



City of San Marcos
Human Services Advisory Board (HSAB)

October 6, 2022 at 7:00 PM
Virtual and San Marcos Public Library

Regular Meeting – Minutes

Members Present: Ruben Garza, Voting Member
Monica Gonzales, Voting Member
Mary Earls, Voting Member
Alison Duplechin, Voting Member
Gloria Quinn, Voting Member
Rachel Montgomery, Voting Member
Mariana Zamora, Non-Voting Advisory Member

Member(s) Absent: JoAnn Parsons, Board Chair

Staff Liaison: Carol Griffith, Planning & Development Services, Community Development Manager

Recording Secretary: Lorena Escobar, Planning & Development Services, Housing Coordinator

Staff Present: Brandon Johnson, Planning & Development Services, Intern

- I. **Call to order:** The meeting was called to order by Gloria Quinn at 7:01 PM.
- II. **Roll Call:** Quinn called the roll. At the time that roll was conducted five voting members were present, forming a quorum.
- III. **30 Minute Citizen Comment Period:** No comments were received.
- IV. **Consideration of Minutes for September 22, 2022, Human Services Advisory Board Meeting.** Alison Duplechin moved for approval of minutes. Monica Gonzales seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

V. Presentations:

1. **Agency: Central Texas Dispute Resolution Center; Program: Reaching Out To Those In Need**

Martha Joyce started by thanking the board for the opportunity to visit with them. She said she wanted to share some of the successes and plans for their future. The Central Texas Dispute Resolution Center has been in business since 2009, and at that time they were called the Hays County Dispute Resolution Center but soon found that they needed more funding to be able to keep their doors open. They reached out to the four counties which included Comal, Hays, Guadalupe and Caldwell County for funding. They also had attorneys and individuals contacting them to offer mediation because they were offering a service that the other counties did not. So, at this time they became the Central Texas Dispute

Resolution Center. They provide affordable alternative dispute resolution services to the citizens of Central Texas. Their vision is to peacefully resolve conflicts through mediation and to serve the economically disadvantaged. They want to continue to market their services because people do not know what mediation is and the benefits it provides. Currently Martha is the only paid employee and have an open mediation coordinator position. They have a total of seventy volunteers and in 2022 they did 151 mediations which is equivalent to serving a minimum of 189 Hays County residents with 87 referrals coming from Justice of the Peace Courts. They charge \$150 for case mediations involving divorces, child custody, and child support. On the private market this would cost over \$600. They are not charging for Justice of the Peace cases. She pointed out that their grant request shows that have reserves but they are planning to purchase an office space in New Braunfels and also keep their current office in San Marcos.

Zamora asked for an updated status regarding the pending grant applications from other counties or foundations. Joyce responded that the McKenna Foundation has not committed to any amount, and they are planning to use their reserves to make a 20% down payment for the office in New Braunfels. They plan on applying for a grant offered by Caldwell County as well. Quinn asked how the program has expanded. Joyce stated they will now have two locations and will continue to expand their marketing. Quinn asked about the volunteer's background. Joyce responded some of the volunteers are attorneys, but some are not and they must receive training in order to be able to provide mediations which can last up to eight hours.

2. Agency: Communities In Schools of Central Texas; Program: Mental Health and Wellness Counseling Program in San Marcos Consolidated Independent School District

Sharon Vigil introduced herself as the CEO of Communities In Schools of Central Texas. Their mission centers around nurturing the enormous potential inside every young person. She stated that they are the nation's largest and most effective dropout prevention organization and for over 40 years have helped students graduate. They strive to support educational equity through staff, programs, and partnerships. They provide services ranging from mental health, social support, mentorship, basic needs, and on campus advocacy. Last year they served 938 students and provided direct financial support in the amount of approximately \$37,000. They take pride in investing right back into the communities they serve. Today, they are asking for \$35,000 to support more intensive, campus based mental health services in San Marcos. Based on their current investment, for every dollar they receive from the city, they will leverage on average \$36.51. Dorothy Garza introduced herself as the senior director of mental health services with Communities In Schools of Central Texas. She stated that the mental health and wellness counselor serves a total of 40 students during the academic year at three San Marcos CISD campuses. The mental health and wellness counselor will provide intensive short-term counseling to students struggling to succeed in both the classroom and Consolidated Independent School integrated support services. The goals for this individualized support and counseling are to provide crisis stabilization, assist in the student's reintegration into campus-based services, and collaborate with community mental health partners to secure ongoing mental health support for students. The funding provided will ensure that students in the most need are provided access to mental health care from an agency working in partnership with students, campuses, and the community.

Duplechin asked about the partnerships they offer that connect the students and families with other community programs. Erica Gallardo, a Communities in Schools staff member,

mentioned some partnerships include Austin Center for Grief and Loss, Austin Diaper Bank, Austin Area Food Bank and Girls Empowerment Network. Zamora asked what schools will be assisted with the funding. Vigil responded they will serve Mendez, Goodnight and Miller Middle School. Quinn asked where their referrals come from. Vigil stated they get referrals from teachers, principals, counselors, community members, and parents. Rachel Montgomery asked what kind of direct financial support they provide to families. Vigil stated they help pay bills, such as rent or mortgage, glasses, and even cap and gowns needed for graduation. They also provide HEB gift cards to help pay for food.

3. Agency: Hill Country Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Centers; Program: San Marcos Community Support

Agency representative Melissa Ramirez started by saying they are the local mental health authority for Hays County, covering 19 counties. Currently they have served 1,364 adults and 240 children with mental health issues in Hays County. Over the last five years they have been able to serve 459 individuals in mental health court, 1,950 individuals with care support, and 2,038 individuals in the family partner program. She stated that in the state of Texas, access to mental health has ranked 51 in America. The funding will help with three different categories which are mental health court, peer support, and family partners. The first one is mental health court which will help reduce the recidivism rate and build support with individuals who are struggling with mental illness who are justice involved. This is not only where the local mental health authority team will come alongside to help this individual, but it will also include the probation, parole officer, the judge, and the police force to help individuals stay out of jail. Peer support provides one-on-one interaction with someone who has experience with mental health struggles and can understand and show empathy. The third one, family partners, support the child and the primary caregiver to help them navigate and understand the mental health diagnosis that they have and help monitor their symptoms. More funding means providing more readily accessible mental health services.

Earls asked what happens after an individual receives services from the agency. Amy Lowry, Clinic Director, responded that the peer support team comes into play and individuals can continue to attend group sessions. Quinn asked about the eligibility guidelines. Lowry responded after intake is completed, they meet with a LPAJ for a complete assessment to determine what services they qualify for. Quinn asked where they are located. Lowry responded that their address is 1200 North Bishop Street. Quinn asked if funding will be used for salaries. Lowry responded funding will pay for the care coordinator, care support specialist, and family partner position.

4. Agency: First Baptist Church National Baptist Convention; Program: Outreach Ministry

Shannon Carr started by saying the church has for 156 years provided community service. They are focused on reaching out to the community by growing their food pantry and Helps Ministry which helps out on various levels ranging from rental assistance to counseling. They have partnered with several different organizations and community partners. The food pantry was open twice a month but with funding from supporting partnerships they are now open six times a month. The Helps Ministry provided \$4,000 in assistance and the toy giveaway supported 176 kids in 2021. In 2022 they increased support to \$16,000 to include blanket giveaway (100), toy giveaway (500), school supply giveaway (150) and car seat give away (75). Currently they have assisted 47 individuals and families with counseling for mental health and substance abuse. They want to increase community partnerships and focus on offering more direct support services.

Earls asked what population First Baptist National Baptist Convention serves. Carr stated they serve more African American people who live around the Martin Luther King area. They focus on anyone in need who is low income or indigent. Quinn asked why they are requesting less funding than they did last year. Carr responded that due to new partnerships they are requesting less. Partnerships with Hays County Food Bank, Capital Area Food Bank and Chamber of Commerce have really made a difference. Quinn asked how many volunteers they currently have. Carr stated they have about 15 to 20 volunteers.

5. Agency: Youth Services Bureau; Program: Teen Network/Active Community Teens

Julie Hollar stated the Youth Services Bureau has been around since 1975 and is one of the oldest organizations in town. They are a free program for youth ages 11 to 17. They are an after school and summer program. Their mission is to empower youth in the San Marcos and Hays County communities to become contributing members of society as they grow into adulthood. They provide educational tools to youth to meet individual needs. They partner with other agencies such as Cenikor to provide education and provide tools on how to say no to drugs, or how to recognize an unhealthy relationship. They encourage volunteer work and giving back to the community. The afterschool program is important because it gives the kids a safe place to come.

Zamora asked what the length of participation for youth is and how many are enrolled in the program. Hollar responded they have five enrolled. Quinn asked what they would like to do to expand the program. Hollar stated they would like to serve more kids and offer their services off campus. They would like to have more money for advertising. Quinn asked what schools they serve. Hollar stated they serve anyone who ranges in age from 11 to 17.

VI. Action Item

- 1. Discuss and take action on Resolution 2022-05R to elect the Vice-Chair for the Human Services Advisory Board.**

Quinn started by asking the board to nominate anyone for the position of vice chair. Griffith reminded board members that they need someone to be present at the library which is a requirement of the Texas Open Meetings Act. They need someone to alternate with JoAnn Parsons, who is the chair. Earls nominated Monica Gonzales for vice chair. Monica Gonzales was voted in as vice chair on a unanimous roll call vote.

VII. Discussion Items

- 1. Hold discussion among board members on programs, agencies, and applications for the purpose of clarification, comparison, evaluation, and assessment.**

This discussion was facilitated by Carol Griffith. She reminded board members that scoring is due on October the 14th. She asked the board members to turn in the excel spreadsheet that has the tally of their scores. She asked board members if anything was memorable from the presentations. Earls stated all the agencies are needed in the community. Earls hopes every agency receives some funding. Gonzales loved the idea that Communities in Schools is offering support at the pre-k level and the broad range of ages that they serve. She was pleased to hear that First Baptist NBC is focusing on three specific areas and are growing and expanding their services. Montgomery wishes the board had more money to fund all the agencies. She thinks it will be hard to decide who gets funding. Griffith mentioned to the board that they will not meet

on October 20th but will meet on October 27th to have a discussion regarding scoring. Griffith pointed out that it will be hard to see how the strategic initiatives will fit with the social service agencies. She stated that City Council asked specifically that board members look at strategic initiatives and give more points if agencies fit those initiatives. Griffith stated it will be challenging to interpret.

VIII. Reports: No reports were provided.

IX. Future Agenda Items: Quinn requested that the board hold a discussion on the length of time provided to each agency for their presentation.

X. Question and Answer Session with Press and Public. Joe Castillo asked if the board members would consider having the individual board members visit the agencies like they used to. Griffith stated they decided it was not appropriate and wanted agencies to present to the board members at the same time. She said it was more efficient to have the agencies come to the board and present instead of having the board members go interview them and make secondhand comments. Griffith stated it was purposely removed as an option when it was changed from the finance department to the CDBG department.

XI. Adjournment: Earls moved to adjourn the meeting. Gonzales seconded. Motion carried.

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 8:36 pm.

The minutes for the October 6, 2022, meeting of City of San Marcos, TX; Human Services Advisory Board are respectfully submitted October 27, 2022 by:

Carol Griffith, Staff Liaison

Approved By:

JoAnn Parsons, Chair