



BOARD MINUTES

Board Members:

Ben Ryan, Brendan Clark, Brian Arnold, Carla Respects Nothing, Jennifer Biess, John Feeney-Coyle, Kelli Barker, Ken Hayes, Kristen Toombs, Mike Malloy

MDHI Staff:

Jamie Rife, Layla Said, Julie Winkowski, Matt Meyer, Rebecca Mayer, Sierra Trujillo

ADMINISTRATIVE

Brian welcomed everyone to the second Board meeting of the year. He asked everyone to fill out the survey Layla sent out regarding a new day of the month for Board meetings. Brian then led the group through an icebreaker with marshmallows and sticks. Mike thanked Brian for his monthly icebreakers.

CONSENT AGENDA

Matt notified the group that it was approved for a waiver to forego the unsheltered Point in Time Count. Jamie noted that we are still doing the sheltered count, which is 75% of the total count. Jamie believes HUD will flip the years that the unsheltered count is required, meaning that everyone must do it in 2022.

Brian asked Sierra how her new role as Director of DEI has been. She said she has spent the past two months doing her own personal assessment of how MDHI operates and how DEI plays into our work. She's been looking at the Council/Committee structure through an equity lens. She is excited about the Youth Action Board, which has been renamed the Young Adult Leadership Committee. She thinks it is one of our most important committees since it represents the younger generation. She mentioned meeting with the group to tell them about a reset this past Wednesday. She is working with Layla to reset the group with an emphasis on leadership skills and activism. In the next few months, she is going to have 1-on-1 time with each member and do targeted recruitment to other organizations.

Ben had a comment about the OneHome CE section in the ED Report. He thinks the inflow/outflow graphs are great, and he wanted to thank the staff for all the work it took to be able to collect and report this data. He wanted to call everyone's attention to what these two graphs are telling us. He sees an emergency in our community. There were over 200 people entering the system, and we were only able to house about 50. From an equity perspective, he thinks it would be great to have a side-by-side comparison for percentage of placements that are broken down by race right next to the same table that's on the first graph on page 6. This way we can make sure, at least regarding people in our system, that we are seeing racially equitable outflow. There is also the added hurdle that we are getting people into the system in an equitable way. Rebecca responded that we are already digging into data in a much more granular way within the CoC committees. She said this can be added to future Board packets. Matt thanked Ben for his enthusiasm about the data, as well as his alarm around what it is showing. Matt noted that this isn't about housing types, but rather about an inadequate supply of housing. We have more people that need housing than we have housing to provide them with. Matt wonders how our partners and CE Team can leave case conferencing feeling good with our current resources. He believes that it is not currently set up to be successful.

Matt also noted that this is the start of MDHI reporting data consistently to the Board. As we continue to operationalize our Logic Model, we expect to have a Data Report separate from the ED Report. Sierra is working with Rebecca now to see how we can incorporate our racial equity work into the Data Report.

Brian covered the consent agenda.

Vote – Ben motioned to approve the consent agenda, Mike seconded, none opposed, none abstained

TOPICS

Financial Update (Mike & Julie)

Mike wanted to thank the fantastic work of the finance team. Their reports are great and easy to read, and they have streamlined a lot of the processes that make the work of the Finance committee much more direct. Julie has compiled a Cash on Hand (COH) analysis that is representative of the amount of cash the organization has on hand. She took total expenditures and broke it down by month, as seen on line 66. She then broke it down into a Daily Cash Burn. As of 12/31/20, we have about 90.5 days COH. The average since 07/01/20 is about 80 days COH. She noted that this is a significant amount of reserves, which is fantastic.

Ben said this was great analysis and thanked Julie for putting this together. He asked if there was a goal for how much COH an organization of our size should have. Julie said this number is indicative of how long we could operate, and she believes three months is very significant. She thinks this is above what is standard for an organization of our size. Matt said that the Board initially mandated that we had \$70,000 in reserves due to fear of a government shutdown. Matt wanted to thank Jamie as our Director of Development for the reserves she has built up in private donations and grants.

John asked if the reserves would shrink as we return to a post-COVID world. Julie said the movement on our statement of activities has been minimal. Matt said that the line item around the PIT count might shift. What we budgeted for our contract with ASR is no longer needed now that we are skipping the unsheltered PIT count.

Officer Succession and Recruitment (Kelli & Ben)

Ben reminded the group of the discussion around Board committee involvement. We are about 2/3 of the way through officer terms, which means that we will need a new slate of officers in July. We will vote on them in June. He hopes those positions will be filled by people not currently on the Finance or Governance Committees. We want to give people a chance to shadow current officers. This is, again, very similar to the comments we made about people participating in CoC Committees. There are no requirements other than being on this Board. He doesn't want people to feel limited by anything. If anyone is interested, please reach out to Ben, Brian, or John.

John added that we could add some people to the Governance Committee. Ben is terming off in June and John will be the only member left. Jennifer asked if the Board Committee meetings could be moved outside of the workday. She sees this as a consistent recruitment challenge. Ben thanked her for making that point and said that all meeting times are negotiable. Carla asked if it was easier or harder during the pandemic for others to partake in committee work. She thinks things are easier now that the vaccine is out, and we are used to the workflow. Ben thinks that as people make their way back to a new normal, people will be able to give more time and energy. Matt said that the Board should consider what the new normal is, to be discussed further later. He also noted that if we are moving the Board meeting time, we will have to move the Board committees in sequence.

Regional Strategic Planning (Jamie)

Last January at the US Conference of Mayors, Mayor Coffman, Mayor Hancock, and Mayor Paul got together and talked about addressing homelessness regionally. We have been working on the pieces of this strategy for years: implementing HMIS, establishing the Veteran By-Name List, launching the Built for Zero work and subregional teams, and harnessing public will. We will begin by activating leaders to clear the path for ending veteran homelessness at a regional level.

There are three phases. Each phase has a different set of stakeholders, which will either occur at a regional or subregional level. In Phase 1, we are briefing elected officials. We are going to talk about why homelessness is an issue and how we can make progress with a coordinated regional response. The convening will be March 18th, led by MDHI and Community Solutions. Phase 2 continues local briefings and subregional planning. We will continue to brief elected officials on the progress in their region based off the BFZ report card. In Phase 3, we will work with nonengaged providers and partners, such as agencies that are not using OneHome or HMIS. This convening would probably happen in May. We would orient them on how to be engaged with the BFZ work to support the regional and subregional work. The plan is to re-convene the large group quarterly to check-in on progress. The public kickoff will be Summer 2021.

Ben said this is amazing, and he is very impressed. Carla asked if we can include the Native community, who have been reluctant to join the CoC. Jamie said she will be reaching out to Carla and the rest of the Board in Phase 3 to pull in those marginalized groups. Brian asked how else the Board could help. Jamie said she can send the Board our talking points so that we can all be on the same page. She might also ask for help outreaching to people in specific communities.

Jennifer thinks this is very exciting, and she thanks MDHI and Jamie for leading this strategy for our communities. Matt said that developing a concurrent regional and subregional approach is something we have never done before. Now that we are engaging many levels of elected officials, obstacles we encounter may be easier to mitigate.

Council & Committee Updates (Sierra)

Sierra and Alix have been looking at the Council/Committee structure. From an equity lens and perspective, Sierra questions if this is the most welcoming structure for people with lived experience, the BIPOC community, and other intersections. She feels like MDHI could end up doing more harm than good if we are bringing in more bodies without setting stronger intentions around the work. She has had lots of conversations with Matt around the Lived Experience committees, and she wants it to be done right instead of feeling rushed. We don't want to tokenize people, and we want them to feel safe in these Councils/Committees. She said Layla brought up a great point about putting people with lived experience in the same room as service providers, where there might be a history of bad experiences. Is this structure right? Can it be simplified? How can we make it better for people with lived experience who want to participate? Sierra emphasized that building relationships with marginalized communities takes time. Something she identified in the first part of her work is the need for DEI training across the organization. Sierra is currently participating in a racial equity training with the NAEH, and she wonders if this is something both the Staff and Board could do as well. She reached out to the two consultants mentioned in the E&A Recommendations. She hasn't heard back from 1, and the other is fully booked. She thinks we must be mindful that these resources are spread thin in the BIPOC community now more than ever. She welcomed Jamie and Matt to add more.

Matt reminded the group that the Equity Recommendations were very concerned with decision-making power. He said the authority to make decisions ultimately resides in the Board, unless the Board delegates that authority to Matt. Many decisions are also made every day at the Council/Committee level. He believes that it is not practical or fair for us to expect the Lived Experience groups to have to vet every decision of MDHI. That is not even necessarily the type of work those groups are trying to do. Matt believes that if we are trying to include DEI throughout the organization, we must make sure that we are truly inclusive at all levels of the organization, and he is confident that we are not there right now. If we start bringing people into our committees from different communities and different experiences before being truly inclusive, we run the risk of doing damage instead of empowering those voices. In sum, what the Board has set out in our Equity Ends Policy is more complicated than initially anticipated. There is a lot of trust building to be done with other community organizations.

Sierra also wanted to add that it was telling when Carla mentioned that Native organizations are hesitant to join the CoC. She agrees there is no BIPOC representation in the CoC. Although she is trying to include these groups, it all takes time. Carla added that it puts a lot on someone to be in this type of space and on this Board. No one else in the Native Community is comfortable being in the kind of situation she has put herself in. Carla mentioned that she is starting up her talking circle of Natives experiencing homelessness again through the library and other partnerships. This group is a

safe space where people can share experiences and information related to homelessness. She is trying to get people to talk to the group about the vaccine because she is concerned that Native people don't even know it's available to them.

Ben thanked Carla for representing her community. He acknowledged that these situations are designed for white people, and to Sierra's point, he wants us to be able to design this group so that it is a welcoming group for everyone. Mike thinks that the pandemic is the right time for us to rebuild our systems from the ground-up. Matt thanked everyone for the points they raised. He said we will continue to bring this back to the Board. He feels very strongly that we need to do all our DEI work within MDHI authentically. We can't be doing it from a numbers perspective; we must do it from a person-centered perspective. As Sierra has said: we can't move faster than the speed of trust. So that is the pace we will be working at as we try to build a durable culture change within our organization. Matt believes this will change how we interact with the organizations within our network, and how they work with the people they serve.

Supportive Services, PSH, & Coordinated Entry (Matt)

Matt acknowledges that some people on the Board may be aware of this, and for some this may be entirely new. He wanted to give everyone a chance to engage in the subject and not think that any question was too basic. Matt and Rebecca have been in talks with our PSH partners. Since we have moved to Coordinated Entry, our partners are getting more acute cases that they are not equipped to manage. This is a problem that has always existed but has worsened in the past 2-3 months. When Matt started looking at the budgets of our PSH partners and the amount they have allocated to supportive services, he noticed a structural flaw in our system. We are currently funding less than half of what is required for supportive services. Kristen has confirmed that this is a state-wide issue. The system we created is working in prioritizing the most vulnerable, but we are noticing that we don't have the services or funding for these highly acute clients. Matt is concerned for the integrity of the network, as providers could eventually leave from burnout. He is also worried about basic safety issues. Are we putting people into housing where they are safe, and where others are safe around them? This isn't an issue that is going to go away, and it is undermining the system we have laid out.

Brenden asked: When we provide funding to providers, do they have to use it for housing only, or is any of it allocated to supportive services? Matt said that we allocate funding for both. For one organization, HUD provides \$144,000 of funding for supportive services, serving 55 households. Brendan asked how we can fill that gap of funding for supportive services? Matt said he doesn't know. Historically, providers have tried to use Medicaid. However, this billing system is too complex for most providers. Kristen said that she is excited to bring Matt to the table because there is a disconnect between understanding how homelessness relates to mental health/services.

Brian said that its not just a money issue. The units that are currently setup for low-income housing are not setup for all the individuals we see. A roof over someone's head is not enough. Matt thinks we need to raise the amount of money we are spending on supportive services when placing people in PSH. It is also clear that we need some different types of housing for highly acute cases. He knows that the notion of respite care is important for Lisa Thompson at CCH, but Matt thinks we need way more than what we have. He sees this as a bigger issue that we need to start putting numbers and analysis into.

Just how many people are we talking about that would need this kind of housing? He thinks Jennifer from HOST can speak to this, since they have been forward-thinking about this as well. We have existing projects that we also need to bring up their funding levels.

Jennifer said that in 2016, the housing division at HOST recognized that there were many people in PSH exiting back to homelessness. HOST asked what they could do about this and realized the solution was to establish a baseline of supportive services. The baseline comes out to \$7,200 in supportive services per unit, per year. HOST now provides supportive services gap financing for new projects trying to be built. Where they have seen a challenge is that this only helps new projects, and that there are many existing projects that have been facing this challenge for years. Jennifer wonders if there are places that are currently doing Medicaid billing well, and if they could partner with smaller organizations who might benefit from this funding but cannot handle the billing themselves.

Matt said there are whole companies that just do billing and can work with providers to assist with revenue generation. Matt said he is also inclined to see if we can work with the Office of Behavioral Health. They operate through a block grant with a much simpler billing system. Those dollars are intended for this work. Kristen has heard this conversation throughout the years and wanted to add some context that might help guide us. For example, the billing piece is also a barrier, so is the limited number of contracts and delays in contracts. We have tried to pair people that use Medicaid with housing partners. Some say no thanks, but others do it and do it well. Kristen would love to have us as partners at the table. Matt thanked Kristen for her work as a partner.

John said that all these services are inter-related, and asked if there were specific services that are needed more than others? He asked if the problems were related to mental health and addiction, employment, etc. He is asking because he wants to know if we could strategically target specific services rather than the whole universe of supportive services. Matt said that we are seeing issues with people that have complex medical needs and cannot do activities of daily living. The other problem-area is people with behavioral health and/or substance abuse issues. Kristen and Matt have mused about having a behavioral health team that is housing oriented. The current mission of the community mental health center is not to keep people into housing. Mat concluded that we might not have the right mental health entity that exists right now for people experiencing homelessness.

Concluding Remarks (Brian)

Brian said that these are all topics that we will continue to discuss. He thanked Kristen and Jennifer for their perspectives. He reminded the group to fill out the Board survey regarding a new day of the month for meetings. He will continue to make calls and check-ins with Board members. Brian asked Ben if we could record the meetings, and Ben said we will discuss this in Executive committee. Brian said the Board 101 meeting will be right before our meeting next month.