

City Council Joint Study Session

DURANGO CITY COUNCIL

AND

LA PLATA COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

07/11/2019

7:30 AM

AGENDA

MAYOR:

Melissa Youssef

MAYOR PRO-TEM

Dean Brookie

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Kim Baxter
Barbara Noseworthy
Chris Bettin

CITY MANAGER:

Ron LeBlanc

1. Discussion Items

1.1. Homelessness 7:30 AM

1.1.1. Strategic Plan Update from Athena Group

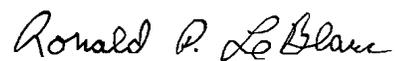
1.1.2. "Summer Camping"

1.2. Durango Fire Protection District Update 8:15 AM

1.3. Koshak Mesa/ La Posta Road Update 9:00 AM

2. Adjournment

NOTE THAT ALL TIMES ARE APPROXIMATIONS



City Manager Ronald P. LeBlanc

MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 2, 2019

TO: PATH members and project staff Chuck Stevens, County Manager, La Plata County and Kevin Hall, Assistant City Manager, City of Durango

CC: Durango City Councilors and La Plata County Commissioners

FROM: Jenn Lopez and Meagan Picard, The Athena Group

RE: Homeless Strategic Plan Update to be Shared with City and County Elected Officials

Background

In response to a request from several elected officials, on July 11 at a joint meeting of the County Commission and City Council, we will be providing the following brief update for the elected officials sponsoring the Durango/La Plata County Homeless Strategic Plan, including thoughts about how the local elected officials can be engaged moving forward. We share this with you as we would like to keep PATH members informed of communications like this to ensure that all of our efforts are transparent and coordinated. Additionally, it is our understanding that project staff will share this memo with City and County elected officials, per their standard communications process, in advance of the July 11 meeting. It is our expectation that we will provide updates like this every four to six weeks, following each milestone of our work with the PATH.

Scope of Work Summary

In some of our early interviews with elected officials, some expressed a desire for us to provide clarity on The Athena Group's final scope of work. The main objective of this contract for services is to create a community engagement process that increases understanding around homelessness and garners additional commitment by numerous stakeholders to address homelessness in La Plata County. At the heart of this work is the intention to break down silos and create a coordinated and strategic approach to addressing homelessness leading to better outcomes for the community - both those experiencing homelessness and those that are housed.

This work will be formalized through the creation of a strategic plan document that outlines actionable strategies within a number of goal areas identified throughout the planning process. The team anticipates that this plan will be available by the end of November for potential adoption by local government and stakeholder partners. Critical to the success of this process is the emphasis on and formal structure for community engagement: the Planning and Action Team on Homelessness (PATH). Invited participants were identified through a set of initial stakeholder interviews. Together, they bring an array of experiences, perspectives and potential resources to consider as we devise a plan, and they serve as connectors to the greater community through their existing networks to ensure that their work

is relevant to the thinking of the broader community. This is not an advisory committee but an action committee that spends significant time over the next six months co-developing the plan. Their work includes sharing knowledge, co-creating a community vision, developing goals, checking assumptions about the issue, defining the problem(s) to be addressed and clearly identifying a set of actions that are broadly supported by the community and implementable through greater coordination across agencies and in partnership with local governments.

The following graphic outlines the basic steps in our work with the PATH, including connections that will be made with the broader community along the way.

Homelessness Strategic Plan Process Map



What Has Been Completed to Date

Over the last two months, The Athena Group has begun or completed the following items:

- 1) **Development of an inventory of existing conditions in the community.** This is in progress. When complete, and to the extent that data exists, it will answer the question of who experiences homelessness, how it has been addressed, who is involved and what programs are currently available in the community.

- 2) **Conducted stakeholder interviews.** Over 20 individuals have been interviewed with their input captured and maintained confidentially in an Excel spreadsheet tracking system. Some key themes from these interviews include the following:
 - There is a sense of urgency around developing short-term solutions now.
 - Please note: While identification of short-term solutions is not a specific scope item within the Athena Group's contract, other initiatives are underway that directly address or assist in addressing short-term initiatives. This includes the faith-based initiatives and the ongoing work of non-profit organizations that continue to serve the homeless community in a variety of ways. The makeup of the PATH Group includes individuals that are participating in these other efforts to enable effective coordination. An accounting of these efforts is included in the Athena planning process and will be factored into recommendations in the strategic plan.
 - There is greater opportunity for collaboration now, greater awareness, increased political will to take action, etc.
 - Significant interest in addressing homelessness on all sides of the issue is present in the community, along with a need to balance the interests of all community members.
 - Beliefs about the causes of homelessness include the rising cost of housing, health issues and lack of access to behavioral health treatment, low wages and people on fixed incomes unable to afford housing, and the presence of travelers in the summer.
 - The needs of people experiencing homelessness varies greatly, and a one size fits all approach does not work.
 - Data collection and reporting is extremely limited currently; many interviewees shared a desire and interest in developing better data tracking methods.

- 3) **Engagement Strategy Designed and Launched:** Meagan completed design of an engagement strategy and launched the first PATH committee meeting with Heather Martinez, who provided graphic facilitation and note-taking services. The first meeting focused heavily on who else needs to be engaged in this process, rules of engagement and expectations for working together on the PATH committee. This is a foundational step that is important to the effectiveness of all future steps.

Next Steps

- The team looks forward to providing an update at the July 11 joint City-County meeting.
- Our next PATH meeting will be on July 18 where the group will review existing conditions in the community and refine project goals that were initially drafted with their input and with consideration of input from individual interviews prior to the first PATH meeting.
- Jenn begins the development of a financial resource inventory for housing and homelessness programs in Colorado as well as a library on best practices for a number of different strategy areas for the plan. This information will be provided to PATH before their August 20th meeting and work session where the process of strategy identification will begin.

How Elected Officials Can Be Engaged

We wanted to share some ideas around how elected officials can be engaged and actively supportive of this work as we move through this process over the next several months:

- 1) As the City and County enters their 2020 budget season, it would be helpful to understand what resources *could* be made available to help support implementation of this plan in early 2020. This includes financial resources as well as staff resources and consultant support for plan implementation. Some things you might consider include:
 - Contracts for services for activities such as street outreach and additional shelter services;
 - Funding to help support a position (FT, PT or contracted) to oversee implementation of the plan;
 - Aligning City or County documents to support the homeless strategic plan, such as ensuring that the City's housing element identifies or links to the homeless strategic plan;
 - Assisting with grant writing or grant sponsorship, since our team has already begun to identify potential grants that can assist with implementation;
 - Identifying government assets, such as land or buildings that can be made available for the strategy;
 - Clarifying what the City and County *cannot* do or provide, so we can clarify this with the PATH as we begin developing strategies later this summer.

2) Please mark your calendars for these upcoming events:

July 29, 9:00-3:00 PM: State Housing Workshop on Affordable Housing. This will be more detailed than the May event and will provide details on current funding opportunities and future opportunities with new housing resources at the state. You can register for the event here: [Durango Housing Forum](#).

September 9, 5:00-8:30 PM: Community Strategy Workshop. At this event, we will invite the broader community to explore and react to a set of draft strategies proposed by PATH members to determine which are most supported, viable and otherwise implementable.

September 16, 8:00-10:00 AM: This is a Funders event to further confirm resources with key state and local funders that could be available for plan implementation.

Additional opportunities for participation in or observation of the process may emerge as we move forward. The consultant team will work with City and County staff to share those opportunities with City Councilors and County Commissioners as they emerge, if at all. Additionally, as mentioned at the beginning of this memo, we will work with project staff to submit written updates to City and County elected officials in accordance with their standard communications processes. This will occur every four to six weeks following each milestone of our work with the PATH, and we will share those updates with the PATH as well.