



DRAFT

MEETING MINUTES

**CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
 HOMELESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (HAC)
 TOWER 101-101 NE 3RD AVENUE
 SUITE 1100 CONFERENCE ROOM
 FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA 33301
 THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2026 – 1:00 P.M.**

<u>Committee Members</u>	Attendance	Present	Absent
Paula Yukna, Chair	P	12	1
Robin Martin, Vice Chair	P	11	2
Ray Dettman	P	12	1
Michael O'Brien	A	11	2
Amy Schimelfenyg	P	12	1
Colby Williams	P	10	3

Staff

Marie Joseph, Homeless Initiatives Coordinator
 Carole Mitchell, Homeless Initiatives Program Manager
 Olivette Carter, Assistant Housing and Community
 Development (HCD) Manager
 Officer Brian Blount, Police Department – Homeless Outreach
 Team (HOT)

Others

Greg Hunt
 Denise Brown, President and CEO – LifeNet4Families
 Mark Adler, Program Manager – LifeNet4Families
 Tony Docal, Hope South Florida (volunteer)

I. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Yukna called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m.

II. Determination of Quorum

Roll was called and it was noted a quorum was present.

III. Public Sign-In

IV. Approval of February 2026 Minutes

Motion made by Mr. Dettman, seconded by Ms. Schimelfenyg, to approve the minutes of the February 2026 meeting. In a voice vote, the motion passed.

V. Agenda Items

a. City Data and Program Updates:

Officer Brian Blount provided a brief update before departing the meeting. He noted that the reporting app (FixIt FTL) is currently under reconstruction, and data will be incomplete or skewed over the next one to two months as information is being tracked through other systems while IT works on improvements.

He reported positive progress working with Fellowship and The Caring Place shelter facility, which is operating at or near full capacity on a consistent basis. The site currently maintains approximately eight female beds, eight male beds, and additional capacity for a family (four beds), with vacancies being filled almost immediately due to ongoing demand.

Officer Blount also highlighted continued collaboration with Broward County's Task Force, despite no formal contract, noting strong communication and support—particularly for assisting elderly clients through specialized programs.

He added that operations are currently more challenging due to increased activity during spring break, especially in beach areas. Overall, the need for additional shelter capacity remains high, as existing facilities are consistently full.

i. FixIt FTL, HB 1365, and Homeless Concern Data

For the month of February, the FixIt FTL system recorded a total of 94 homeless-related requests, with an average closure time of 26 hours, specifically related to House Bill 1365 cases. Requests were categorized between homeless concerns and homeless inquiries, with only one inquiry received in February, compared to two in the previous month. Additionally, there were 18 public sleeping requests under House Bill 1365, which were responded to by homeless outreach staff, including Officer Brian Blount. Districts 2 and 4 continued to generate the highest number of concerns. It was noted that the FixIt FTL system and reporting dashboards are currently under review by the IT department, resulting in limited and potentially incomplete data reporting at this time.

ii. Community Court Data

Regarding Community Court, there were 324 visits recorded in January and 334 visits in February. Despite the lack of full reporting capabilities, operations remain steady, with the majority of individuals accessing Community Court services voluntarily to connect with resources, rather than as a result of citations or enforcement actions.

Additional updates included ongoing efforts by Broward County to develop standards of care for shared housing, which are still in progress and expected to be presented to the appropriate committees before potential adoption. These standards would primarily apply to organizations receiving County funding and focus on ensuring appropriate living conditions and oversight. The City may consider aligning with these standards once finalized. It was also reported that the Rotary Connection bus has been approved to receive four parking passes, improving its ability to operate locally and transport individuals more efficiently.

Lastly, updates were provided on the safe parking program operated by Hope South Florida. Since its inception in December, three families have transitioned into housing within the 90-day target, and two additional families have secured housing through supplemental funding. However, challenges remain, including a lengthy referral process involving multiple agencies, restrictions due to income eligibility requirements, and fixed operational costs such as security. Opportunities for improvement include allowing direct referrals from outreach partners and providing more flexibility in income requirements to better serve individuals in need.

iii. Safe Parking Program Update

Denise Brown and Mark Adler of LifeNet4Families provided an overview of their Safe Parking program, emphasizing that there is a clear and growing need for such services in the community. They noted that challenges seen in other programs are more related to execution rather than a lack of need. LifeNet's approach is more streamlined, utilizing direct referrals from partner agencies and existing clients, allowing for faster intake and service delivery. The program includes an internal vetting process and strict behavioral expectations, with participants required to actively work toward housing stability or risk removal from the program.

The Safe Parking program evolved from LifeNet's existing "parking lot project," which focuses on individuals and families who are newly homeless and often living in their vehicles. The program provides comprehensive support services, including meals, showers, job training, financial education, and individualized case management. LifeNet tailors services to each participant's needs and focuses on long-term stability, rather than short-term placement, with some participants requiring extended time beyond typical program limits.

LifeNet reported strong outcomes, including housing 142 families into permanent housing over the past year and maintaining an average of approximately 27–28 families in their safe parking program at any given time. They also provide ongoing follow-up for up to 12 months to ensure participants remain stable and do not return to homelessness. The presenters emphasized that early intervention—assisting individuals while they are still living in their cars—helps prevent chronic homelessness.

They identified ongoing challenges such as securing funding for move-in costs (first, last, and security deposits), community resistance to homeless services, and fear among some individuals—particularly related to immigration concerns—which may prevent people from seeking assistance. Despite these challenges, LifeNet continues to operate discreetly to avoid community pushback and maintain program stability.

The presenters also discussed their interest in partnering with the City of Fort Lauderdale to expand services, noting that their model differs from other programs due to their experience, infrastructure, and higher service capacity. Committee members expressed interest in receiving formal documentation of LifeNet’s program performance and capacity to better evaluate its effectiveness and potential for future collaboration.

Motion made by Vice Chair Martin, seconded by Mr. Dettman, after review of LifeNet4Families’ current operating Safe Parking shelter this committee requests that staff (City) continue pursuing a contract to expand services to assist families who are experiencing homelessness in the city of Fort Lauderdale. In a voice vote, the motion passed.

b. Homeless Advisory Committee:

i. Open Discussion

The discussion included several updates and open items brought before the committee. Staff reminded members about the annual City Clerk update form sent on March 6, requesting any changes to contact information; members were advised that no action is needed if there are no changes. It was also noted that the advisory committee’s current resolution is set to expire in June (June 20), and members confirmed their desire to continue for another year, with a new resolution to be prepared for extension.

Additional discussion touched on funding and program updates. The Rotary bus program was mentioned as having applied for CDBG public service funding, with applications scheduled for review in April. A representative also shared progress from Bold Justice, highlighting a recent Broward County Commission vote to allocate a portion of tax increment financing (TIF) funds toward affordable housing, following sustained advocacy efforts.

Committee members raised ongoing priorities, including revisiting the Central Homeless Assistance Center's capacity cap (currently 200 vs. a 300 capacity) and requesting continued updates on disaster-related CDBG funding and related projects. Public input included concerns about the lack of accessible mail services for individuals experiencing homelessness since a prior program ended, with suggestions to explore alternatives such as expanding existing services or using general delivery at post offices.

Finally, there was discussion about a recent federal action related to veterans at risk of homelessness, though limited information was available. It was noted that veterans typically represent about 5% of the homeless population locally, and further coordination with the Continuum of Care was suggested to better understand potential impacts.

VI. Public Input

None.

VII. Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the Committee at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 2:11 p.m.

THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD ON APRIL 9, 2026, AT 1:00 P.M.

[Minutes prepared by J. Burnham, Prototype, Inc.]