

# City of Jacksonville

*117 W. Duval Street  
Jacksonville, FL 32202*



## Meeting Minutes

**Monday, November 20, 2023**

**12:00 PM**

**Council Chamber**

### **Special Committee on Homelessness & Affordable Housing**

*Council Member Joe Carlucci, Chair  
Council Member Ken Amaro, Vice Chair  
Council Member Raul Arias  
Council Member Jimmy Peluso  
Council Member Ju'Coby Pittman*

Attendance: CP Salem; CMs J. Carlucci, Arias (12:50 pm arrival), Pittman (12:54 pm departure), Peluso and Amaro

Also: Mary Staffopoulos, OGC; Phillip Peterson, Auditor's Office; Colleen Hampsey, Council Research

Meeting convened: 12:01 pm

Meeting adjourned: 1:18 pm

### **Welcome and Opening Remarks**

**Chair J. Carlucci welcomed the group and called for introductions.**

**CP Salem thanked the members for the work they are about to do. He noted the Mayor's transition funding bill (2023-807) and how portions of it are directed towards the issues of homelessness and affordable housing.**

**CM Boylan reminded the members about the work of the CQLI committee.**

### **Introductions & Opening Comments**

**CM J. Carlucci said that this committee's goal is to create actionable legislation. He said the focus for this meeting is the topic of homelessness, specifically the possibility of establishing a homelessness trust fund.**

### Committee Charge & Process

The members reviewed the committee's charge to:

Identify the various types/categories of homeless persons, the specific needs of those persons, the services necessary to address their particular needs, and the costs per individual (per year) to meet those needs. This would include a survey of what other local government entities and agencies are doing to address the needs of the homeless in their communities.

Identify the current, unmet needs of the Duval County homeless population and any gaps in existing programs, initiatives and services (including affordable housing) targeting homelessness and homelessness prevention.

Identify funding sources, both public and private, to assist in the provision of appropriate services for the Duval County homeless population and make recommendations on how those funding sources would be administered and how they could be leveraged for additional dollars.

CM Pittman asked about residents who use housing vouchers and whether they are becoming homeless due to substandard living conditions in some apartment complexes.

CM Peluso mentioned the creation of a board of directors through legislation to oversee a homelessness trust fund.

Mary Staffopoulos, OGC, explained the special revenue fund for homelessness diversion created through 2023-67-E. She also described the pending bill (2023-804) that appropriates \$200,000 from that special revenue fund for the Homeless Diversion Program, a pilot program implemented by Sulzbacher to provide diversion services to avoid entering the Shelter/Homeless system through a safe housing alternative, short- or longer-term, to include: a negotiated return to their previous housing; short-term, non-shelter accommodation; apartments or homes, (including shared housing) or returns to family.

CP Salem talked about the Urban Rest Stop, an initiative started by former CM Bowman, which will be the point of entry for the Homeless Diversion Program.

Phillip Peterson, Auditor's Office, spoke about the difference between special revenue funds, that can be eliminated through legislation, and trust fund like the PFPF-Jacksonville Police & Fire Pension, that is more permanent. CM Peluso asked about Firewatch, and Ms. Staffopoulos explained that it is an intergovernmental agency.

### Stakeholder Comments

CM Pittman asked about collaborating with nonprofits on funding.

Dawn Gilman, Changing Homelessness, said that during COVID there was federal funding that passed through the City to providers for services.

CM Boylan talked about the chronically homeless population and how they need supportive long-term housing with wraparound services.

Cindy Funkhouser, Sulzbacher, explained the different levels of diversion and prevention, and compared it to medical triage. She talked about homelessness and eviction prevention, with back rent assistance. Diversion programs are targeted towards those who have already lost their stable housing. She said that this population is usually lacking a support system from family or friends. CP Salem mentioned the point in time count, where 1200 homeless unsheltered individuals were identified, 700 of whom said they were newly unhoused. CM Peluso said that point in time counts do not capture all of those who are homeless.

Ms. Funkhouser cited a 2020 report that reviewed homelessness services in the city.

CM Peluso spoke about homeless seniors, and about the Miami Dade Homeless Trust fund which has a dedicated revue stream and a 27 member oversight board which acts as a continuum of care. He suggested partnering with Nassau and Clay Counties. CP Salem recommended focusing primarily on Duval centered programs.

### Working Groups Discussion

There was discussion about the composition and role of a potential homelessness trust fund board, the need for staffing, and the source for funding.

CP Salem recommended a less lengthy process of identifying a target population and service providers, and then matching that program with available funds. He cautioned against the creation of a board with paid staffing that would divert funds from the services needed.

CM Peluso contended that a lengthy process is valid to achieve a better outcome.

CM J. Carlucci said a potential board could be modeled after other City boards like the Tree Commission, which is comprised of Mayoral and Council appointees and is an advisory body to encourage and coordinate the efforts of the various public and private entities that are concerned with the conservation and enhancement of the City's Tree Canopy.

Shannon Nazworth, President and CEO of Ability Housing, talked about the Miami Dade Homeless Trust and how the size and composition of the body makes it not especially nimble. She talked about the Central Florida Commission on Homelessness, a collective impact collaborative from across Orange, Osceola and Seminole Counties committed to ending homelessness through shared expertise. She talked about the cost savings from providing housing to the chronically homeless population, due to decreases in law enforcement and health care costs. Ms. Nazworth talked about housing as the solution to homelessness, and about stable housing barriers like zoning, transportation and deeply affordable units. CM Peluso indicated that he is working on a bill that may impact zoning in the city. He asked Ms. Nazworth what other cities have homeless trusts. She said she will look into it and report back. CP Salem said we should utilize the expertise of our system of providers already doing the work, and he asked Ms. Nazworth to draft a homelessness programming "game plan" to have the greatest impact.

### Closing Remarks

Chair J. Carlucci summarized the topics from this meeting and he requested some board composition examples from the Ordinance Code to use as a guide in discussion at the next meeting. CM Peluso said he would like to get either a presentation from someone from Miami or an explanation on how they prioritize their spending.

With no further business, CM J. Carlucci adjourned the meeting.

The next meeting for this committee is 11/27/23 at 12:00 pm.

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research  
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Posted: 11.21.23 5:00 pm