

# COORDINATED HOUSELESS RESPONSE OFFICE (CHRO)

## Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

8:30 – 10:00 am on Thursday, September 21st, 2023  
Deschutes Services Building, Allen Room (2nd floor), 1300 NW Wall St., Bend, OR

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*Attendance: Commissioner Adair, Chair, Deschutes County; Councilor Perkins, City of Bend; Councilor Blum, City of Sisters; Councilor Zwicker, City of Redmond; Mayor Richer, City of La Pine; Chris Ogren, Houseless Response Analyst; Nick Lelack, County Administrator – Deschutes County; Michelle Cross, MountainView Community Development; Erik Kropp, Deschutes County; Rick Russell, Executive Director of MountainView Community Development; William Bailey, Deschutes County Sheriff's Office; Mickie Derting, City of Bend; Erik Nelson, Homeless Leadership Coalition; Geoff Wullschlager, City of La Pine; Tammy Baney, Executive Director – COIC; Molly Heiss, NeighborImpact; Gwenn Wysling, Executive Director – Bethlehem Inn; Brook O'Keefe, City of Bend; Linda Murrer, Community Member; DW Lee, Community Member; Chuck Hemingway, Community Member.*

### **1. Introductions and Agenda Review**

Vice-Chair Perkins called the meeting to order at 8:30 and asked participants to introduce themselves.

### **2. Approval of Minutes**

The group reviewed the minutes from the meeting on August 17th. Vice-Chair Perkins asked if there were any requested changes to the minutes. There were none.

**VOTE:** Councilor Zwicker motioned approval of the August 17th minutes. Mayor Richer seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **3. COIC Board Update & IGA Discussion**

Tammy Baney explained that the COIC Board had been given an overview of the proposed Intergovernmental Agreement. Tammy noted that discussions with Deschutes County are ongoing, but a likely outcome could be that COIC is hired as a Contractor to assist the CHRO with completing a workplan, similar to a consultant.

Councilor Zwicker asked for clarification on how the process would work and whether COIC would be a party to the previously established agreement between cities and the county. Tammy explained that COIC is providing a service to the CHRO by helping it accomplish the workplan, so a contracted role may be more appropriate.

Vice-Chair Perkins asked how the new partnership with COIC would impact staffing. Tammy said that COIC is discussing the staffing structure with the administrative team of the CHRO and that staffing will likely be dictated by the final contract, in terms of the annual amount to support staffing. Tammy also noted that the CHRO would likely be supported by blended positions at COIC and would benefit from some of the work that shared staff are doing for other community partners. Tammy said she hopes to bring the final contract before the board for a decision soon, so that COIC can begin the hiring process. Vice-Chair Perkins asked how discussions about the contract impact the draft bylaws that have been discussed in past meetings. Tammy said she was ready to move the bylaws forward. Chris said the bylaws would be ready for the October meeting.

Vice-Chair Perkins noted that the Homeless Leadership Coalition (HLC) was recently awarded the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) grant and asked Chris to share more information about it. Chris explained the nature of the grant and that Central Oregon was one of 16 communities in the United States to be selected for funding this year. Chris noted that the investment was a testament to the great work that Central Oregon had recently undertaken, and recognition of the great work of our local providers.

Tammy noted that the COIC Board has an interest in including the HLC and NeighborImpact as advisory board members on the CHRO Board. Tammy explained that the seats could be non-voting, but that often there are questions about data or policy, and it would be helpful to have them at the table on a regular basis. Councilor Zwicker explained she's a NeighborImpact Board member so she will need to abstain. Mayor Richer expressed support for bringing the partners to the table. Councilor Blum was supportive as well. Geoff Wullschlager agreed. Vice-Chair Perkins supported the idea of having the two join as advisory body members. Councilor Blum asked when the group would get a chance to discuss the sustainability of funding for the Office. Vice-Chair Perkins said the discussion would likely follow once the contract had been finalized. Chris noted that the funding conversation hinges on a few things, but that the terms of the contract – namely the annual amount, need to be finalized before it makes sense to decide who's paying for it. Chris also noted that once the Office is staffed up, that staff would be able to go after additional state and federal funding, to reduce the financial burden on cities and the County. Nick Lelack noted that the County was working with their lobbyist to advocate for more funding to support the Office at the State level.

#### **4. Public Agency Roundtable Planning**

Chris provided updates on progress towards the Public Agency Roundtable. Chris explained that the subcommittee had met earlier in September and recommended a set of Values and Criteria to be considered throughout the site

selection process. Chris reviewed the recommended criteria. Councilor Zwicker asked Chris to further define comprehensive community engagement, and said that her idea of that may be different than others. Chris agreed that that phrase was open to interpretation, but that it was the Board's role to define what comprehensive community engagement looks like. Chris suggested options like hosting open houses for the community to attend, regularly incorporating public feedback, creating project-specific webpages, but that the process will need to be intentional and it will take time. Councilor Perkins noted the importance of a public feedback process, but noted that the outcome of the feedback process can't be that nothing is done. Councilor Blum noted her community's recent experience with public engagement processes and the Sisters Cold Weather Shelter, and how challenging it can be to facilitate processes like that. Councilor Blum stressed that public engagement is the most important and agrees with this approach - maintaining community trust is imperative. Chris suggested the Board could choose to include a check-in period to ensure a project is operating as expected. Commissioner Adair said if there is a check-in period, it should be 90 days, not one year.

Chris reviewed the public engagement criteria with the Board. The Board did not request any changes.

Chris introduced the Technical Committee concept to the Board. Chris explained that the committee would be comprised of technical experts who do this work, and break the list of available properties in 3 categories – ready for development, developable with some improvements, and fatal flaw. The group would also go see each site in the first two categories, and would provide a description of each property and an assessment of the best use of the property.

## **5. Community Updates**

Mayor Richer – La Pine

Homelessness in La Pine is relatively stable. Most folks don't live in town but come into town for services. Chris asked what types of services are offered during the Winter in La Pine. Mayor Richer noted that there are meals and a warming shelter, but that some folks will likely leave the area during the fall and winter. Geoff Wullschlager confirmed the cyclical nature of houselessness in La Pine, given the severe weather in the Winter. Geoff noted that the County's mental health services in La Pine are very sought after.

Councilor Zwicker – Redmond

Oasis Village utility access has begun. Folks have been relocated from the Redmond Protection Zone property and there was not a single issue. Groundbreaking for Oasis Village will be hosted October 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Councilor Blum – Sisters

Much like La Pine, many folks in Sisters experiencing homelessness live in the forest. In Sisters, folks are supported by volunteers who help deliver food and pick up garbage. Councilor Blum noted a slight uptick in homelessness in Sisters, and attributed it to camp closures in other communities, but expected that number to come down as Winter sets in.

Councilor Blum noted that the City of Sisters recently denied an application to set up a Cold Weather Shelter in Sisters, due to application deficiencies. Councilor Blum noted that while the outcome was ultimately a denial, the City of Sisters is committed to continuing the discussion. She said that this wasn't the City saying no to shelter, it was saying no to shelter where it was proposed.

Nick Lelack – Deschutes County

Deschutes County staff are spending a lot of time on updating the IGA with COIC and the State to make sure the transition goes as expected. The County has also spent a lot of time and effort lately on supporting Juniper Ridge. Nick noted that due to the high level of need in La Pine, Deschutes County is offering a pay-premium for folks that are willing to live and work in La Pine. The County is considering policy that would allow the siting of RVs on rural properties to be used as housing.

Councilor Perkins – Bend

City of Bend recently approved a contract to renovate the Lighthouse Navigation Center, which are desperately needed. The contractor will be doing their best to maintain shelter bed space while they work.

**6. CoC Annual Competition Update**

Erik Nelson introduced the Homeless Leadership Coalition and explained the structure and how the Continuum of Care (CoC) is funded each year. Erik explained that the CoC is a Collective Impact Model that supports the Central Oregon region and brings in about \$800,000 annually to support programs for homeless individuals. Chris explained the process for the annual competition.

**7. Provider Update – Mountainview Community Development**

Michelle Cross and Rick Russell introduced themselves and their proposal for a master planned community RV Park. Mountainview hopes to develop and operate a RV park east of Redmond, adjacent to the Oasis Village campus, that would serve as transitional housing for some, and affordable housing for others. Rick Russell noted that Mountainview's inspiration is to create more rungs on the ladder for folks to help themselves out of homelessness. Mountainview staff traveled nationwide to explore other models of this type. Mountainview staff are particularly interested in a model out of Texas, that charges a small amount of

rent each month. Mayor Richer asked for specifics on how much money the rent payments would bring in and how much subsidy may be required for operation. Rick noted that the rent amount would not fully support the park, but would help clients have some skin in the game and develop good habits. Councilor Zwicker noted that the City of Redmond was very supportive of the RV park. Chris suggested that as Mountainview continues to develop this program, they consider ways they can support clients as they exit into more permanent housing. Rick agreed. Rick asked if the CHRO Board would be willing to support Mountainview's efforts. Chris noted that the Board would be happy to support specific requests as they come up, and to reach out if the CHRO can be helpful in removing barriers as well.

## **8. Public Comment**

Chuck Hemingway - Community Member – Chuck came to provide comments and express concerns about the Kevin Dahlgren report. Chuck says that all of the service providers he's talked to disagree with the contents of the report and therefore should not be relied on as factual. Chuck said he's concerned that the Dahlgren report was included as part of the public record for the CHRO and is afraid the document will take on a life of its own. Chuck requested that the CHRO Board use this opportunity as a springboard to get a handle on the real data. Councilor Perkins shared concerns about including the report in the record. Chris noted that the report did not come from a request or any action from the CHRO, but that it was included in the record because it was shared in the meeting and became a public document. Chris noted that he could add something to the attachment that indicates the report was not endorsed or sponsored by the CHRO. Councilors Zwicker and Perkins agreed.

Linda Murrer – Community member – \*audio quality was inconsistent\* Linda thanked the CHRO for placing so much emphasis on community engagement as they consider opportunities to address unsanctioned camping. Linda noted a substantial amount of distrust of government in the community. Linda stressed that the public outreach needs to be fully taken into account, not just listened to and ignored.

Tammy Baney – Executive Director – COIC – COIC was able to negotiate an additional \$850k for the MAC group to add an additional 25 households to the rehousing goal and is making a leased property available to the City of Bend to help mitigate challenges at Lighthouse due to construction.

## **9. Other Items & Adjourn**

**Vice-Chair Perkins adjourned the meeting at 10:00 am.**