



General Government & Social Services Committee

February 12, 2020
Summary and Motions

Committee chair, Susan Lamb, called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. Committee members Steve Kay, Richard Moloney, Chuck Ellinger, James Brown, Bill Farmer, Angela Evans, Fred Brown, Jennifer Reynolds, and Kathy Plomin were present. Council Member Amanda Bledsoe was in attendance as a non-voting member.

I. Approval of October 15, 2019 Committee Summary

A motion was made by CM Farmer to approve the January 14, 2020, General Government & Social Services Committee summary; seconded by CM Ellinger. The motion passed without dissent.

II. NAMI, Fayette Mental Health Court (annual update)

John Tackett, Fayette District Judge, provided a story about a woman who suffers from mental illness and her continued arrests for violation of domestic violence order, unaffordable financial bonds, and a referral to Eastern State Hospital. After serving three months in custody the prosecutor dismisses her case, she is released untreated for her mental illness while also losing her housing; within one week she is arrested again, starting the process over again. He said the purpose of the Fayette Mental Health Court is to interrupt this cycle of criminal activity, homelessness, and drug or alcohol abuse, describing it as criminal justice reform. Tackett talked about law enforcement, judges, and other professionals who are demanding an alternative for those who suffer from mental illness. He explained the key to success for FMHC is its operation under specialized advocates versus state employees, stating many of their participants are undiagnosed or misdiagnosed and nearly all are untreated. He also reported some of the participants are victims of sex trafficking.

Sergeant Brian Martin, Lexington Police Department, spoke about his participation in the Crisis Intervention Team. He talked about the effort by law enforcement to decriminalize and look for mental illness, explaining how FMHC provides an alternative to jail that law enforcement needs. He said the courts provide accountability and eluded to the number of resources untreated individuals require through recidivism. Kelly Gunning, NAMI, first said “thanks, help, wow” and talked about their budget as a moral document that speaks to the community’s priorities. She said 80 percent of people they see in their court have Severe Mental Illness and co-occurring Substance Use Disorder, a population that is overlooked in the opioid crisis because they aren’t allowed to take their psychotropic medicines in substance abuse programs, and therefore quickly spiral downward. She talked about Participation Station, a recovery-oriented program, that habitates people, giving them the skills to complete and compete in the world. Overall she talked about their outcomes being far better than the national average and a partnership with the University of Kentucky to help with their data analysis. K. Gunning highlighted the accomplishment of a graduate of FMHC whose book was recently published and is now being sold on Amazon. (A motion was made to allow an additional five minutes for the presentation. The motion passed without dissent.)

Phill Gunning, NAMI, reviewed a total of \$370,000 invested in FMHC over the last two years and showed how the number of referrals exploded in 2019. He talked about their client’s need for housing, which all participants are provided but also showed a high rate of maintaining that housing for 12 months. P.

Gunning showcased their rate of maintaining sobriety in 2019 at more than 50 percent, compared to the national average of 10 percent, a testament to their team who doesn't have the same restrictions as typical providers. With a majority of their participants having dual-diagnoses, he talked about how they reverse the 80 percent unemployment rate of those who enter the program to 80 percent employed upon graduation. He summarized the return on investment that totals about \$1.7 million over two years (FY19 and FY20), plus additional savings for law enforcement of about \$1.1 million; this takes into consideration people with Serious Mental Illness, who on average require 60 percent more resources while in jail than other individuals.

CM Bledsoe confirmed 25 percent of participants have been victims of human trafficking. Judge Tackett believes this problem is about to explode and the socioeconomic status in which victims fall within. He referenced the Well, a resource they use to help get individuals sober and protect them. Bledsoe said the data is unbelievable and pointed out the increase in referrals to the program.

CM Plomin asked about Participation Station. K. Gunning said it is a physical location that sees 6,000 people a year, that provides education, skills building, socialization, and psychiatric rehabilitation. The program is a peer to peer operated; graduates from both FMCH and the Kentucky certification system as Adult Peer Specialists are among those who help run the program.

CM F. Brown confirmed the overall budget for NAMI Lexington is \$807,000. He spoke about the results and statistics that help show how government dollars can be maxed out. He asked about expansion and P. Gunning explained how more funding would provide more caseworkers and therefore serve more people but their current staff is stretched thin. The two discussed how NAMI does not qualify for funds from the National Institute of Mental Health directly; that money would have to come through the Kentucky Department of Behavioral Health or potentially city government. F. Brown asked about the timeframe for someone to get into the program. Judge Tackett said the typical timeline can take three months, often leaving folks untreated but FMHC drags individuals out of that system and gets them evaluated within two weeks. He pointed out the waiting list and how judges from other parts of Kentucky want to refer cases to the program because of its success.

CM J. Brown spoke about the staff's knowledge of participants and thinking outside of the box as well as the return on investment that benefits the community-at-large. He asked about sustainable funding, maybe through the state, stating this program shouldn't be at risk of losing funding. K. Gunning explained they are looking all the time, how they are working with the commissioner of social services, and provided an example of their involvement with the paramedicine program to show how they continue to think outside the box.

CM Evans confirmed that \$72 per day per individual is the cost associated with the Fayette County Detention Center and the calculations that cite people with Serious Mental Illness require more resources than other inmates is a national statistic. P. Gunning pointed out how FCDC is unique, particularly with New Vista operating within the facility. Evans talked about inmates who remain undiagnosed, the detention center's population problem, not releasing bonds, and allowing people to get resources, noting how it is all connected; she questioned how they can help the judicial perspective while referencing the bond reduction system. Judge Tackett explained how district and circuit court judges are essentially bound to pre-trial assessments, which determines the risk level of appearing in court or reoffending. He explained a judge's perspective to prioritize public safety as an example. He mentioned a state bill filed to expand administrative release and take the discretion out of district court, adding that incarceration is a tool in terms of the FMHC program.

K. Gunning talked about the closing of mental hospitals in the 1960s and posed the question of why Eastern State Hospital is half empty while the jail is full of people with mental illness. She said Kentucky incarcerates people with a serious mental illness at a rate of 3 to 1 over getting them into treatment, explaining that people suffering from addiction or have a biological brain disease have no business in jail. K. Gunning said criminal justice reform is top of mind for legislators in Frankfort while the U.S. maintains the highest incarceration rate in the world and jails are so full they are dangerous. She eluded to the good she could do if she received funds that mirrored the amount jails use.

CM Moloney echoed K. Gunning's comments regarding Eastern State Hospital. He is concerned about the folks after they graduate the program, where they end up, utilizing the hospital better, and monitoring. P. Gunning has had high-level conversations about the challenges to get people into Eastern State Hospital and he has been told it comes down the interpretation of state statute. He said you can be a danger to yourself or others without being suicidal or homicidal so ultimately further interpretation is necessary but until then, it will be dictated by funding. Moloney described the current situation as a tragedy and asked them to draft a resolution that the council could forward to state legislators. K. Gunning talked about growing an aftercare program, Participation Station, for graduates of the FMHC to keep them engaged. She pointed out limited funds their programs operate on, adding that government funding is available, it's just not being spent appropriately. No further comment or action was taken on this item.

III. Summer Youth Job Training Program

J. Brown talked about a shared interest to build off the Summer Youth Job Training Program's success and make the program more sustainable. He listed all 15 members of the workgroup that he established. Ford explained the purpose of the SYJTP and highlighted the history of the program shifting to the Division of Youth Services in 2007 and expanding to serve 300 youth workers in 2013. He reviewed the program model, where youth earn \$10.10 per hour working 20 hours per week in businesses, government agencies, and community organizations for six weeks in the summer. He said the program does both youth development and workforce development, providing an opportunity for some youth to gain their first work experience as well as explore career interests. He explained participating employers do not incur direct wage costs for participating in the program, however, the investment by worksites is an invaluable component of the program. Ford talked about a shift in the administering of the program that engages Partners for Youth.

Hilary Angelucci, Research Analyst, continued the presentation by outlining the workgroups' process. She highlighted some statistics from the 2019 program and the research completed to guide initiatives and recommendations. She reported seven recommendations that the workgroup created, including the importance to recognize the needs of 14-year olds and 17-year olds are different as well as a need to enhance soft skills training. The last recommendation proposed a youth employment advisory commission, which Angelucci said could continue efforts initiated by the workgroup. Ford outlined the revised program model for 2020 with efforts to expand business partnerships as well as a pilot partnership with FCPS and their college and career readiness staff within high schools to identify rising 10th, 11th, and 12th graders to participate in the program. He explained other improvements.

Plomin asked about outreach and program criteria and qualifications. Ford said outreach is improving through social media, help from Commerce Lexington, and a concise website with all the program information; Partners for Youth will be the point of contact for businesses. He said they have delegated

the identification of youth to FCPS, adding there has always been a large applicant pool of youth interested in participating so they are focusing on expanding worksites. Plomin mentioned the idea of utilizing the expansion of public-private partnerships to share wage costs.

Evans talked about the percent of worksites in 2019 that were private businesses and the opportunity for Commerce Lexington to play a role in growing participation among their members. Ford said they are working on awareness to better engage employers, adding that Commerce Lexington is involved in the workgroup. He pointed out that despite no direct wage cost to employers, they are investing manpower, energy, and time. Evans asked if there is a plan to work with Commerce Lexington to advertise more. Ford said they intend to feature the program in the *Business Focus* magazine as well as electronically through social media.

Bledsoe spoke about the hard work of the workgroup and \$364,000 of general fund dollars invested in our youth to employ the future leaders and workforce of our city. She commended Braina Persley for expanding business partnerships to have worksites in every district that the youth can easily and safely get to. She talked about the coordination with Kim Lyon and Betsy Dextor to align this program with FCPS' career pathways initiatives that will complement school and summer work experiences. Bledsoe also emphasized crucial buy-in from the private sector to provide a meaningful work experience that applies to the youth's development.

Moloney mentioned Lexington's low unemployment rate and employment opportunities in preparation for the Breeder's Cup because a lot of work has to get done this summer. He talked about matching funds with the private sector and how this is a great year to get businesses on board with the program. Ford said SYJTP is a 6-week program, therefore there is a need to be as efficient as possible because that is a short window. He talked about the proposed advisory commission to look at youth employment year-round, utilizing FCPS, and youth who are out of school but not fully into the workforce, in addition to those who are in school but working in the evenings. Angelucci added that recommendation six does recognize the need for financial partnerships in the future.

Lamb talked about her interest in tracking participants' employment successes further down the road. J. Brown said he was a summer youth employee in the early years of the program. He commended the existing staff for doing an excellent job managing the program over the last several years. He said the recommendations are ways the city can expand the program. Agreeing with Bledsoe, he said we can do that by aligning with efforts in the business community and FCPS, and potentially leverage state and federal funds like the SummerWorks program in Louisville. He said the best way to keep this conversation going is to create the advisory commission, to look at youth employment across the board. He said he may bring a resolution regarding the recommendations and an ordinance for the commission forward at a later date. No further comment or action was taken on this item.

IV. Historic Preservation

Betty Kerr, Director of Historic Preservation, reviewed the division's organizational chart. She said their office assists 16 local historic districts, consulting with property owners while also working with the Board of Architectural Review and the Planning Commission. She reviewed the data collected regarding certificates of appropriateness applications for the last several years, which are largely approved administratively, or through the BOAR. She talked about the federal national register of historic places, with 10,000 properties in Lexington that are registered. She pointed out how the Historic Preservation Commission reviews nominations to the national register, before it goes to the mayor, the council, and

the state and federal governments for final approval. Historic Preservation also conducts “106 reviews” of all projects receiving federal funds. She reviewed their involvement with stone fences and demolitions, both of which are regulated by ordinance. She talked about LFUCG’s 45 historic properties and the office’s effort to coordinate with other divisions. She highlighted a variety of programs and specials projects their office is involved in, such as Skuller’s clock and work with citizen groups.

J. Brown confirmed the office has one unfunded vacancy, an administrative position. They are in the process of filling the historic preservation specialist position. J. Brown and Kerr discussed the office organizational structure under the COA, which Kerr said works well programmatically. J. Brown recalled his original interest in the office falling under the Department of General Services. He talked about several pictures in the presentation representing the first district and a recent project to rebuild the columns of the Morton House in Duncan Park, which impacted the orientation of the park.

Plomin asked if Kerr knew how many miles of stone fencing remain. Kerr said the city has lost about 80 percent of the dry stack stone fences so the remaining fences are precious. She explained the ordinance only covers fences in the right-of-way. They discussed the Dry Stone Conservancy that trains masons to work on dry stack fences.

Farmer asked if Historic Preservation has an inventory of the stone fences. Kerr explained they are all mapped through GIS and can be looked up by street address. Farmer talked about the work of the Corridors Commission, how they have come across fences that need work, repairs, and or need to be added to, and the jurisdiction of fences. Kerr said issues are largely driven by complaints and also mentioned that theft has been an issue in the past.

Ellinger asked about the demolition process being different for historic properties. Kerr explained how demolition and building permits for properties within a historic district are directed to the office of historic preservation. She added any demolition request in a historic district is required to go to the BOAR. He asked if it helped to be in an H-1 overlay to get on the national registry. Kerr said the two designations complement each other, pointing out the data collected for either status applies to both. No further comment or action was taken on this item.

V. Homeless Camps

This item was not heard because the meeting ran out of time. No further comment or action was taken on this item.

VI. Items Referred to Committee

A motion was made by Farmer to adjourn at 2:59 p.m.; seconded by Plomin. The motion passed without dissent.