

Camden County Homeless Trust Fund

February 2, 2023

9 a.m. via Conference Call

Members Present: Wendy Alexander, Anthony Bianco, Jr. , Susan Cantando, Michael Faulk, Jr., Kevin Hickey, Rob Jakubowski, Gino Lewis, Sharrae Mormon, John Saban, Alex Staropoli.

Guests Present: Jim Rhodes and Digna Townsend

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 and it was noted a quorum was attained. Mr. Lewis motioned to approve the minutes of December 1, 2022. Ms. Cantando seconded the motion which was approved.

The balance of the trust fund was reported as \$690,783.59

New Business

Mr. Jakubowski shared information related to the Work Now program. This was a successful program that connected homeless with day work and services run by Volunteers of America. It had closed due to the pandemic, and we were looking to bring it back. A formal proposal was not presented.

Old Business

Mr. Jakubowski reported on the purchase of additional homeless outreach supplies which was approved by the Trustees at the December meeting. These items are already being distributed on the street. We added a new outreach organization which was developed by Next Journey Recovery. This group is very active with the Camden County Addiction Awareness Task Force and has begun outreach.

There was a discussion on the Welcome Home Vouchers. It was noted that the board held an email vote on January 23, 2023 that allowed these vouchers to be made available to people receiving a housing voucher via a State Covid Rapid Rehousing Program. There was then a discussion on the vouchers which has only been used by three individuals to date. After discussion on the program and the state requirement to spend funds within four years, Mr. Lewis made a motion to sunset this program on March 31, 2023 so the funds can be made available for other more pressing issues. Mr. Hickey seconded the motion which was approved by all present.

Mr. Jakubowski also reported that half of the \$50,000 the trustees approved for Sober Living has been spent. The rest of the funds are on track to be spent in the next few months.

Homeless Initiative

Mr. Bianco reported on the progress of several programs that were initiated by Commissioner Director Cappelli in late Fall 2022. This included the introduction of a new, low barrier County identification card that can be accessed by the homeless and people in recovery. He also updated on various issues such as planned discussion with the City of Camden and meetings his office held with the United States Interagency Council of Homelessness. We are trying to leverage federal support to help us be a pilot for best practices to end homelessness.

Mr. Bianco also reported that the State will be issuing a Diversion Grant just for Camden County. The \$312,500 fund will be available for agencies to apply in the coming weeks. The Trust Fund previously approved \$50,000 to support this program. Mr. Jakubowski had shared that information with Michael

Callahan from the NJ Office on Homeless Prevention and he positively responded to the efforts of our Trust Fund.

Mr. Lewis asked about reports that must be submitted to the State for the homeless trust fund. Mr. Bianco responded that we are prepared to complete the reports, but the State has not created a format for which they want the data to be reported.

Mr. Jakubowski reported on a grant to benefit the homeless issued by the US Department of Health and Human Service, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMHSA). He and John Pellicane from the Camden County Office on Mental Health and Addictions Services hosted a meeting of multiple agencies to develop a proposal for Camden County.

We are also awaiting the issuance on a Youth Homeless Demonstration grant in the coming months. We are pushing for the Southern New Jersey Continuum of Care to pursue these funds. Mr. Jakubowski also reported that our Social Services for Homeless sub-award agencies have been experiencing a high volume of calls for homeless prevention.

To close the meeting Mr. Rhodes thanked the trustees for their volunteer time serving on this board. Their time and insights help guide the County towards ending homelessness.

The next meeting will be April 6, 2023.

Mr. Lewis made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Alexander made a second to for the motion, which was approved, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:50.

Minutes are respectfully submitted by Robert Jakubowski, Homeless Services Coordinator.