



MEETING MINUTES

HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF WASHINGTON COUNTY

January 27, 2022- 9:00 a.m.

Virtual Meeting Via Zoom

<u>COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT</u>	<u>STAFF PRESENT</u>
Alma Flores	Komi Kalevor
Katherine Galian	Josh Crites
Cindi Otis	Melissa Sonsalla
Narendar Sahgal	Jacob Boyett
Vince Chiotti	Annette Evans
Eric Schmidt	Yaling Dressel
Sheila Greenlaw-Fink	Shannon Wilson
Ballen Younis	Will Seals
Sid Scott (phone)	Jes Larson
	Liz Morris
<u>ABSENT</u>	
Renee Brouse	<u>GUESTS</u>
Dave Bachman	Gena Briggs
Melinda Bell	Jacquilyn Saito
<u>HABOD MEMBERS PRESENT</u>	

I. ROLL CALL – 9:01 a.m. A quorum was present.

II. DISCUSSION – ORAL COMMUNICATIONS and MEMBER UPDATES

Katherine Gallian, director of housing stability at Community Action, reported the state emergency assistance program reopened yesterday. This is being processed at the state level but local applications are still open and those who have applied locally do not have to apply at the state level.

Cindi Otis, personal support worker serving adults with developmental disabilities, shared her clients are having a tough time finding providers and struggling to get the services they need.



Eric Schmidt echoed the same issue from Cindi Otis. At a recent meeting of the Behavioral Health Counsel, the issue of people leaving the provider workforce was discussed.

Sheila Greenlaw-Fink, Community Housing Fund, stated she will send information when it becomes available on an upcoming housing leadership cohort to move toward getting more communities of color engaged in a variety of ways in Washington County housing issues.

Ballen Younis, housing specialist at Lutheran Community Service working with minority groups, stated they are still receiving a number of refugees and immigrants. The main challenge is finding them housing and filling out the applications.

Sid Scott, Principal with Scott Edwards Architecture, reported construction is continuing with several potential new affordable housing coming online. He noted the projection is for an easing of the supply chain issue that has plagued the construction this past year, and by the end of the year back to “a normal pace”.

III. ACTION – APPROVAL OF MINUTES @ 9:08 a.m.

The committee voted to approve minutes from the November 18, 2021 meeting, with changes to the spelling of one item.

Motion: Eric Schmidt

Second: Katherine Galian

Vote: All approved (Sheila Greenlaw-Fink abstained from the vote)

Alma Flores introduced Jacquilyn Saito who is the assistant county counsel for Washington County housing.

Jacquilyn Saito shared she has worked for Washington County for about 22 years with the last 12 years working in land use which included long range planning, current planning, building services, and a few other specialty clients.

IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Komi Kalevor reported a claim audit was received from TKW (external auditors). While the number of staff have remained the same, the housing budget has nearly doubled with the Metro bond and the supportive housing services (SHS) program. The Housing Authority is still working with facilities on moving to the new building called Adams Crossing. This move will allow the housing staff to be in one building.

V. RESOLUTIONS / ACTION ITEMS

N/A

VI. ONGOING BUSINESS

A. Term Limit Expirations – Melissa Sonsalla



Melissa Sonsalla reported they are in the process of recruiting for the next round of HAC committee members. As of the end of March there will be five open positions which include a veterans position, a position by someone receiving services from the Housing Authority, member at large position, representative from minority groups, and urban planning and development. Interviews are currently taking place for those positions. Gena Briggs is in attendance today and applied but is awaiting approval for the position of someone currently receiving assistance from the Housing Authority. First round recommendations will be presented to the Board in early March and two weeks later the Board will confirm those appointments. The expectation is to have all positions filled by April 1.

Note – Jacob to send HAC application link to HAC members wanting reappointment

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Concerns regarding housing for the immigrant and refugee populations

Chair Flores asked Balen Younis to restate the concerns he has seen in the immigrant community.

Balen Younis explained in working with immigrants and refugees who come to the United States, they wait a number of weeks for their official documentation. Without this documentation and a lack of work history from just arriving stateside, these individuals cannot obtain housing. He suggested Washington County work with property managers to waive these requirements for refugees and provide a list to agencies as a resource for housing for this population of individuals.

Chair Flores would like to find solutions to the issue of immigrant/refugee populations and the need for housing after resettlement.

Komi Kalevor mentioned there is a special ask coming up in the next legislative session to set aside funding for refugees.

Narender Sahgal asked if there is an overall strategy of how many properties the county may have available to make it easier for special cases such as refugees.

Chair Flores asked if staff could research this and bring the information back to the next meeting.

Sheila Greenlaw-Fink suggested if some of the homes in the Section 18 disposition could be sold to refugee agencies to be used to house refugees or if there's opportunity for additional developmental sites to provide shelter for the refugee community.

VII. DEPARTMENT UPDATES

A. Continuum of Care (CoC) – Annette Evans

Annette Evans, homeless program manager with Washington County housing, gave a detailed presentation of the continuum of care programs which include the following: Federal continuum of care, county general fund, and the county public safety levy. This work includes system level planning and



coordination. The continuum of care program has 286 units of leased tenant based rent assistance and/or physical housing units.

The vision and strategy is outlined in, A Road Home, which aligns with the shared goals and strategies identified in specific funding plans which include: the Office of Community Development, Metro Affordable Housing Bond implementation strategy plan, and the Metro Supportive Housing Services levy local implementation plan, and the federal Here Together plan. All of this work embraces the values based approaches. She gave an overview of the funding streams including federal, state, local, private and other funds explaining 258 households are currently leased with 22 households currently looking for housing. A request for 4.4 million dollars was submitted to HUD for a CoC consolidated grant in November. They are hoping to receive award funding for a new project proposal submitted by Central Cultural for a 20 unit Bridge housing project providing rapid rehousing through tenant based rental assistance.

HSSN (Housing and Supportive Services Network) is the continuum of care governance that is required under federal law. This is a public stakeholder community group which includes those who have experienced homelessness and agencies who serve the homeless population to ensure open and transparent planning and address policy and procedures for improving the system outcomes. Measure 34-296 renewed funding for the public safety levy which provides the county's public safety services and continues funding for the shelter operations that serve victims of domestic violence. In this measure there are two new commitments to public safety in serving victims of domestic violence through the creation of an employment specialist and housing navigation program that is aligned with the family and youth shelters to assist those who access employment services and housing navigation administered by Community Action. The partnership with the Domestic Violence Resource Center provides ten units of rapid rehousing for survivors of domestic violence.

Katherine Galian reported Community Action staff is working in collaboration with the family and youth shelters and Work Systems to assist individuals who are interested in employment career exploration training and housing navigation to support what is happening onsite at the shelters.

Ms. Evans stated the Washington County general fund focuses on addressing the service funding gaps in the system. Community Connect and Community Action took the lead to revamp some of their resources to take on this work. The funding from the county provides community resource advocates to work with clients going through the system. The Supportive Housing Services program is looking to align more closely to provide greater utilization of their funds. They will streamline contracts with an agency redeploying general funds to continue to serve homeless both in and outside of the Metro service district boundary. They are also investing in intensive case management to address chronic homeless persons with disabilities through Open Door Counseling. Rural assistance and transition from homelessness provides local access to homeless services in rural areas and small cities. They are partnering with the Salvation Army and the Forest Grove Foundation to help implement this program which will commence soon once staffing is secured. The annual Point in Time census began January 26th and preliminary results show 435 individuals in emergency shelter and transitional housing beds which is an increase of 76 individuals over last year. The street count will be finalized soon. Last year's street number count was 357 unsheltered individuals.



B. Supportive Housing Services Plan – Jess Larson

Jess Larson reported supportive housing services (SHS) has been up and running for six months. Shelter and outreach, housing and rental assistance programs, and case management and wrap around services represent the various pieces of the entire system of care in responding to homelessness. Programs reach people where they are at when unsheltered to provide temporary housing. Case workers know are trained on how to navigate the system to provide the services individuals need. The wrap around services help make sure housing lasts for people which include behavioral health support, peer support specialists, and employment programs among others. The housing and rental assistance programs provide the finances to ensure housing stability. With the 286 units of supportive housing in the continuum of care programs, SHS funding allows for an additional 500 in supportive housing units with a goal of adding an additional 1,665. Community Connect is the thread that ties these three systems together. Ms. Larson gave an update on the following programs within SHS.

Shelter and Outreach Programs: The winter shelter programs are up and running with an addition of 187 beds which are available from November through spring. The goal is to expand the program to provide shelter all year. The inclement weather program is also available to house people temporarily during severe weather which has served 88 people over nine days so far this season. There is a Covid response plan in place to cover staffing shortages and place individuals in housing such as hotel rooms if testing positive with Covid. Shelter community guideline work will involve engagement with community, individuals impacted, stakeholders, and community service providers to talk about how to grow from the current shelter capacity to the goal of 250 year around shelter beds.

Case Management Work: The biggest foundational investment so far is in the housing case management services program. The first big steps is to secure experienced providers to assist individuals to get the services they need. There were 18 contracts signed with community based service providers providing the capacity for 38 new housing case managers. So far 20 have been hired and trained and are starting to enroll participants who have been chronically homeless guiding them to shelter.

Upcoming Work in the Program Expansion: With SHS funds they are looking to do more housing system navigation to expand work further and embed the housing navigators in Health and Human Services programs. These are programs like DAVS (Disability, Aging, and Veterans Services), ACT Team which serves high needs individuals with behavioral health conditions, and the Maternal and Family Health program among others. They are excited to launch a supportive employment workforce pilot helping to train and support workers who want to pursue a career in housing.

Housing and Rent Assistance: The Aloha Inn project is currently in the midst of renovations to convert it into permanent supportive housing turning 54 hotel rooms into future apartment homes for those experiencing chronic homelessness. The rent assistance types will be expanded to include rapid resolution and rapid rehousing which are tailored to meet people's needs by their different timeframes. Rapid resolution is a onetime rent assistance. Rapid rehousing provides short-term rent assistance ranging from 2 to 24 months. These expanded programs will compliment RLRA (Regional Long-term Rental Assistance). This program has housed 94 individuals with a goal of housing 500 chronically homeless by the end of the program year.



Ms. Larson shared the SHS intergovernmental agreement has been finalized with Metro. The homeless plan advisory committee (HPAC) advises the continuum of care programs, and their role has now expanded to advise on ongoing implementation of SHS.

Sheila Greenlaw-Fink asked how the system can be built out to create online tools for people to access to see what housing is available to them.

Ms. Larsen stated this is a current priority as they work with case managers providing RLRA vouchers to assist individuals to find housing. They have added a team member who will be helping to build out the landlord liaison programs and actively recruiting partnerships with affordable housing developers, operators, and owners with a goal of setting aside project based voucher units. Next steps are getting the word out to those who need housing and building the structure to implement the tools which provide the housing.

Alma Flores asked how staff is working to be culturally and linguistically specific in those populations as it relates to housing availability.

Ms. Larsen said as they begin this program that will be an important consideration to reach all parts of the landlord community in providing linguistic specific services, communication materials, and capacity.

Balen Younis asked if the plan for rapid resolution eligibility is to be able to receive rental assistance support.

Ms. Larsen: She stated she didn't have the answer to that question. She explained the purpose of the rapid resolution program, when launched, will be to flexibly meet needs that federal funds do not have the flexibility to address.

Balen Younis asked for clarification on providing year around shelter as he had heard there were legal issues involved but also heard in Ms. Larsen's presentation the barrier is finding a location.

Ms. Larsen said with a year around program the correct zoning and land use permission for the use of the building is a barrier. Recently, they worked to ensure proper zoning to convert the Aloha Inn from a former hotel to permanent housing.

Vince Chiotti noted the benefits of having a system that is inclusive of surrounding jurisdictions so individuals can find what housing is available near them as several cities border or are split between two counties.

Josh Crites mentioned there is a tri-county regional board that does coordination and the SHS staff are meeting with Multnomah and Clackamas counties at all levels.



Cindi Otis mentioned her biggest challenge as a provider in finding her clients housing is having to connect with so many different agencies to find out current availability. She would like to have access in one place of what is currently available as it is a very time consuming process now.

C. Move To Work – Melissa Sonsalla & Josh Crites

Josh Crites presented an overview of the Move to Work (MTW) program. The Washington County Housing Authority officially became a MTW agency in November 2021. This program provides increased affordable housing choices, cost effectiveness, and promotes self-sufficiency.

Melissa Sonsalla presented an overview of what is happening in the MTW program over the next four months. All documentation is being finalized and on February 14 the information will be posted for public review. Meetings with community stakeholders and residents will be held in February and in March a preview of the work will be presented to the Housing Authority Board of Directors (HABD). This information will also be presented to the HAC for a recommendation in March to move forward with the work. It will then be presented a final time to the HABD in April which will include a public meeting. The goal is to submit all the paperwork in mid-April to HUD with the hope of receiving approval by July 1. There are several MTW activities that will be pursued this year. The first is a tiered rent program which is a change in the rent structure based on a study with HUD and TRC. Reviews will move from annual to triennial without the need to report income increases between the recertifications. Decreases in income can be reported for rent modifications. Currently there are 600 households who are eligible for this program with half being randomly chosen for this six year pilot program. The second and third MTW activities are rent simplification initiatives and a Moving On program which waives inspections for those who stay in the same unit when moving from permanent supportive housing to a regular voucher. The fourth and fifth are administrative changes to the local project based voucher program and voucher set aside program serving homeless students. The last activity is focused on becoming more strategic with waitlists. More detail on these activities will be shared at next month's HAC meeting.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 10:51 a.m.

Komi Kalevor
Secretary/Executive Director