



**MINUTES  
YAKIMA CITY COUNCIL  
STUDY SESSION  
April 11, 2023  
City Hall – Council Chambers  
5:00 p.m. - conducted in person and via Zoom**

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**1. Roll Call**

Present: Mayor Janice Deccio, presiding, Assistant Mayor Soneya Lund and Councilmembers Matt Brown, Patricia Byers, Danny Herrera and Eliana Macias

Staff: City Manager Robert Harrison, City Attorney Sara Watkins, City Clerk Sonya Claar Tee, and City Clerk in training Rosalinda Ibarra

Absent and excused: Councilmember Holly Cousens

Guests: Lee Murdock, Homeless Network of Yakima County; Mike Kay, Grace City Outreach/Camp Hope; Mike Johnson, Union Gospel Mission (attending via Zoom); Rhonda Hauff, CEO, Yakima Neighborhood Health Services; Renee Kollman, Cassidy Leslie, Sophia Sanabria with Triumph Treatment Center; and, Esther Magasis, Director of Yakima County Human Services

**2. Public comment (allow 15 minutes)**

Sister Roberta Rorke, resident, shared her concerns about refuse service moving to the street, increased crime and drug use in the area following fencing off of Naches Ave. parkway, and also commended first responders.

**3. Discussion on homeless issues with nonprofit partners and stakeholders**

Communication and Public Affairs Manager Beehler moderated the discussion, noting the City Council would like an open conversation about homelessness and drug use and the strategies that have been implemented as we strive to address these problems. City Manager Harrison welcomed the nonprofit partners attending the study session and asked the agencies in attendance to provide information regarding the following questions: 1) what are you doing now to help manage homelessness and drug (addiction) issues; 2) what could your agency do to further help improve the present state situation to an affirmative future state; and 3) what obstacles are in your way to make change for the better?

Rhonda Hauff, Yakima Neighborhood Health Services, shared a presentation and described their community outreach efforts and explained the services offered. Renee Kollman, Cassidy Leslie and Sophia Sanabria with Triumph Treatment Center informed Council about Triumph's inpatient and outpatient programs for substance abuse addiction, which includes

mental health services and assisting with stable housing following treatment services. Ms. Kollman noted approximately half of Triumph Treatment clients are not from Yakima.

Mike Kay stated Grace City Outreach/Camp Hope primarily provides shelter services in cooperation with Triumph and Comprehensive Mental Health who are available and/or on-site five days a week to assist the population at Camp Hope with mental health and substance abuse needs.

After a question and answer session with Council members, nonprofit providers reported success looks different for each organization and for each individual step in the process that the homeless population is moving towards in their personal struggles. The agencies described success is measured both by an individual's success and overall progress in the community. The group shared the goal is stable housing for all.

Mike Johnson provided the Union Gospel Mission's five areas to determine success, which include social functioning, education or employment opportunities, substance abuse treatment, community involvement, and stable housing.

Lee Murdock discussed, and Esther Magasis agreed, that systemic plans and cooperation with other providers to ensure unsheltered homelessness is addressed and that appropriate housing not just additional housing is available. Appropriate housing includes housing opportunities for singles, not just families, and permanent supportive housing is more cost effective than transitional housing. Lee Murdock defined success as net zero homelessness and believes the City's Comprehensive Plan, Consolidated Plan and Housing Action Plan contain all of the necessary components to support housing, with the exception of funding.

Most providers stated more appropriate and available housing is the single biggest need in the community to address unsheltered homelessness, with funding the biggest obstacle. They encouraged Council to pass a 1/10 of 1% sales and use tax for housing and related services. Mr. Johnson encouraged a visible reduction in homeless by enforcing no trespassing laws.

4. Adjournment

**MOTION: Lund moved and Byers seconded to adjourn to the next City Council meeting on April 18, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers.** The motion carried by unanimous vote. The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

**CERTIFICATION**

READ AND CERTIFIED ACCURATE BY

\_\_\_\_\_  
COUNCIL MEMBER DATE

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COUNCIL MEMBER DATE

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
CITY CLERK

\_\_\_\_\_  
MAYOR