

From: **Chris Coleman** <[ccoleman@dm.bbb.org](mailto:ccoleman@dm.bbb.org)>  
Date: Wed, Jul 3, 2024 at 11:44 AM  
Subject: Re: Checking in re homelessness  
To: Lewis, Amber L. <[ALLewis@dmgov.org](mailto:ALLewis@dmgov.org)>  
Cc: Coleman, Chris J. <[CJColeman@dmgov.org](mailto:CJColeman@dmgov.org)>

Thank you. You touched on items that are top of mind for me.

I am supportive of a 'tough love' strategy that is more assertive in getting unsheltered to access the generous safety net our community has created. We generally all agree that the less time a person is unsheltered, the better their life outcomes improve. So it makes sense that our tough love begins before 10 days. That said, in order to do such, I agree we FIRST need a:

- communication strategy with providers. A well choreographed and scripted meeting by you and Malcomb might very well be the best strategy.
- Before we implement changes to more assertively champion the community's safety net and encouraging and then demanding their use of it, we need to have a plan for dogs and possessions. I think that must be done in advance. Which might be a few weeks or less.

I also am very conscience of the need for a stronger and clearer mission of the HCC. I have been through this every 10-12 years for nearly 25 years, starting with my time assigned to figure it out when my career was as a United Way leader. There has always been a balance of leadership and authority between HCC (elected officials pre-2011) and the Continuum of Care - now called Homeward. We need to find the right pace and right words and right mission for both so it does not feel like a zero sum game. The lane for CoCB / Homeward is big, wide and important....they need to make wise decisions about funding allocations that match the community's goals and then hold the funded agencies accountable for results. When I wrote the 'charter' for CoCB/Homeward, I felt like we did some good things, but they were clearly not sustainable. Or at least sustained. There is plenty of work to do, leadership needed and success to be achieve that the role and important for both HCC and CoCB needs to grow and advance. I am not in favor of HCC taking work from CoCB or limiting or diminishing their work....in order to raise the profile or stature of HCC. But there should be a division of duties; which should be based on the abilities of each group to leverage their membership for good and for results. Our membership and purpose is different intentionally.

Ok, there is MY soap box and I respect and want to hear various perspectives. Including yours.

I do think we have some philosophical differences from what we each thing, individually, about strategies and so forth. But we all need to, eventually, put personal views to the side for the greater good of a shared vision and mission.

I do have some absolutes; and if we collectively agree to them we all need to adjust to them. If we don't all agree, I will adjust and advance the shared plan. I can give you some examples when we connect.

Maybe next week we can grab coffee. I appreciate your outreach.

**Chris Coleman**

*President*

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On Wed, Jul 3, 2024 at 11:27 AM Lewis, Amber L. <[ALLewis@dmgov.org](mailto:ALLewis@dmgov.org)> wrote:

| Councilmember Coleman,

I wanted to check in and ask if there's anything I can do to support your efforts regarding homelessness, whether through city council, the HCC, or otherwise.

I know the likely upcoming change in enforcement will be a big deal. Scott suggested giving our nonprofit partners a heads-up in advance so they are not surprised the day-of. We are thinking of organizing a small meeting next week that Malcolm will likely lead. This seemed to work well when the city made the change in enforcement in Parks. We are also working on some ideas for how property storage could work.

I also understand there are ongoing conversations about the best role for the HCC, and how it can coordinate most effectively with Homeward and other entities. Especially with regard to the efforts to get a new community strategic plan in place for homelessness.

We are also working on an update report about the proposed Pallet Shelter village that was discussed this spring. Funding is (and was likely always going to be) the biggest question. We would like to get to a point of clarity about whether this is the best path forward for the community at this time. And if not, then to refocus on the goals we are trying to achieve, whether through Pallet or anything else, and if there are other ways to make progress toward those goals.

It has been interesting to see the news unfolding slowly, both nationally and locally, about the Grants Pass Supreme Court decision. It has been quite a week of other news and headlines, likely dampening the immediate reaction to the homelessness ruling.

Best,

Amber

[Amber Lewis](#) | CITY OF DES MOINES

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