

Vernice Hankins

From: oz <zurawska@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 10, 2019 9:14 AM
To: councilmtgitems
Cc: Rick Cole; Setareh Yavari; Margaret Willis; Terry O'Day; Gleam Davis; Ana Maria Jara; Greg Morena; Kevin McKeown Fwd; Ted Winterer; Sue Himmelrich; Bill Parent; Elaine Barringer; Eric Stoff; Winifred Wechsler; Nancy Coleman; Derek Devermont; Brian Stedje-Stroud; Cindy Akin
Subject: OPCC HMST agenda item 3-I at 9/10/19 City Council meeting

Hello,

This is my written public comment regarding agenda item 3-I, particularly in regards to the funding for OPCC HMST.

Question 1: what particular goals/benchmarks does the City have for OPCC providing the outreach?

Is spending the average of \$48,000 per one permanently housed individual a success? This number has been recently reported by The Santa Monica Daily Press, as has this:

“Since the program’s launch in 2016, a team of eight specialists and a part-time program director have worked with 37 people with serious medical, substance abuse, mental health and behavioral challenges, transitioning 25 into interim housing and 19 ultimately into permanent housing.”

Are the above numbers a success that warrants more taxpayer dollars to be disbursed?

Question 2: what accountability mechanism will the City be employing towards OPCC if it is a well known fact that the the City has not in the past monitored the provider’s performance, even though such monitoring is required by the Human Services Grant Agreement the City has with OPCC?

What happened to the idea of fiscal accountability and the fiduciary duty the City has to the taxpayers?

Since when is repeated disbursement of large amounts of taxpayer dollars with no accountability or oversight allowed in modern government? Especially when such disbursement is continued by the City despite ongoing serious complaints by OPCC’s client whistleblowers?

I think especially in light of the recent abysmal LAHSA audit results, it is necessary to remind the Council that [on January 22, 2019](#) City Manager Rick Cole dissuaded the Council from commissioning an audit of OPCC by stating that if LAHSA is not doing anything about OPCC’s well known performance problems then the City shouldn’t either.

Now it turns out LAHSA itself is in serious trouble... because of an audit of its outreach efforts.

Below are a few interesting excerpts from a Los Angeles Times article about the recent LAHSA audit:

“Galperin said the audit, which began last year, took months to complete “partly because getting accurate and consistent numbers from LAHSA has been a challenge.”

The authority, according to the audit, “lacks a rigorous performance review process for its outreach activities. Moreover, data-driven decisions about the deployment of resources are not made because the information is neither timely nor accurate.”

LAHSA provided the controller’s office with four different versions of its outreach numbers, each one significantly different, Galperin said. A chart in the audit showed the percentage of homeless people placed into shelters dropping from 64% in the first version to 19% in the last.

(...)

The audit also faulted a report by the authority that it placed [21,000 people](#) into permanent housing last year. Not only did the number include placements made by other agencies, such as the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, it included duplicates by counting individuals or families that fell in and out of homelessness during the year, the audit said.

The report also faulted LAHSA’s participation in cleanups of homeless encampments by the city’s Bureau of Sanitation for contributing to its failings with outreach. The authority estimated that cleanups accounted for 67% of its outreach time in the city.

(...)

The audit sharply criticized the goals set by the city in its contract with LAHSA.

The goal that 25% of homeless people with a substance abuse disorder would be connected to appropriate treatment “supplies no indication about what the 25% target represents,” it said. “Even if LAHSA had met its 25% target, only 167 ... would have received substance abuse treatment,” it said.

(...)

Galperin said the city and authority should recast goals that are understandable and specify the number of people expected to receive assistance, rather than using a percentage. LAHSA also should adopt a data-driven outreach system modeled after the CompSTAT policing model used by police departments across the country, including the LAPD.”

Source: <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2019-08-27/homeless-audit-lahsa-outreach-performance>

The fact that the City repeatedly ignores feedback from OPCC client whistleblowers shows discriminatory treatment of those citizens. The whistleblowers have been requesting that their voices and input be heard in order to improve the City’s homeless services, to no avail. The whistleblowers have been requesting a citizens’ oversight committee to monitor the questionable homeless services provider’s performance for a couple years now.

It turns out that the City of Los Angeles might be more progressive on this issue than Santa Monica.

Below are some highlights from a Santa Monica Daily Press piece on Councilmember Bonin's recent proposal:

"In an effort to improve City efforts to combat the homelessness crisis, Los Angeles Councilmember Mike Bonin has proposed the creation of a new advisory commission, composed entirely of people who are or have been homeless in Los Angeles.

The commission, modeled after city advisory commissions on disability issues, children's Native American issues, and transgender issues, would provide expert and real-world experience to improve policy-making, program development, and budgeting decisions.

"We set ourselves up for failure if we do not take into account the experience of people who have been homeless," said Bonin. "Programs that sound good on paper or in a City Council meeting may not work given the complexities of being without housing. We need to be listening to the people who can tell us if the programs taxpayers are paying for are working as intended."

I would hope the City Council and staff ponder the above paragraph.

Source: <https://www.smdp.com/bonin-proposes-new-commission-composed-of-people-who-are-or-have-been-homeless/179540>

Regards,

Olga Zurawska

Vernice Hankins

From: zinajosephs@aol.com
Sent: Tuesday, September 10, 2019 11:54 AM
To: councilmtgitems; Gleam Davis; Greg Morena; Sue Himmelrich; Ana Maria Jara; Councilmember Kevin McKeown; Ted Winterer; Terry O'Day; Rick Cole; Katie E. Lichtig; Anuj Gupta
Cc: zinajosephs@aol.com
Subject: City Council 9-10-19 agenda item 3-I – Contracts for Homeless Street-Based Services

City Council 9-10-19 agenda item 3-I – Contracts for Homeless Street-Based Services

Dear Council members,

I recently became aware that a 68-year-old woman, Ophelia Sweeney, the widow of a U.S. Army vet, who had been **living on the street near Samoshel and trying unsuccessfully to get housing through OPCC since 2010**, ended up in the hospital, perhaps due to heat-stroke. OPCC cannot confirm that she's now in the Samoshel Respite Bed section, but they have confirmed that she's still alive.

However, I don't know what's happened to Ophelia's little dogs, who have kept her company all of these years, while OPCC failed to find housing for her. And what will happen to the tickets Ophelia received from the SMPD for sleeping on the sidewalk?

How is it that the OPCC's Homeless Multidisciplinary Street Team couldn't help someone who had been sleeping on the sidewalk near Samoshel for nearly 10 years?

And why would the city give OPCC another \$1.2 million, given this type of performance?

Santa Monica Daily Press:

"Since the program's launch in **2016**, a team of eight specialists and a part-time program director have worked with 37 people with serious medical, substance abuse, mental health and behavioral challenges, transitioning 25 into interim housing and 19 ultimately into permanent housing."

Three years, \$1.6 million of city money spent, 8 specialists, and a part-time program director, to find permanent housing for 19 people?

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“We set ourselves up for failure if we do not take into account the experience of people who have been homeless,” said Bonin. “Programs that sound good on paper or in a City Council meeting may not work given the complexities of being without housing. We need to be listening to the people who can tell us if the programs taxpayers are paying for are working as intended.”

Where is Santa Monica’s Commission, composed of people who are or have been homeless?

Respectfully,

Zina Josephs