

COORDINATED HOUSELESS RESPONSE OFFICE (CHRO)

Board Meeting Minutes

11 – 1:00 pm on Thursday, December 14th, 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; Mayor Richer, City of La Pine; Nick Lelack, Deschutes County Administrator; Chris Ogren, CHRO; Erik Kropp, Deschutes County; William Bailey, Deschutes County Sheriff's Office; Eric King, City Manager – City of Bend; Keith Witcosky, City Manager – City of Redmond; Mickie Derting, City of Bend; Amy Fraley, City of Bend; Kerry Prosser, City of Sisters; Tammy Baney, Executive Director – COIC; Molly Heiss, NeighborImpact; Erik Nelson, Homeless Leadership Coalition; Janice Garceau, Deschutes County; Linda Cline, City of Redmond; Jordan Wheeler, City Manager – City of Sisters; Anna Kaminski, Bend Bulletin; Steven Emerson, Deschutes County; Linda Murrer, Community Member; Chuck Hemingway, Community Member, Jenny Lingard, 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 the meeting on October 26th. Chris Ogren noted that Councilor Zwicker had requested an edit to the minutes via email, and that feedback had been incorporated.

VOTE: Councilor Perkins motioned approval of the October 26th minutes. Councilor Zwicker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. **COIC Transition Update**

Tammy Baney explained that COIC had posted a job description and had accepted applications for a program manager to run COIC's Housing & Homelessness Programs. The job posting had closed, and there were 8 people that applied. Tammy noted COIC was in the process of setting up interviews with applicants, and asked if anyone on the board would like to participate in interviews. Councilor Zwicker and Commissioner Adair were interested in serving on the interview panel. Tammy noted she would work with the board members to schedule interviews, but things could be delayed due to the holidays.

Erik Kropp noted that contract negotiations between COIC and Deschutes County were ongoing, but that things were going well. Erik noted the draft agreement would be ready for the CHRO board to review in the coming weeks. Erik explained that once the CHRO board approved the transition documents, the

Deschutes County BOCC would likely vote in early 2024 on the transition. Tammy explained that the process to transition a public employee from one entity to the other is complicated, but that things were getting close.

4. Central Oregon MAC Group Investments (\$15m)

Tammy Baney shared the investments the Central Oregon Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC) Group had made in Central Oregon's homeless response system in 2023. Tammy highlighted that nearly \$10m had been invested specifically in service providers in Deschutes County, while over \$2m had been invested in providers that served individuals across Central Oregon, or outside of Deschutes County. Tammy shared that with the funding from the state, there were some expectations that would be met, too. Tammy reported that of the two goals for Central Oregon, the Central Oregon MAC group had exceeded the shelter goal, and was closing in on the rehousing goal, as well.

Commissioner Adair asked about the challenges to meeting the rehousing goal, noting an 8.5% vacancy rate in Bend, and asked Tammy about the strategy to meet the rehousing goal. Councilor Zwicker explained that some rules required by landlords often make it hard for providers to place clients in some units, like requiring first and last month's rent or requiring income statements that prove someone can afford a unit. Molly Heiss explained that due to the nature of rehousing individuals that were previously unsheltered, this population can sometimes have higher needs than individuals who are being rehoused from a sheltered setting. Chris Ogren noted that Oregon has a statewide challenge in rehousing due to limited rental vacancies, so Central Oregon's experience with this goal is not necessarily unique. Tammy noted a one-size fits all approach is not the solution to ending homelessness, and that the MAC group has instead provided flexible funding to help providers meet their clients unique needs.

5. Public Partners Roundtable Recommendations

Janice Garceau presented to the CHRO board on initial recommendations from staff related to moving the Public Partners Roundtable (PPR) Discussion to the next stage. Janice shared staff's recommendations for a goal statement, recommended outcomes, and the values and criteria commitments that the CHRO board had already voted to approve in October.

Janice continued through the attachments included in the Board packet, outlining the documents that lay out the types of shelter being considered, the properties that public agencies had offered for consideration for development, a technical review form template, and more.

Janice explained that staff's request of the board was to commit to a regional process and decide whether or not the CHRO is the appropriate entity to facilitate

the RFP process for development or instead approve the packet and then allow individual communities to RFP their own projects within their jurisdiction.

Councilor Zwicker noted a lot of this decision comes down to funding. Councilor Perkins said she liked the work from the MAC Group, and thinks a similar model for this type of development could make sense. Councilor Perkins asked if Councilor Blum or Mayor Richer had any thoughts or concerns. Mayor Richer noted his preference for the funding going where the highest need was. Councilor Blum acknowledged that requiring CHRO board approval before a project could be developed within a specific jurisdiction, could likely delay the process. Keith Witcosky noted that while getting regional support for a project could delay its implementation, Central Oregon supporting a development as a region will likely have a bigger impact with the State which could free up some State funding to support the effort. Eric King noted that if the CHRO commits to RFPing all sites identified, then it will ensure the strongest candidate in the region is identified and developed.

Councilor Zwicker asked about the order of events, and where public outreach would begin. Staff suggested the potential of a CHRO Board roadshow in communities across Deschutes County in 2024 to highlight their efforts and let the community know what was being considered. Councilor Zwicker noted that this would preface a broader series of open-houses that could be hosted after the RFP process was complete.

Janice Garceau noted that staff were awaiting direction from the CHRO board on how to proceed.

VOTE: Councilor Zwicker motioned approval of the Public Partners Roundtable Packet Materials. Mayor Richer seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Planning for 2024

Mickie Derting shared recommendations on how to begin setting up the CHRO Advisory Board. Mickie suggested that CHRO board members appoint industry representatives to the Advisory Board, but that the advisory board also include a member with lived-experience. Mickie suggested the CHRO pay the individual with lived-experience for their time contributing to the group. Mickie also recommended that the CHRO Board and Advisory Board attend some trainings hosted through Ryan Dowd.

VOTE: Councilor Perkins motioned approval of the Advisory Board Framework. Councilor Zwicker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chris Ogren asked about the meeting cadence for 2024, and the CHRO Board asked that meeting cadence be kept the same for the time being.

Chris Ogren noted that the bylaws require the CHRO board to vote on Chair and Co-chair in the first meeting of the new year, so board members should be prepared for that discussion in January.

7. Community Updates

Mayor Richer – La Pine

Homeless situation in La Pine is relatively static. Things have 't gotten worse or better. The City of La Pine is looking for safe parking locations. The La Pine Warming shelter is also open on a nightly basis, now, and is not temperature dependent.

Councilor Zwicker – Redmond

Oasis Village is nearly complete, the units are being drywalled and wired. Oasis's goal is to be operational by January 4th, 2024. Councilor Zwicker also noted the Longest Night Vigil being held in Redmond at the Bethlehem Inn.

Councilor Blum – Sisters

A lot of service providers in Sisters are working as volunteers. Councilor Blum wants to ensure that there are volunteers who are participating in the Point-In-Time Count because there is a fear that the individuals being served in Sisters aren't being counted or tracked.

Commissioner Adair – Deschutes County

Commissioner Adair expressed appreciation for the great work of providers helping families in Central Oregon. Nick Lelack also mentioned the recently approved Deschutes County Safe Parking Code.

Councilor Perkins – Bend

Family Kitchen needs a new location, please reach out if you have a space for them to occupy.

8. Public Comment

Chuck Hemingway's comments attached.

Jenny Lingard, Community Member – Jenny shared concerns about the site evaluation criteria document in the CHRO packet that was approved. Jenny noted there was nothing about equity in the site evaluation criteria and questioned whether more sites would be considered on the east side of Bend, where she feels there are a high concentration of sites to serve homeless people, or if sites will be considered on Bend's west side. Jenny also had questions about the

specific distances listed in the evaluation template. Councilor Zwicker said she would be willing to discuss the distance criteria when an actual site is offered, rather than worrying about what-ifs.

9. Other Items & Adjourn

Chair Adair adjourned the meeting at 1:07 pm.

DRAFT

Public Comment from Chuck Hemingway:

“Hello CHRO board members,

My name is Chuck Hemingway. I am a local advocate for those in the unhoused community. I am here to talk about another matter. But first I want to give an update about Central Oregon Villages.

When Central Oregon Villages opened last March there were six units at first. The first six occupants were all homeless women who had been living in their vehicles or in tents. All had chronic medical conditions and most had been sexually abused, if not in the camps, then elsewhere.

The village only has 2 units left to go. These will be ready and likely occupied by the end of the month. That will give us 20 units fully occupied. Nicky Merritt, the Central Oregon Villages Executive Director, has done an incredible job.

But I am actually here to ask you as individuals, as members of this entity and as members of your various local communities to think outside the box and be open to innovative solutions to address serving the needs of the unhoused here in Central Oregon.

The Governor has made clear that we, in our Central Oregon localities, must look to sites inside the UGB before any sites outside the UGB will be considered.

I've been actively involved with the Gales family who have offered up a site east of town outside the UGB but within a mile of the Bend city limits.

There are complications with making that site work and the County Commission's recent passage of a safe parking ordinance is a good first step toward a potential way to deal with those complications.

But the Gales property is just one site. By itself it is not the answer and we can't just focus on it. While the Gales property is needed, so are other properties.

Serving the needs of our various communities not only looks different for each community, it also looks different for the persons and individuals in those communities. We have to have options. We need to build a new level of support that honors and values this reality.

As a board, you've got to focus on Deschutes County. But at the same time Deschutes County should be part of a regional approach. This will help dissipate the impact on Deschutes County. Don't ignore the region. Include the region as a part of your vision.

I'm thinking outside the box here. There might just be some land elsewhere, like up in Jefferson County, like, let's say, around Deer Ridge, that could be part of the solution for Deschutes County.

We just need to have a range of options to help stabilize and provide a safe environment for those struggling.

It is easy to get discouraged when you're engaged in the work you're doing. But I believe, as I hope you do, that we are really close to achieving short term success. You already have made some.

There is an old saying that when you're looking out at that big forest you've got to clear, just saw the wood in front of you.

With innovative, short term small successes, I know we can get there.

Thank you for the small successes you are accomplishing. And thank you again for the work you are doing.”