

**STATE OF ILLINOIS**

*Diane Wolfe Marlin, Chair*

**CUNNINGHAM TOWNSHIP**

*Phyllis D. Clark, Town Clerk*

**CUNNINGHAM TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING**

**Monday, July 12, 2021**

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The Cunningham Township Board met in regular session at 6:30 p.m. Monday, July 12, 2021 in the Council Chambers at the Urbana City Building, 400 S. Vine Street, Urbana, Illinois.

**ELECTED OFFICIALS PHYSICALLY PRESENT:**

Chair: Diane Wolfe Marlin  
Trustees: Christopher Evans  
Shirese Hursey  
Jaya Kolisetty  
Chaundra Bishop  
Grace Wilken  
James Quisenberry  
Deputy Town Clerk: Darcy Sandefur  
Supervisor: Danielle Chynoweth

**ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE:** None

**ELECTED OFFICIALS ABSENT:** Trustee Maryalice Wu; Phyllis D. Clark, Town Clerk

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Fred Grosser; Members of the Media

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**A. ROLL CALL**

There being a quorum, Chair Marlin called the meeting of the Cunningham Township Board to order at 6:30 p.m.

**B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Minutes unavailable at this time.

**C. COMMITTEE TO VERIFY BILLS**

- 1. Town Fund in the amount of \$31,227.38
- 2. General Assistance Fund in the amount of \$58,802.85
- 3. TOTAL Expenditures: \$90,030.23

*[In second property tax disbursement the amount of \$543,990.26 was received.]*

**D. REPORTS OF OFFICERS**

Ms. Chynoweth, the Supervisor of the Township reported on the monthly support of Urbana residents who are not working and are in need of assistance. She reported on the number of current participants, those that are homeless, the number of male, female, transgender or non-conforming.

Ms. Chynoweth updated the Board on the rental assistant program, the

utility bill support for residents. She stated that LIHEAP closed in June and the Township has an increase in utility assistance calls.

Ms. Chynoweth also updated the Board on the emergency housing status and on the 208 E. California for emergency shelter. The Bridge to Home is a rehousing program that provides housing stabilization and that they served 3 households with rapid rehousing services.

**E. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

1. **Angie W.** - Addressed the Township Board with concerns about the leasing for 206 & 208 E. California. She stated that the first notice that was given to the tenants that Cunningham Township was the new owners of the property was on May 7<sup>th</sup> and that the residents were given until August 15 to vacate the premises and take advantage of the \$2,000.00 incentive to move. On June 7 they received a letter stating that the Township would not be extending any leases. On June 30 they received an email advising them that they will need to sign month to month leases by July 15<sup>th</sup> and that this has been offered and approved by the Board. She was asking for clarity since the communications appear to be disjointed.
2. **Martel Miller** - Mr. Miller extended an invite to the Board to come to the Township Office and see what actually goes on there on a daily basis, as well as to see how the Township works and address the needs of the homeless and the underserved. Urbana does not have a shelter to accommodate the homeless. It is unfortunate that the City restricts hotels from allowing those in need to stay for more than 28 consecutive days.

**F. REPORTS OF OFFICERS**

Chair Marlin added comments on the situation at the Roadway Inn. Urbana has an ordinance that restricts regular hotel rooms to use no more than 28 days for long term stay. The reason for that is regular hotel rooms are not set up for extended stay because there are no accommodation for cooking stoves or refrigerators to sustain extended stays. There are possibly extended stay rooms that can be used. If it is necessary for an extended stay then after the 28 days the hotel will have the residents to change rooms and their 28 day stay will start again. Hotel management is willing to work with township and other local agencies to allow longer stays as needed.

It is not because Urbana has an ordinance in place it is because hotels are now implementing the 28 day clause in their decision. Chair Marlin stated that she has also looked into the balance of the Emergency Solutions Grant and the current balance is \$300,000.00. Can any of this be used to help in an emergency?

Ms. Chynoweth stated that in order to use any of those funds, we have to have them referred from the centralized intake for the homeless, then there is a process of inspecting the property and getting it ready for moving in. This process is so extensive it can take up to a month or a month and a half.

We refer people to agencies to evaluate their circumstance and approve they're eligible for participation in the program and after that the RPC

refers them back to us to finish the process. We could benefit more if we could get an extension on relocating homeless people who have qualified for the program. Discussion ensued.

CM Evans asked the question of the 33 homeless, how many are living outside.

Ms. Chynoweth responded that there are two definitions of homelessness, HUD definition means staying in a place that is not safe, on the street, in a park, in a car or abandoned buildings. The McKinney Vento definition would be someone who does not have a fixed place to stay and continues to move from house to house with no permanent address. As for the 33 homeless that we are working with, they do not have a fixed address. Many of them were housed at the CU at Home. We house some in the Township hotel program. We have some that are sleeping outside and now we have a street outreach program. We have direct contact with those who are sleeping outside and one of the first things we do is to try to get them signed up for general assistance which would start the steps of getting into housing.

CM Evens asked of those who are outside does the Township try to stay in touch with them. Ms. Chynoweth respond "most definitely."

CM Hursey inquired as to what was the cause of the CU at Home to close their doors.

Ms. Chynoweth advised that staffing and safety issues was the determining factor for their closing.

In June they downsized their operation and actually agreed to keep those who were already there and on track to get vouchers. If you are homeless and living on the street then you do not qualify for the C19 vouchers. To qualify for the vouchers you have to stay in a shelter.

CM Hursey asked how long the voucher process usually is.

Ms. Chynoweth advised that to be eligible for a voucher you have to have been in a shelter for 14 days in Champaign County.

CM Hursey said that Mr. Miller had mentioned empty houses here in Urbana that we probably assume are owned by someone, can you elaborate on that.

Chair Marlin stated that they are owned by the City of Urbana and two of the properties are the same zoning you have on the California properties. The houses are not zoned for emergency family housing and we are looking at options for those including helping with first time home buyers. Brief discussion ensued.

CM Bishop asked that in order for people to be eligible for the voucher can they stay in the hotel for two weeks or did they have to be in CU At Home?

Ms. Chynoweth said that the hotel program qualifies as shelter.

CM Bishop asked how the street outreach program is working.

Ms. Chynoweth stated that the program is exceptional and is one of the best things that the Township has implemented.

CM Wilken asked about the emergency housing situation and understands that the hotel stays play an integral part for now as well as the properties on California. Are there any dreams about a permanent shelter for people who have no place to go somewhat like CU At Home? Brief discussion ensued.

CM Kolisetty asked for verification of the time line on leases that was mentioned earlier this evening.

Ms. Chynoweth said that it was the first time she was hearing this and encouraged the residents to be sure to make a concerted effort to contact the Township Supervisor and she will work together with them to answer all of their questions on the leasing process.

**G. OLD BUSINESS**

There was none.

**H. NEW BUSINESS**

There was none.

**I. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Cunningham Township Board, Chair Marlin declared the meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

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Phyllis D. Clark  
Town Clerk

\*This meeting was taped.

\*\*This meeting was broadcast on cable television.

\*\*\*Unless noted differently, the elected officials listed herein were present physically at this meeting.

**Minutes Approved:** 10/11/2021