



Work Session Meeting Agenda
2 Park Drive South, Great Falls, MT
Gibson Room, Civic Center
August 01, 2023
5:30 PM

The agenda packet material is available on the City's website: <https://greatfallsmt.net/meetings>. The Public may view and listen to the meeting on government access channel City-190, cable channel 190; or online at <https://greatfallsmt.net/livestream>.

Public participation is welcome in the following ways:

- Attend in person.
- Provide public comments in writing by 12:00 PM the day of the meeting: Mail to City Clerk, PO Box 5021, Great Falls, MT 59403, or via email to: commission@greatfallsmt.net. Include the agenda item or agenda item number in the subject line, and include the name of the commenter and either an address or whether the commenter is a city resident. Written communication received by that time will be shared with the City Commission and appropriate City staff for consideration during the agenda item, and, will be so noted in the official record of the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

PUBLIC COMMENT

(Public comment on agenda items or any matter that is within the jurisdiction of the City Commission. Please keep your remarks to a maximum of five (5) minutes. Speak into the microphone, and state your name and either your address or whether you are a city resident for the record.)

WORK SESSION ITEMS

1. Update from Continuum of Care Great Falls Montana

DISCUSSION POTENTIAL UPCOMING WORK SESSION TOPICS

ADJOURNMENT

City Commission Work Sessions are televised on cable channel 190 and streamed live at <https://greatfallsmt.net>. Work Session meetings are re-aired on cable channel 190 the following Thursday morning at 10 a.m. and the following Tuesday evening at 5:30 p.m.

Wi-Fi is available during the meetings for viewing of the online meeting documents.

UPCOMING MEETING SCHEDULE

Work Session - Tuesday August 15, 2023 5:30 p.m.

Commission Meeting - Tuesday August 15, 2023 7:00 p.m.

Continuum of Care Great Falls Montana

“Our goal is to make homelessness rare, brief and nonrecurring in our community”

What is the Continuum of Care?

- A coalition of housing agencies, homeless shelters, and service providers working together to provide resources and housing opportunities to homeless individuals and families.
 - Agencies include: United Way, Opportunities, Inc., GF Rescue Mission, NeighborWorks GF, the Mercy Home of the YWCA GF, Family Promise, St. Vincent de Paul’s Grace Home, GF Public Library, Alluvion Health, Indian Family Health Clinic, Alliance for Youth, Many Rivers Whole Health...
 - Mental and physical health partners, law enforcement, school district, Mayor

What does the Continuum of Care do?

- **Coordinate services**
 - Meet monthly = continuous communication
 - Address gaps and increased needs
 - Coordinated entry – housing first philosophy
- **Case Conferencing**
 - Eviction prevention
 - Emergency shelter through local nonprofits
 - Transition to housing
 - Wraparound services

Results of coordinated effort

- **People helped**
 - 2021: 30 households/61 individuals secured housing.
 - 2022: 53 households/107 individuals secured housing.
 - As of June 30, 2023: 48 households secured housing.
- **More effective coordinated entry**
 - 2022: 107 Assessments total
 - 2023: 147 Coordinated Entry Assessments have been completed.

 - January 2022: 27 households/60 individuals on the by-name list.
 - June 2023: 202 households/335 individuals on the by-name list.

How many are homeless in our community?

- Annual Point In Time Survey:
 - 2023: 217 Great Falls; 2,178 statewide
 - 2019: 223 Great Falls; 1,343 statewide
- By-Name List: 335 in June
- Reported increase in demand for services at community agencies
 - 80 on a Sunday for lunch at the Angel Center
 - Mercy Home, Cameron Center, Family Promise consistently full & turning people away
 - Opportunities Inc. managing more need than available Housing Choice Vouchers

Explaining the increased visibility of unhoused

- Increased housing costs
- Decrease in availability of low-income rentals
- Mental health Crisis
- Increased addiction issues
- Intimate Partner Abuse
- Moving people from hidden camping spots
- Increased awareness nationally and regionally (news stories)

Types of Homelessness

- Temporarily Homeless
- Episodically Homeless
- Chronically Homeless

Temporarily Homeless

- Persons who experience only one spell of homelessness (usually short) and who are not seen again by the homeless assistance system
- 80% of those who experience homelessness
- Often exit within 3 to 4 weeks

Episodically Homeless

- Those who use the system with intermittent frequency but usually for short periods
- 10% of those who experience homelessness

Chronic Homelessness

- **HUD Definition of Chronic Homelessness:** A *chronically homeless* person is an "unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more, or who has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years."
- 10% of those who experience homelessness

*On January 31, 2008, volunteers with the annual Montana Survey of the Homeless identified 184 persons considered chronically homeless by the HUD definition: 169 of them had a diagnosed disability.

Who are our chronically homeless neighbors?

- Most visible of the homeless
- Multiple, interrelated problems with deep roots:
 - History of childhood abuse
 - History of trauma
 - Deep poverty
 - Illness (including mental illness and addiction)
 - Lack of connection to the broader community
 - Lack education
 - Unstable work histories
 - Lack of skills

Challenges of chronically homeless

The chronically homeless share a host of characteristics that make them difficult to serve, particularly within context of traditional service systems.

- Chemical dependence, mental illness, physical and developmental disabilities are common.
- The behaviors that rise from these issues often lead to incarceration or institutionalization, multiple hospitalizations and emergency room use.

Progress in action

- Alluvion PATH Grant
- Rescue Mission ability to expand women's housing
- GFPS expanded support for homeless students
- Alliance of Youth community kitchen, youth resource center
- St. Vincent community kitchen and outreach
- Mobile Response Team
- Opportunities Inc. expanded support for CoC
- Restarting of Family Promise services

Hope on the Horizon

- Baatz Building – 24 units
- Grace Haven: St. Vincent building for female veterans
- YWCA: seeking building for transitional housing for IPV survivors
- Expanded response in rural counties (prevent migration)

What can the City Commission do?

- Be mindful of the issue when setting policy:
 - Housing options including low-income housing
 - Mental Health/Substance Abuse services
 - Public Transportation & Public Safety
 - Crisis/Disaster Management
 - CDBG/HOME funds
 - Access to public restrooms and clean water sources
 - Best practices for police response
 - Support for Treatment Courts, Mental Health Courts
- Play a leadership role in helping other local governments respond to homelessness as close to the problem as possible
- Advocate for support from State CoC (GF is the only big 7 community that doesn't receive direct CoC funding).

What can the community do?

- Become informed, have empathy
 - Reduce violence
- Support local nonprofits, schools, & churches working on issues
 - Donate
 - Volunteer (volunteergreatfalls.org)
- Advocate for change
 - Federal, State, & Local

Questions & Discussion