

COORDINATED HOUSELESS RESPONSE OFFICE (CHRO)

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

11:00 – 12:30 pm on Thursday, August 17th, 2023
Deschutes Services Building, Allen Room (2nd floor), 1300 NW Wall St., Bend, OR

Attendance: Commissioner Adair, Chair, Deschutes County; Councilor Perkins, City of Bend; Councilor Blum, City of Sisters; Councilor Zwicker, City of Redmond; Chris Ogren, Houseless Response Analyst; Nick Lelack, County Administrator – Deschutes County; Keith Witcosky, City Manager – City of Sisters; Amy Fraley, City of Bend; Deputy Karpstein, Sheriff's Office; Eric King, City Manager – City of Bend; Jordan Wheeler, City Manager – City of Sisters; Mickie Derting, City of Bend; Kerry Prosser, City of Sisters; Tammy Baney, Executive Director – COIC; Angie Powers, Deschutes County; Deputy Blilack, Sheriff's Office; Geoff Wullschlager, City Manager – La Pine; Commissioner Debone, Deschutes County; Officer Ditzel, USFS; Stacey Witte, REACH; Eliza Wilson, HLc & J Bar J; Caitlin Rodgers, OHCS; Brook O'Keefe, City of Bend; Kathy Skidmore, Central Oregon Veterans Outreach; Deschutes County HOST Team; Linda Cline, City of Redmond; Kevin Hopper, Community Member; Linda Murrer, Community Member; Natalie (?), Community Member.

1. **Introductions and Agenda Review**

Chair Adair called the meeting to order at 11:00 and asked participants to introduce themselves.

2. **Approval of Minutes**

The group reviewed the minutes from meetings on July 20th and July 27th. Chair Adair noted a missing name on page 3 of the packet. Chris Ogren noted staff would correct the issue.

VOTE: Councilor Blum motioned approval of the July 20th minutes, pending edits. Councilor Zwicker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Mayor Richer was absent.

VOTE: Councilor Zwicker motioned approval of the July 27th minutes. Councilor Blum seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Mayor Richer was absent.

3. **COIC Board Updates**

Tammy Baney explained that the COIC Board has had initial discussions about the proposal of hosting the CHRO back at their August Board Meeting. Tammy explained the concept of the CHRO maintaining autonomy, but being supported by COIC staff. Tammy said that the next step in the process is to negotiate the agreement between Deschutes County and COIC, and that Tammy had been

given instructions from the Board to begin negotiating budget, staffing, bylaws, and more. Commissioner Adair asked when Tammy thought the negotiations would be concluded. Tammy responded that negotiations should be concluded in early October, but that there would be draft documentation for the CHRO Board to review by their next meeting on September 21st. Councilor Perkins requested the draft materials as soon as possible so the Board has adequate time to review. Councilor Zwicker asked Tammy how quickly she could share the draft documents. Tammy noted that the next COIC Board meeting occurs the first week of September, and that meeting will need to happen before a draft can be shared.

4. Bylaws Discussion

Chris Ogren introduced the draft bylaws for Board consideration. Chris noted that staff had incorporated the changes requested in the previous Board meeting, which revolved around more clear delineation between the CHRO Office, the CHRO Board, and the Advisory Committee as well as addressing some vagueness in the attendance section of the bylaws.

In reference to the attendance policy, Councilor Zwicker clarified her preference for the policy to explain that unexcused absences count towards the policy, but excused absences shouldn't. Chris noted that the policy has ambiguity around the results of violating the attendance policy. The Board clarified that a community would not be excluded from the CHRO based on a representative's inability to attend, but that that community would be required to select a new Board representative.

Councilor Blum requested that each iteration of the bylaws have a version number. Councilor Zwicker requested page numbers on the document. Nick Lelack asked if the language on public comment may necessitate a change. The CHRO Board agreed that it was unnecessary to specify that public comment always came at the end of the meeting.

Chris asked the Board if they wanted to vote to approve the bylaws then or if it made sense to wait until the discussion with COIC moves forward. The Board asked Tammy what she recommended. Tammy recommended the Board wait to make the decision until negotiations were complete.

5. Public Agency Roundtable Planning

Mickie Derting introduced a map that she helped create, in partnership with local service providers. Mickie stressed that the data changes regularly, and is not intended to replace the Point-in-Time Count, but is meant to be a tool to help illustrate the problem and highlight priority areas.

Commissioner Adair asked Officer Ditzel about the Fuzztail fire. Officer Ditzel noted that the fire was contained, and no evidence suggested that the fire was caused by someone living unhoused.

Councilor Perkins requested a staff update about the progress of the public lands emergency roundtable planning efforts. Chris Ogren noted that the meeting had been delayed so that staff could continue to identify which organizations have resources that can be utilized to address the emergency. Eric King noted that the governor's office would attend the staff meeting as well.

Councilor Blum asked about which staff would be attending the meeting, and stressed the importance of having everyone at the table for the initial conversations. Councilor Blum requested an update on the conversations others have had with the governor's office. Commissioner Adair explained that the discussions have been really focused on managed camps and Central Oregon's unique needs and challenges. Tammy noted that funding through EO 23-02 may be available to support the effort, as long as the region is on track to meet its other goals. Commissioner Adair asked if the money could be used to support camping or safe parking, Tammy responded that the funding couldn't be used to support unsheltered camping, but could be used to provide services to individuals living in that setting.

6. China Hat Update

Deputies Karpstein and Blilack with the Sheriff's Office spoke to their perception and experiences patrolling the China Hat and Juniper Ridge areas since June. Deputy Karpstein noted the value of the partnership with the US Forest Service. Karpstein noted that he felt like his experience patrolling China Hat is unique to others providing outreach to the camps, because the Sheriff's Office doesn't provide resources or services to help people, but is there primarily for law enforcement and watching for fires. Deputy Karpstein noted that he has distributed nearly 30 fire extinguishers throughout camps in China Hat.

The deputies shared that the conditions in China Hat are a serious cause for concern. The deputies have concerns about the safety of individuals living out there, the fire risk due to unmanaged fires, drug use, and the human waste due to dumping tanks and buckets.

Deputy Karpstein explained that camping at China Hat is increasing. The deputies explained they believe the increase is due to lax enforcement and public awareness about China Hat as a place to reside has increased to the point of having a website devoted to telling people how to get to China Hat and camp there. The officers also explained that they believe that almost every person residing in

China Hat is not from Oregon, and that Measure 110 is bringing people to Oregon.

7. Provider Update – REACH

Stacey Witte explained that she’s been providing outreach to China Hat and Juniper Ridge for the past 8 years, all by herself. Stacey explained her belief that homelessness is a spectrum, there are some people that need and want help and others who don’t.

As Stacey has been doing outreach, she’s been asking people what they would want to see in a managed camp.

Stacey explained how her and her staff have worked with Bend Fire to help people replace their wood heaters in their trailers with gas heaters. She suggested the Sheriff’s Office and Forest Service reach out to her staff to coordinate some of this, if they’re interested. Stacey also noted the importance of Safe Parking.

Stacey noted that managed camps that put hundreds of people in one space and seriously limit participants’ ability to freely come and go will be unsuccessful. There is a subset of the homeless population that will not go into a shelter, we need to think about how we support those individuals. People have been living out there for over 20 years. Continuing to close camps and enforce camping bans makes providers jobs harder as people move every day and are hard to track down.

Stacey recommended that the CHRO Board focus on increasing shelter capacity, both high and low barrier, and increasing Safe Parking capacity so people have a place they can go.

8. Public Comment

Commissioner Debone introduced a report that the Sheriff’s Office had just received from Kevin Dahlgren, who was contracted to create a more up-to-date Point-in-Time Count.

Kevin Hopper – Public Land Stewards – Kevin and his group have been cleaning up China Hat for over 8 years. Kevin thinks this is a mental health crisis. Kevin said that people don’t always enter China Hat with mental illness, but they often leave with them. Kevin is a concealed carry holder. Kevin is glad Kevin Dahlgren is here to work with the Sheriff. Kevin pulled hundreds of thousands of pounds of garbage from China Hat. Kevin thanked Discover Your Forests for fiscal sponsorship. Kevin noted that he has seen positive change in China Hat since the yellow bags have been shared with campers.

Stacey Witte – REACH – Stacey noted that she started a program with BottleDrop a few years ago that piloted a program to pay people to collect garbage in specific areas around town in exchange for gift cards. Stacey noted the project as a success.

Linda Murrer – Community member – Linda thanked everyone for their work on this issue. Linda said she really likes Kevin Dahlgren and he should be invited to a future CHRO Board meeting.

9. Other Items & Adjourn

Chair Adair adjourned the meeting at 12:37 pm.