

HOMELESSNESS & MENTAL HEALTH COMMITTEE MINUTES
LAFAYETTE CONFERENCE ROOM
SEPTEMBER 4, 2025
9:00 AM

Committee Members Present: Brenda McNair, Council Member, Committee Chair
Malik Davis, Council Member (Joined via Teams)

Committee Members Absent: Courtney Banks-McLaughlin, Council Member

Staff Present: Douglas Hewett, City Manager
Chris Cauley, Economic and Community Development Director
Albert Baker, Economic and Community Development Assistant Director
Jeff Morin, Housing Program Manager
Jacqueline Abbott, Community Relations Manager
John Jones, Office of Community Safety Director
Orlando Smith, Community Impact Supervisor
Deanna Braggs, Rapid Response Lead, Office of Community Safety
Zaira Scott, Homeless Code Enforcement Officer, Fayetteville Police Department
Brook Redding, Special Projects Manager
Loren Bymer, Marketing & Communications Director
Paula Handberry, Executive Assistant to the City Council

Others Present: Jimmy Plater, Sr., Redeploying American Veterans (RAV) Founder/President
Jerome McNair, Redeploying American Veterans, Vice President
Cory Lampkins, Redeploying American Veterans, Program Director
Debbie Brown, Fayetteville-Cumberland Continuum of Care Chair
Carlos Sanchez, Day Resource Center Director
Heather Skeens, Assistant Cumberland County Manager
Members of the Public
Members of the Media

1.0 Call to Order

Council Member McNair welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

2.0 Approval of the Agenda

MOTION: Council Member McNair moved to approve the agenda.

SECOND: Council Member Davis

VOTE: UNANIMOUS (2-0)

3.0 Approval of Minutes – April 3, 2025

MOTION: Council Member McNair moved to approve the April 3, 2025 minutes.

SECOND: Council Member Davis

VOTE: UNANIMOUS (2-0)

4.0 ITEMS OF BUSINESS

4.1 Tiny Home Presentation - Redeploying American Veterans (RAV)

Mr. Jimmy Plater, Sr., Redeploying American Veterans (RAV) Founder presented this item with the aid a PowerPoint presentation. Redeploying American Veterans is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to determine a solution to end homelessness. The goal of the organization is to eliminate Veteran homelessness by 2030, then focusing on ending homelessness for all.

Mr. Plater stated RAV has come up with a unique model to solving homelessness for Veterans. What makes it unique is their for-profit and other industry partners. There are Fortune 50 companies backing the organization with resources and donation of tiny homes at no charge to the City. The ask from RAV and its partners is real estate from the City either donated or leased to place the tiny homes on.

Currently there are 2,589 incarcerated Veterans in North Carolina, which is 9.8% of the total population. The goal is to slow down the number of incarcerated Veterans.

The community faces several challenges, including insufficient legal services, limited transportation hours, and gaps in mental and physical healthcare. Current aid is inadequate, and administrative inefficiencies further hinder access to support. Jobs often fail to provide livable wages, falling behind inflation and rising living costs. A skills mismatch and criminal records also limit employment opportunities.

Mr. Plater stated most of the tiny houses will be 16x16 feet, designed with consideration for Veterans who suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), to avoid exacerbating their symptoms. Some of the potential sites for the tiny homes are Fayetteville, Jacksonville, Durham, and Goldsboro.

Mr. Plater outlined a six-step process designed to support Veterans transitioning into stable housing and employment. 1. verifying veteran status and conducting a background check; 2. evaluations of both mental and physical health to ensure appropriate support; 3. Veterans are placed in a tiny cottage with onboarding assistance; 4. focus on financial literacy training and setting up a bank account; 5. skills assessment and job placement help guide Veterans toward meaningful employment; and 6. Focus on food independence and long-term sustainment, ensuring Veterans have the tools to thrive.

Mr. Plater stated there are several benefits for the City. It helps relieve the burden on state and city resources and budgets by reducing reliance on emergency healthcare, law enforcement, etc. The program accelerates the transition of individuals off the streets, contributing to improved safety, public health, and well-being for both residents and visitors. Additionally, it expands the pool of qualified labor and helps lower the unemployment rate.

Council Member Davis asked if any tiny homes have been built in the state, the estimated cost, the City's role, and whether the project meets zoning requirements. Mr. Plater responded none have been built yet, there is no cost to the City, funding will come from Fortune 50 companies, and the request is for donated or leased land.

Mr. Loren Bymer, Marketing and Communications Director, asked is there a plan to help Veterans with their VA disability. Mr. Cory Lampkins, Program Director responded this is covered in step two of the six-step process.

Officer Zaira Scott, Homeless Code Enforcement Officer asked how were the number of potential sites determined. Mr. Plater responded military bases, density of unhoused, and co-location of a technical college. Discussion ensued.

Council Member McNair asked has a site been chosen for the tiny homes. Mr. Plater responded they are considering the vacant property on S. Cool Springs Street.

Council Member Davis requested that Mr. Plater and his team include more detail in their presentation and research the zoning requirements for tiny homes before presenting to City Council.

MOTION: Council Member Davis moved to move this item to the October 6, Work Session.

SECOND: Council Member McNair

VOTE: UNANIMOUS (2-0)

4.2 Day Resource Center Update

Mr. Carlos Sanchez, Day Resource Center Director presented this item with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation.

Mr. Sanchez stated the basic needs usage increased in all areas from the third to fourth quarter except for lunches and bus passes. The bus pass decrease was due to other organizations purchasing the bus passes and the Day Resource Center staff was unable to purchase additional one-day bus passes. There was a significant increase in clothing request due to weather conditions. To better manage the demand with limited staff, clothing distribution has shifted from a daily to a weekly schedule.

The service provider numbers increased in all areas except for medical. Veterans services and behavioral health increased significantly due to adding new providers.

The Day Resource Center has undergone leadership changes, with Mr. Sanchez assuming the role of Director on July 1, 2025. Additional staff have been hired to fill vacancies. A new front desk system, Lobbytrack, has been implemented, and staff are working with subject matter experts to optimize its use. The team is in the process of signing and re-signing of Memorandum of Understandings, with eight providers still outstanding. A new provider email has been created to share updates and event announcements. Upcoming quarterly meetings are scheduled for October 16, January 22, and April 23.

There are three new fourth quarter providers: Shine for Sight Outreach, an ophthalmologist providing free glasses; Recovery, Unity, and Service provides recovery support for Alcohol Anonymous; and Endeavors which provides case management for mental health & wellness.

The goals for 2026 is to create a raised vegetable garden and mobile dental trailer.

Council Member McNair asked what can be done to assist with the clothing issue. Mr. Sanchez responded space is an issue and suggested a container onsite could be helpful. Discussion ensued.

Council Member Davis asked for an update on his previous request to add additional security at the Day Resource Center. Mr. Christopher Cauley, Economic and Community Development Director responded an extra security guard has been added.

Discussion ensued between Mr. Sanchez and Mr. Orlando Smith, Community Impact Supervisor on mental health services providers.

4.3 Homelessness Overview and PIT Count

Ms. Debbie Brown, Fayetteville-Cumberland Continuum of Care (CoC) Chair presented this item with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation.

Ms. Brown stated the CoC conducted its annual HUD-required Point-in-Time (PIT) Count, originally scheduled for January 23, 2025, but rescheduled to January 24 due to inclement weather. The data is still preliminary, as HUD has not yet confirmed the final numbers.

This year's count reflects an increase of three individuals compared to the 2024 total of 380. Outreach teams noted that some individuals were absent from previously known locations, likely due to increased access to warming stations and White Flag shelters. Despite this, field teams still visited those areas, and the data collected was included to maintain accuracy. Some individuals may not have been counted, particularly those who are employed and may have been working overnight or extended shifts during the count.

The PIT Count shows a slight increase in homelessness, it reflects only a single 24-hour snapshot. A broader picture comes from HMIS, which tracks individuals served by our CoC throughout the year. The fiscal year runs from October 1 to September 30.

In 2023–2024, 553 households and 845 individuals were served, while the PIT Count recorded 380 people. This highlights that the PIT Count offers only a limited snapshot and does not reflect the full scope of homelessness in the community. HUD uses both PIT and annual data to evaluate CoC performance and determine funding. It is essential to review all available data to understand strengths and identify areas for improvement.

HUD's required Coordinated Intake System and HMIS data help better evaluate the impact of housing efforts. Using HMIS tools like Stella Performance (Stella P), aided tracked trends showing progress in reducing the length of homelessness and improving housing outcomes. However, there has been a slight increase in returns to homelessness, which will need continued attention.

To better understand how federal grant funding is used in the Fayetteville/Cumberland County CoC, housing placements from January 1, 2022, to December 31, 2024, were analyzed. The review includes various types of housing services implemented throughout the community. HUD has identified several housing types: transitional housing, supportive housing, permanent housing, and shelter space.

An increase in Transitional Housing placements was observed after a previous decline. Permanent Housing and Rapid Rehousing also showed upward trends, along with a rise in shelter stays. In contrast, placements in Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) declined significantly. The White Flag shelter data was not entered into HMIS until 2023. The number of individuals served through White Flag shelters more than doubled from 2023 to 2024.

MOTION: Council Member McNair moved to have Ms. Brown present this information at the October 6, Work Session.

SECOND: Council Member Davis

VOTE: UNANIMOUS (2-0)

5.0 ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items of business the meeting adjourned at 10:01 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

PAULA HANDBERRY
Executive Assistant to the City Council
090425

BRENDA MCNAIR
Committee Chair