
CITY OF BALTIMORE

BRANDON SCOTT – MAYOR



ZEKE COHEN - COUNCIL PRESIDENT



OFFICE OF COUNCIL SERVICES

NANCY MEAD – DIRECTOR

100 N. HOLIDAY STREET

BALTIMORE MD, 21202

HEARING NOTES

Bill: LO25-0018

Title Homeless Services

Committee: Housing & Economic Development

Chaired by: Odette Ramos

Hearing Date: April 29, 2025

Time (Beginning): 4:05 PM

Time (Ending): 5:25 PM

Location: Du Burns Council Chamber / Webex

Total Attendance: Approximately 58

Committee Members in Attendance:

Torrence, Glover, Jones, Blanchard, Ramos

Bill Synopsis in the file?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Attendance sheet in the file?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Agency reports read?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Hearing televised or audio-digitally recorded?.....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Certification of advertising/posting notices in the file?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Evidence of notification to property owners?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Final vote taken at this hearing?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Motioned by:	N/A		
Seconded by:.....	N/A		
Final Vote:.....	N/A		

Major Speakers

(This is not an attendance record.)

Ernestina Simmons – Director, Mayor’s Office of Homeless Services

Dan McCarthy – Episcopal Housing

Kevin Lindamood – Health Care for the Homeless

Jamal Turner – Continuum of Care

Major Issues Discussed

- Vice Chair Ramos Begins Hearing, notes attendance, & bills
- Agency reports
- Director Simmons (MOHS) gave a presentation on the agency
- Questions from the committee:
 - Federal funds – what are the anticipated reductions, and what is the plan to address them
 - No changes projected for this fiscal year. Current awards will take us through 2026
 - The increase in residents who are 1st time accessing the system – is there an affordability & eviction crisis?
 - Yes, this seems to be the reason behind the increase in people looking for services.
 - Data on eviction
 - MOHS does not have intervention dollars (outside of flex funds) and cannot comment on why people access their system
 - What is the correlation between eviction prevention dollars and the increase in the homeless population? # of How many evictions are happening in the City? MOCFS, MOHS, Sheriff * (double check record). How much do we spend on eviction prevention?
 - What impact does increasing rent play on homelessness?
 - Health care for the homeless - Pew study – \$100 increase in rent = a 9% homelessness increase.
 - What is the process for building shelter beds v. permeate supportive housing and how do we move to that?
 - It's difficult to get in there, but that is the goal of MOHS. There are a lot of federal hoops. We want to create more housing, but there is nothing worse than vacant units.
 - When we say providing services, do we mean men, women & children
 - Yes – there are shelter spaces for families
- Presentation on hotel acquisition
 - The footprint of the site is pretty large – almost 1 acre – are you going to use it all?
 - Yes, demolishing sleep in and building new to connect to the Holiday Inn.
 - Having the hotels has been useful for non-congruent housing. How do we replace those beds when the hotels are not available
 - City is actively looking for a replacement.
 - May not be a 1-1 replacement – have made a move to double occupancy rooms
 - What is the timeline for the renovation of the site?
 - Non-profits applying to a state system in May (16) will know by August and will begin construction about 12 months after.
 - Have to coordinate folks currently living there
 - Need to create a process for those who will move in
 - COC
 - Ramos – you are totally federally funded

- COC is working collaboratively with partners and MOHS, working to keep clients in housing
- Jones – services that are being offered to people – what is the cost breakdown versus housing
 - 1-20 or 1-25 ratio model – with many programs, its is 0-20 because programs lack funds to offer services.
 - 1-14 is a dream ratio. People need access to services, ideally several times a week.
 - Would cost 22 million – 15k a year for housing ½ that for the services. But services are harder to fund and stable.
 - Transition to fee based model – Medicare offers only 8500 for services.
- MDDHCD – Homeless services deputy secretary
 - HUD has usually increased housing assistance – this is the 1st time they increased it for continuing services.
 - The state provides 7 million for homeless services in the city
 - Some prevention dollars, but those are ending as part of covid funding
- Baltimore makes up 30% of the state's homeless population – black families are 3x more likely to experience homelessness. The City has 50% of the chronic homelessness population in the state.
- There has been a 41% increase in MD Fair Market rent, which drives homelessness. 10-20% of people experiencing evictions go on to experience homelessness
- The State dept of Housing & Community Development is working on a Tenants Bill of Rights
- It is also creating an Office of Landlord Affairs
- The floor was open to public testimony
- Comments from Chair
 - Need for general funds for homeless services.
 - Encampments

Further Study

Was further study requested?

☒ Yes ☐ No

If yes, describe.

Committee Vote:

James Torrence Chair:

Odette Ramos:

Zach Blanchard:

Antonio Glover:

Jermaine Jones:

Anthony Leva, Committee Staff

Date: April 29, 2025

Cc: Bill File
OCS Chrono File