

# COORDINATED HOUSELESS RESPONSE OFFICE (CHRO)

## Board Meeting Minutes

11 – 12:30 pm on Thursday, February 15th, 2024

Deschutes Services Building, Barnes & Sawyer Room (1<sup>st</sup> floor), 1300 NW Wall St., Bend, OR

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*Attendance: Commissioner Adair, Chair, Deschutes County; Councilor Zwicker, City of Redmond; Councilor Blum, City of Sisters; Councilor Perkins, City of Bend; Commissioner DeBone, Deschutes County; Chris Ogren, CHRO; Eliza Wilson, Homeless Leadership Coalition; William Bailey, Deschutes County Sheriff's Office; Mickie Derting, City of Bend; Erik Kropp, Deschutes County; Nick Lelack, Deschutes County Administrator; Tammy Baney, Executive Director – COIC; Jean Hrabik, COIC; Amy Fraley, City of Bend; Erik Nelson, COIC; Jessica Gamble, Home More Network; Keith Witcosky, City Manager – City of Redmond; Kerry Prosser, City of Sisters; Linda Cline, City of Redmond; Brook O'Keefe, City of Bend; Geoff Wullschalger, City Manager – City of La Pine; Steven Emerson, Deschutes County; Captain Bailey, Deschutes County Sheriff's Office; Gwenn Wysling, Bethlehem Inn; Jordan Wheeler, City Manager – City of Sisters; Derek Wentorf, CSH; Mike Savara, Oregon Housing and Community Services; Josh Burgess, Community Member; Jenny Lingard, Community Member; Dean Harris, Community Member; DW Lee, Community Member*

### 1. **Call to Order**

Chair Adair called the meeting to order at 11:00.

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

Chair Adair reviewed the minutes from meeting of January 18, 2024.

**VOTE:** Councilor Perkins moved to approve minutes as corrected. Councilor Zwicker seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Mayor Richer was absent

### 3. **Financial Review**

Chair Adair reviewed the financials and asked about the time period of the invoice. Erik Kropp clarified that the period of the invoice was for 7 months. Chris Ogren noted that the Board of County Commissioners is responsible for approving CHRO financials, so a Board vote was not necessary.

### **Letter Approval**

Chair Adair addressed the SB 1530 letter of support to the senate committee.

**VOTE:** Councilor Perkins moved to approve, and Councilor Zwicker seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Mayor Richer was absent.

### 4. **IGA Between Deschutes County and COIC**

Erik Kropp relayed that on Monday, February 26<sup>th</sup> the IGA between Deschutes County and COIC goes before BOCC and then goes to COIC for signature. This IGA is for the functional operation oversight of the office. Staffing will come through another, separate MOU in the future, Erik shared.

## **5. Staffing Update**

Tammy Baney stated that the IGA for staffing is in progress, but nothing is standing in the way of the work getting done. Chris Ogren is fully dedicated to CHRO. Recruitment for housing administrator has been completed. This is a shared position between COIC and CHRO. Tammy thanked the CHRO members involved in the interview process. COIC in negotiations now and will know by the end of the day next steps. A Program Assistant II was brought on to help support the work, and they were at the last CHRO meeting, her name is Jean Hrabik. Katie Carter is providing fiscal support for the CHRO. Staffing is being blended to utilize resources.

Commissioner Adair asked Tammy Baney about the Bethlehem Inn (BI) in Redmond. Tammy responded that her role on the Bethlehem Inn Board of Directors does not allow her to speak on behalf of the organization, but she would do her best to answer questions. Tammy talked about new housing units coming online in Bend and Redmond, including the Old Mill Inn & Suites as early as March with about 75 units and the Bethlehem Inn in Redmond as a voluntary sober living unit. Chair Adair asked if someone who needed shelter in Redmond could go there tonight. Councilor Zwicker stated that she has heartburn over this when there are 10 units vacant, and people are living in the cold. Chair Adair stated that the County put almost \$1m into the project and it's freezing and snowy outside, so there is frustration that the units aren't available. Tammy suggested that questions about the Bethlehem Inn's operations be directed to Gwynn Wysling, the Executive Director, and noted that the property is being moved from a shelter environment to long term housing.

Chair Adair stated that there are 19 kids who are part of the safe parking program so maybe a family friendly, sober living situation would be well-suited for families. Providers are expected to stand up to new circumstances, trying to add capacity as a system, but there is frustration that this is not something we will get through right away. Councilor Zwicker noted that there appears to be a lack of communication. Tammy encouraged talking to the HLC regarding challenges facing providers. Luckily, Rick Russell has the staff capacity to expand the safe parking program. Councilor Zwicker asked if maxed out providers need new employees and stated that maybe as the CHRO we should be training people so they could get jobs at these organizations so they can scale up.

Eliza Wilson stated that these are good topics to delve into when developing a strategic plan (High Desert Home) needs assessment. We should look at which organizations have the capacity to expand, and which don't. Needs assessment can identify gaps in services and what needs are. Chris Ogren reviewed relevant strategic priorities and funding sources uncertainty, as well as the need to advocate for continued funding opportunities. Tammy mentioned provider benefit fund as another way we're trying to flexibly support providers as a region to build capacity and which has been taken advantage of by many providers. However, we need to hear more from the providers on how we can support.

Chair Adair appreciates that Hayden Homes was all private, not public funding. While the Old Mill project has been mostly supported with private money, the state can help with rent assistance. There may also be ways the board can support the process. Unfortunately, this is something that we will continue to experience as a region as new projects get up and running, but we need to be able to support providers through these transitions.

## **6. Request for Qualifications (RFQ) / Request for Proposals (RFP)**

Chris Ogren reviewed RFQ/RFP process beginning with a recap from January's meeting. He then discussed delaying the timeline to allow for information to come in before deciding. The RFQ is fully separated from and precedes the RFP, as the RFQ is high level view of projects. Delaying the RFQ will allow this process to align with the short session, giving more staff time for the process and allowing more detailed responses. The process is trying to build in what we want to see but still allowing new providers the chance at being awarded. The RFQ places emphasis on past campaigns, with the RFP providing much more detail. Chris then presented updated anticipated timeline. Chair Adair questioned timeline so Chris explained the flexibility of timeline was necessary to ensure the greatest results from the solicitation.

## **7. Marketing and Communications**

Mickie Derting presented on CHRO Communication and Direction beginning with a review of the background and recommendations from the Public Partner Roundtable (PPR). At the December meeting the CHRO board adopted the PPR technical package. There are two PPR strategies – board engagement strategies (discussed at this meeting) and specific site recommendations. Mickie presented a variety of engagement tools, including a recommendation to use vendors to help produce these tools, followed by a review of next steps. Councilor Zwicker doesn't think that the level of engagement is what she is envisioning and that the price point

isn't correlating to what we are doing in different counties. Councilor Perkins wondered if there should be more grass roots efforts, but also realizes that the public does not know what is being done to address homelessness. Councilor Zwicker acknowledged that we do need some kind of public outreach. Eliza agreed and thought it would help the public understand, alleviating anger and fear. Councilor Blum can see both the pros and cons and would like to hear more about what has worked in other areas. Tammy heard both grassroots and general higher-level education but needs to know what funds we are working with and definition of what the board wants the PPR and staff to do. Councilor Perkins recommends two-way communication, i.e., the roadshow supported by Councilor Zwicker who stated that people want to see us show up with answers and solutions and with complete transparency. Eliza expanded on that, stating that we need storytelling, showing positive impact and real people; address the negative, but also need to show positive. Councilor Perkins wants to include highlights of successes in each of the communities. Tammy acknowledged that not every community is ready for the roadshow, so will be sensitive to that as well.

## **8. Community Updates**

Councilor Perkins, City of Bend

Councilor Perkins was recently in Salem to testify on behalf of SB 1530. She met with a variety of legislators while she was there.

Councilor Zwicker, City of Redmond

No updates

Councilor Blum, City of Sisters

No updates

Commissioner Adair, Deschutes County

No Updates

Mayor Richer, La Pine (submitted via email)

Within our community we are moving forward on:

- 59 workforce housing apartments (set at 60% of AMI)
- A 34 unit potentiel Habitat development

## **9. Youth Homeless Demonstration Project (YHDP)**

Derek Wentorf, HUD TA for YHDP, provided a YHDP update. There is nearly \$1m in federal funding awarded over a two-year period for Youth Homelessness. The dollars can provide a foundation for a community to grow on. Derek reviewed what

YHDP means for Central Oregon, as well as the YHDP process in Central Oregon and the Central Oregon Youth Advisory (Action) Board roles and invited those in attendance to the next in-person meeting March 11 & 12.

## **10. Oregon Housing and Community Services**

Mike Savara, Special Initiative Director of Oregon Housing and Community Services, gave a brief overview of happenings in Salem and the Executive Order work, presenting the results of EO 23-02 as far as Central Oregon's work. He stated that MAC groups have been pivotal in addressing homelessness and that both critical goals for the MAC groups have been exceeded – emergency shelter and rehousing unsheltered households. He then reviewed the issue of stabilizing Oregon's shelter system, including the work and prevention goals. Mike announced that a new wave of funding will be released under another executive order and clarified prevention vs rehousing unsheltered homeless definitions. Councilor Perkins is looking forward to addressing true costs, including wrap-around services, not just beds.

## **11. Public Comments**

- Councilor Perkins had a comment about a comment last month regarding information about City of Bend's Shelters. That information will be up on the City of Bend website soon.
- Jenny Lingard addressed the topic of data conversation, as that is her profession so has seen organizations and departments that need that kind of reliable data to make decisions. Glad the City of Bend is offering a data dashboard, however people on the street don't know what's available each night. This could be as easy as using a google sheet. Homeless people need this as a resource so that they know where to go and it is virtually free. This is a consistent complaint from people Jenny has met performing outreach, from law enforcement and providers.
- Commissioner Debone - As a sitting commissioner he gets calls all the time with people asking what he's doing to solve this. Commissioner DeBone tells these people he's deferring to and empowering the leadership of the Coordinated Office.
- Jessica Gamble wanted to put out the idea regarding marketing of using some grassroots and low-cost efforts. Being able to utilize apps like Nextdoor to engage with folks in neighborhoods that are direct engagements, as well as being present on Facebook to contribute to conversations, would be helpful. Central Oregon Homeless Solutions is a forum to talk about homelessness in Central Oregon and can share their experiences. Councilors Zwicker and Perkins objected to Nextdoor due to the inability to control the content.

## **12. Next Meeting and Adjournment**

- Next meeting is March 21 in the Allen Room.
- Chair Adair adjourned the meeting @ 12:39.