conditions in which many families lived in, that housing is so important, and wants to make others aware of issues facing the homeless population. Commissioner Heitmann, represents both Cities of Pomona and Claremont, joined the MHC as a desire to become a more integral part of the solution in this area, that her role is understanding the homeless population as she is on a daily basis on the trenches with them. Anne Henderson, representing City of Pomona, discussed the various community organizations she has participated in, including being a Tri-City's stakeholder, noting that her role is getting community groups together. Governing Board Member Liaison Gonzalez stated that his policy is YIMBY, discussed the lack of development in his District in Pomona; that residents are empathetic to the homeless in his District; and that his role is to advocate what is best for society to other elected officials.

Consultant Sadlon then posed the question about what was the MHC understanding of the reason there is homelessness in the Tri-City area. The following were comments from the Commission: that Pomona is the urban center of the valley since the 60's, noting that federal, state and county offices are located there; that Pomona has been a sanctuary city because of all the programs in the City, having a hospital, and approximately 120 registered churches; that Pomona has parks where homeless can hide and feel safe there; that there are those persons who do not want the responsibilities of society and who do not want to be controlled.

Executive Director Navarro reported that in the City of Claremont, per the Claremont Unified School District, there are approximately 200 children living in overcrowded conditions; that seniors in Claremont are foregoing medical treatment and food because they do not have enough money to cover their mortgage or rent but wish to live in this area because they are happy here, so they end up homeless in the area.

Other comments about what causes homelessness included: housing crisis; housing availability; the high cost of rent; the high diversity in the City of Pomona; drug addiction; not being prepared for life and lack experience in life management; loss of family support; lack of financial planning and the inability to build wealth; no education; lack of awareness on how to access services through SSI and SDI; services are available only when you hit rock bottom, no safety net to catch those before they drop all the way down; and that there is no prevention for homelessness.

Executive Director Navarro stated that the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) has identified funds for permanent supportive housing which are for those that are homeless, or at-risk of homelessness; noting that Tri-City is one of the few counties that is able to keep the at-risk of homelessness as a qualifier, in comparison to the permanent supportive housing of Los Angeles at large under MHSA, which is only for homeless because there is such a huge chronic homeless population in Los Angeles that they are not able to have a middle safety net.

Consultant Sadlon stated that when thinking about the prevention and recognition piece, she would like to explore the forward-looking solutions that the Commission Members are seeing and experiencing in the community that might be addressing prevention or might be recognizing the factors that cause homelessness that were just discussed.

The Commission made the following comments: that the Pomona Valley Hospital will be opening soon a special unit in its emergency department dedicated to psychiatric assessment, treatment, and healing, which provides the hope of allowing staff to reach the patient at their level and provide them with resources with consistency and with more compassionate care; that St. Ambrose Church provides to those that are homeless with the ability to take a shower, do laundry, get a cup of coffee, sit on the lawn which speaks of dignity and compassion; that the availability of having medication storage lockers is also important, noting that the City of Pomona has them available; having the opportunity to build more dignity for the homeless can remove a barrier that can allow them to accept help, for those that want it; educating communities that homelessness is a society/community problem to allow them to see that it is not somebody else's problem.

Discussion ensued regarding the three cities level of awareness of their homeless population; the homeless connections to the cities, safety, and resources available within the three communities; about the Pomona Homeless Shelter being a key resource and not the solution; about Tri-City's landlord project that connects the property managers to Tri-City which creates the opportunity to build housing inventory.

Consultant Sadlon then asked the Commission to share with her the names of those individuals who are influencers and opinion makers, or group of people, who they turn to in the community who are important in this process, or the nay sayers that should be engaged in the conversation to share information, create awareness, acceptance and compassion; she then explained how the outreach will take place and encouraged the Commission to contact her if there were any other ideas they want to share with her.

Daniel Argueta, staff overseeing the Housing Stability Project in the Tri-City Housing Division, spoke about the importance of awareness.

Mary Monzon, Tri-City's Housing Division Supervisor, spoke about the goals of the Landlord's Project.

### **III. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT**

Executive Director Navarro spoke about the Pomona O.A.T.H. Initiative, The Officers Assisting The Homeless, that Freddy Assembly Member Rodriguez, former Tri-City Governing Board Member, was able to secure \$4 million from a one-time funding from the Governor's Office for the City of Pomona to fund training and support, as well hire Homeless Liaison Officers and mental health professionals to be available 24/7.

She explained that Tri-City was not able to provide 24/7 programming services as needed by the City of Pomona because it costs over \$1 million annually. However, Tri-City will be actively involved with the Police Chief, his staff and those that they hire, so that when persons are identified as having a mental illness, Tri-City will be there to open a case immediately and get them into a stable treatment; and discussed the process how Tri-City responds to mental health crisis situations.

### **COMMISSION ITEMS AND REPORTS**

Commissioner Ryback reported that the Path Unit at PVH will improve the services currently being provided to those patients in need of mental health services, noting that it is not an inpatient psychiatric unit, rather it is primarily for emergency services crisis stabilization.

Executive Director Navarro reported that Tri-City's Medical Director and the Crisis Intervention and Medication Support Manager are very involved with the PVH's team; that the Medical Director last week had a teleconference with the PVH ER Medical Director and the PMV Medical Director for the Tele-Psychiatric Unit to make sure that tele-psychiatrists are aware that Tri-City's Medical Director and our doctors are available for consultation and for hands-off; and that Tri-City staff had been working on the protocols with PVH since February.

Discussion ensued regarding the protocols to provide services to veterans.

Vice-Chair Perez welcomed all the new Commission Members and stated that he was looking forward to working with everyone, noting that Tri-City has a great staff team.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Daniel Argueta distributed flyers for the next Landlord's meeting.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

At 5:05 p.m., on consensus of the Mental Health Commission its Regular Meeting of July 10, 2018 was adjourned. The next Regular Meeting of the Mental Health Commission will be held on Tuesday, September 11, 2018, in the MHSA Administrative Office, 2001 North Garey Avenue, Pomona, California. The Mental Health Commission is Dark during the month of August.



Micaela P. Olmos, JPA Administrator/Clerk