

Present were James Lafolette, Dean Hackett, Terry Cummings, and Chris Hankel. Member Kristi Atkins and Council representative Maria Duron were excused. Also present were Council representative Rod Hardin and City Recorder Lilly Alarcon-Strong. The meeting was opened in prayer at 4:04pm.

Minutes

Terry moved and Chris seconded to approve the minutes of the October meeting. Motion carried unanimously. There was no meeting in November.

National Faith & Blue Weekend Updates and Action Plan

The Committee asked for an update regarding the National Faith & Blue Weekend.

Terry stated the event was well attended and plan to have a counter next year to better gage how many people were in attendance. The Parks and Recreation Department did a fabulous job helping to plan and coordinate ideas, and Chaplain Aaron Johnson did a great job personalizing it and making it a wonderful and memorable event. There were police participants from the City of Hermiston, City of Umatilla, and Umatilla County. There has been some discussion regarding inviting the Fire Department to participate.

Christmas Express

Terry gave an update regarding Christmas Express and the food and gifts that are given to families in the City of Hermiston that are in need.

The Committee asked that neighbors and friends also remember the elderly during this time as well.

School Adoption

James gave an update regarding items churches are donating to schools and stated that Loma Vista Elementary is still not adopted. James stated he will be reaching out to Bruce or Gail at Solid Rock Church as well.

Stepping Stones Alliance Presentation

Stepping Stones Alliance, Sleep Center Coordinator Cindi Jorgensen, gave information (attached) regarding the program to include:

- The recent ground-breaking ceremony
- Stepping Stones is in partnership with the Cities of Hermiston, Umatilla, Stanfield, Echo, and Umatilla County
- Temporary location in the old Sears Building at 80487 N HWY 395, Hermiston, which opened December 1st and will continue to stay open the entire year
 - The services offered at the old Sears building will move to the permanent Stepping Stones location on Lind Road once construction is complete
 - This location offers 40+ beds and is open from 6pm-8am
 - Dinner if offered from 6:30pm to 9pm each night by volunteers. Volunteers are asked to bring in all prepared food and serving utensils as only a microwave is available at the site to use. Underaged volunteers are able to attend with accompanying adults
 - The shelter is currently serving about 14 people per night, but it's estimated that there are about 800 homeless individuals in this area
- Two volunteers are needed to help check in guests each evening from 6-8pm and help check guests out each morning from 6-8am. If there are not enough volunteers, the shelter will not open. Trainings are provided to each volunteer before their first volunteer opportunity

- Donations of food, clothes, toiletries, and other items are always accepted. A list of needed items are on the website
- Taxi's pick-up individuals at three locations each night for free, from: Wal-Mart, Desert Rose Ministries and the Food Pod. Taxi's drop-off each morning for free from the shelter to Wal-Mart or Harvest Foods in Umatilla
- Dogs are allowed in the shelter as long as they are well behaved and on a leash
- There are three phases of the project:
 - Homeless Shelter, which is open nightly
 - Navigation Center, which will help give resources to those who want to improve their current situation, and
 - Huts, that fit 1-2 people or 1 adult and 2 small children. In order to receive a Hut, the family must be actively involved in the Navigation Center resources
- Tours are given to any group who is interested
- The public is encouraged to check out the website or Facebook page for information, updates, volunteer opportunities, and more <https://stepping-stones-alliance.org/>

Cindi stated Stepping Stones Alliance is intended as a help up not a hand out.

A member of the public stated he and his wife volunteered last night for the first time and were very impressed by the entire process, and stated they will continue to volunteer and encourage others to volunteer as well, and thanked Cindi and the Board for their work to provide these resources.

Next Meeting

Tuesday, February 7th at 4:00pm in the Large Board Room on the 2nd Floor of City Hall.

Adjournment

There was no other business and the meeting was adjourned in prayer at 5:03pm.

Stepping Stones ALLIANCE



Our Mission is to provide individuals with necessary *Stepping Stones* - shelter, basic needs and supports that can lead to stability- for people in West Umatilla and Morrow Counties who are experiencing homelessness.

Our Program has three phases: an overnight sleep center, a navigation center providing access to support systems and individual housing units for those wishing to progress towards permanent housing of their own.

Starting Date: our overnight sleep center will open December 1st. Our other two phases will begin thereafter. Individual housing units are currently being built by volunteers.

More information: be obtained through our website www.steppingstonesalliance.net or by emailing questions to: steppingstonesalliance@gmail.com or calling: 541/561-3680.

****basic shelter*support systems*small housing units*basic shelter*support systems*small housing units****

