



Social Services and Public Safety Committee

October 10, 2023

Summary and Motions

Chair Reynolds called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. Committee Members Ellinger, J. Brown, Fogle, Monarrez, Gray, F. Brown, Baxter, Sevigny, and Plomin were in attendance. Council Members Lynch and Vice Mayor Wu were also present as non-voting members.

I. Approval of August 22, 2023 Committee Summary

Motion by Ellinger to Approve the August 22, 2023 Committee Summary. Seconded by Baxter. Motion passed without dissent.

II. Community Risk Assessment

Chief Jason Wells, with Lexington Fire Department, presented the *Community Risk Assessment Standards of Cover* (CRA-SOC) for consideration of accreditation status. As part of the accreditation process, the Division of Fire and Emergency Services had to create its first ever *Community Risk Assessment Standards of Cover*. He defined Community Risk Assessment as the identification of potential and likely risks within a particular community, and the process of prioritizing those risks. He reviewed 3 initiatives supported by CRA-SOC. He provided an overview of the contents included in the CRA-SOC which outlines community description, description of services provided, community risk assessment, and summary of department performance. CRA-SOC provides an in-depth examination of risks associated with Fayette County as well as by geographic planning zone. All incident response types were given a risk score of probability, community consequence, and divisional resource impact. Baseline response times are in the 90th percentile for all incidents which are grouped by population density and risk score. Division of Fire and Emergency Services has set a goal of reducing all response times by 90 seconds. Speaking about response times, Wells said the standard response time is 4 minutes and he noted that current response times are based on rural or urban areas. When asked if the CRA-SOC will help the community to address gaps, Wells explained part of this is peer-related and part is a strategic plan. He noted they need to identify areas where focus is needed. No action was taken on this item.

III. Annual Juvenile Treatment Court Update

Melissa Moore Murphy provided an overview of Juvenile Treatment Court (JTC), and she explained the mission statement which comes from state statute with a focus on mental health for children. Thurston spoke about mechanics of the JTC operation. She reviewed agreements in place with the Administrative Office of the Courts, Fayette County Public Schools, and LFUCG. She provided an overview of how the process works. JTC accepts referrals from court designated workers, family court, and juvenile court. JTC implements a 4 phased approach. Each of these phases monitors the individual participant plan (IPP), no new charges, random drug screening, mental health services, and family & educational supports. Figgs spoke about where we are now with the program since the first court date on March 11, 2022. She reviewed a list of mental health partners and other community partners. She spoke about *You Matter KY* members and funding needs.

Figgs explained a typical day for youth once they enter the program. She said there would be an Individual Participant Plan (IPP), random drug screenings, participation in mental health services, attending court dates, and following the rules. Speaking about the start of this program and funding, Murphy said they get funding through donations and funding from LFUCG and FCPS. She noted that there are other expenses they still need additional funding for. Figgs spoke about the selection of participants in the program. She said the board works with the court and has a screener to screen potential youth for entry into the program. When asked if JTC works with the Department of Social Services (DSS) and Division of Youth Services (DYS), Figgs said they work with all youth. There was some discussion about budgeting for ankle monitors. DYS has been unable to assist with costs associated with ankle monitors due to lack of funding. No action was taken on this item.

IV. Source of Income Discrimination

Charlie Lanter, Commissioner of Housing Advocacy and Community Development presented the Source of Income (SOI) Discrimination item. SOI Discrimination is the refusal to rent to someone based on their form of income and it has been an ongoing issue, particularly in the housing world. Sources of income include social security, section 8 housing vouchers, other program vouchers, child support, and alimony. He explained the data received from the Lexington Housing Authority (LHA) and he spoke about the impact from the voucher program. The most significant impact is on vulnerable populations, such as those exiting homelessness. Continuum of Care data shows the average length of time between program enrollment and housing move-in exceeds 100 days. There are very few listings in Lexington that accept vouchers. Based on a search conducted September 15: out of 557 rentals listings, 534 did not accept vouchers or "Section 8" and those are just ones that publish they don't accept "Section 8". Some of the solutions recommended include state and local governments to adopt legislation prohibiting housing discrimination based on SOI. He spoke about how SOI Discrimination impacts tenants and he said landlords are impacted for a variety of reasons as well. What this means is that landlords can't advertise "No Section 8" and the value of the voucher must be included in the calculation of household income for the purpose of eligibility. The proposal from the Law Department is to add language to the Fairness Ordinance which extends a ban on SOI. This does not prevent landlords from using credit history, eviction history, criminal history, or any other "commercially reasonable and nondiscriminatory" practice in making a rental decision. This ban does not require landlords to make repairs or alterations to units if their unit does not pass inspection for acceptance into the Section 8 or any assistance program. And this does not change or restrict any landlord rights to enforce compliance with a written lease agreement once executed. Accepting vouchers does not force landlords to hold units vacant for unreasonable amounts of time. He reviewed the more restrictive ordinance Louisville passed in November 2020 and noted there was no measurable impact on rents in Louisville. He spoke about the enforcement and education pieces of this legislation. Lanter clarified that property owners would only need an initial inspection for what the voucher requires, and this is done through the application process. Not every landlord needs an inspection, only when they are accepting vouchers. Speaking about enforcement, Lanter said the idea is to open the housing market to those with vouchers and the Human Rights Commission (HRC) would respond to any complaints. Speaking about using vouchers, Austin Simms with LHA said they are provided a timeframe by which to use the voucher and once that timeframe lapses, the voucher is given to someone else to use. When asked about the 215 vouchers that were issued with 18% returned unused, Simms said that information is correct. He said it could be that the renter can't find exactly what they are looking for. When asked about voucher holders being too selective with housing, Simms explained that sometimes the unit and location they are looking for is sometimes not available, so they are unable to use the voucher. When asked if vouchers keep up with rent increases, Simms said the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) makes that

determination and they publish fair market rents. Speaking about landlords who are not accepting vouchers, Lanter said the bigger complexes are probably 90% of those who do not accept and there is no remedy for this. No one is being forced to take a voucher, but you cannot SAY you don't accept them. Speaking about the formula, Lanter said the family pays about 30% of their income and HUD pays the other portion. Landlords can set rent at any amount; it just must be reasonable. What they find is that most can't rent using a voucher because the landlord's rent is outside the percentage of income. Addressing whether vouchers would interfere with lease renewals, Lanter said LHA must approve rents. Addressing what it would take for a recipient to get kicked out of the voucher program, Simms said when a voucher has been provided and the tenant violates the terms of lease, they can be evicted. After 2 years have passed, they can be reconsidered. Speaking about the date selected (9/15) for the search conducted and if there were other limitations, Lanter confirmed he didn't find any landlords that state they DO accept vouchers. Chair Reynolds spoke about a Special Committee meeting on this topic to be held on November 14, 2023 at 6pm for the purpose of hearing public comment. No action was taken on this item.

V. Items Referred to Committee

No action was taken on this item.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 p.m.