

Meeting Minutes  
05/02/17  
O'Connor Senior Center

**I. Attendance**

In attendance: Shelley Clemons, Melinda Bryant, Charlie Dietz, Jody Persino, Linda Rust, Brad Hall, April Tomlin, Tim Howell, Darrell Griffin, Margaret Chuinard, Susan Ogle, Marista Lipsey, Lorri Ryan, Veronica Andrews, Teresa Lawson, Vivian Shipe, Andrea Kline, Heather Majka, Lauren Stuart, Susan Long, and Rita Holt.

**II. Forensic Center Overview**

Jody Persino, Quality Assurance Manager with the Knox County Regional Forensic Center, provided a history of the local forensic center which went from being with the county, to being part of the University of Tennessee Medical Center, to rejoining the Knox County government in 2015. It serves 27 East Tennessee counties.

Jody Persino described what kind of deaths the center always responds to including all motor vehicle deaths, anything involving infants or children, homicides, suicides, and falls. The center does not typically respond to expected or natural deaths and hospice cases.

The center does not currently maintain data on decedents who may have been victims of elder abuse. There may be some data on older decedents. The amount of potential neglect cases received is nominal. However, there are gaps in what cases are being reported.

Andrea Kline asked Jody Persino about having the medical examiner's office participate in the bimonthly Vulnerable Adult Protection Investigative Team (VAPIT) meetings. He recommended that chief medical examiner, Dr. Darinka Mileusnic-Polchan, would be the best person to bring that request to. The Forensic Center may participate in the systems change process in 2018.

**III. State of Affordable Housing**

Linda Rust, Community Development Administrator with the City of Knoxville, spoke on the state of affordable housing in Knoxville. Between 2005 and 2015, home prices and rent have risen 9.8% and 15.5% respectively while wages have only gone up 2.3%. Her findings show how rising housing costs have been challenging for most residents, but especially for low income individuals such as seniors.

The rise in housing costs is caused by several factors. One major factor that affects low income individuals is the reduction in affordable housing. "Affordable housing" means not spending more than 30% of income on housing-associated costs such as mortgage/rent, utilities, insurance, and taxes. Subsidies can only do so much due to the crunch of affordable housing options.

Section 8 housing has lost over 1,000 units due to facilities being renovated or converted to fair market price. KCDC housing has long waiting list. Older adults could wait anywhere between 3 months to 5 years for public housing. These shortages make it difficult to house or rehouse low income older adults including those who have been a victim of elder abuse and need to move.

#### **IV. Housing Brainstorming**

Linda Rust's presentation highlighted the need to consider what housing options exist for elder abuse victims in Knoxville-Knox County.

Due to the lack of time, Joseph said he would email out a survey to CCR members to begin collecting ideas on how the group could approach this issue. The four main questions to be asked include:

- What kind of housing could be involved?
- What are the financial resources available?
- What barriers could be faced?
- Who could manage and sustain this project?

#### **V. Next Meeting**

Catholic Charities' Samaritan's Place is one of the nation's few housing programs dedicated to people 60 years and older. They offer emergency, transitional, and long-term supportive housing. Samaritan's Place works very closely with numerous partners including the CAC Office on Aging and Adult Protective Services to house at-risk older adults including those who have been a victim of elder abuse.

The CCR will meet at Samaritan's Place to get a tour and to discuss what housing options we want to support moving forward. Joseph will have spoken to several groups that are leading the way in housing for elder abuse victims around the country. He will bring those findings to the meeting. These findings along with the results of the survey sent to CCR members, and the ideas that come out of the June meeting, will guide the CCR's work on filling housing gaps for victims.

The June CCR meeting will take place on **Tuesday, June 6<sup>th</sup> at 2 p.m. at Samaritan's Place, 3009 Lake Brook Blvd., Knoxville, TN 37909.**