



Sonoma County Homeless Coalition Board

Homeless Coalition Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

1:00 – 4:30 p.m. Pacific Time – Meeting held by Zoom

Zoom Recording:

<https://sonomacounty.zoom.us/rec/share/4zXJQopraz9FmodshLXPPKOra20KZen2sqxp7t7N6wfljFp8ARayFplCvbGR1-CN.GmPBE1p3iePumgOh>

Passcode: H0b.1^5l

Welcome and Roll Call Introductions (00:05:03– 00:11:18)

Jennielynn Holmes called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm, and went over the Zoom rules regarding public comment and Brown Act guidelines

Present:

Dennis Pocekay, City of Petaluma | Jennielynn Holmes, Catholic Charities | Natalie Rogers, City of Santa Rosa | Benjamin Leroi, Santa Rosa Community Health Center | Chris Coursey, County of Sonoma Board of Supervisors | Margaret Sluyk, Reach For Home | Chris Cabral, Committee on the Shelterless (COTs) | Kristi Lozinto, Member-at-Large | Martha Cheever, Community Development Commission | John Baxter, proxy for Don Schwartz, City of Rohnert Park | Natalie Rogers, proxy for Jackie Elward, City of Rohnert Park | Ron Wellander, City of Sonoma | Dannielle Danforth, West County Community Services

Absent:

Cheyenne McConnell, TAY Representative | Chessy Etheridge, Community Member / LEAP | Una Glass, City of Sebastopol

A quorum was present.

1 - 6. Approval of Consent Calendar (00:11:21 – 00:25:27)

- Jennielynn Holmes, CoC Board Chair, presented the consent calendar items:
 - 1) 2/28/24 meeting agenda
 - 2) 1/24/24 meeting minutes
 - 3) Summary of Follow-ups from the Previous Meeting
 - 4) Reports for Standing Committee Updates
 - 5) Coordinated Entry Advisory Committee Changes to Policies & Procedures
 - 6) Sonoma County Homeless Coalition Tribal Seat & Charter Revision

- Dave Kiff requests an addition to the agenda to authorize Dave Kiff, as staff to the Homeless Coalition, to send letters of support to fellow jurisdictions in Sonoma County in support of Encampment Resolution Fund (ERF) grants applications, as long as the request is aligned with the Homeless Coalition Strategic Plan.
- Michael Gause requests an addition to the agenda for Board approval to authorize Michael Gause to sign a letter on behalf of the Homeless Coalition to facilitate the transition of a federal Housing & Urban Development (HUD) grant for Permanent Supportive Housing from Social Advocates for Youth (SAY) to Community Support Network (CSN). This would serve to keep youths housed upon the closure of SAY.
- Mayor Natalie Rogers requests pulling #3 (Update on MOU going to BOS for approval) from Consent Calendar Item 3 (Summary of Follow-ups from Previous Meetings), for additional information and discussion.
- John Baxter supports additions to the consent calendar as recommended by Dave Kiff and Michael Gause, with the caveat that any actions subsequently made in the name of the Homeless Coalition be reported back to the Board. Michael Gause agrees.

Public Comment: Garry La Londe-Berg, Teddie Pierce

- In response to a comment about conflicts of interest, Jennielynn Holmes states that she will follow the recusal process and expects other members of the Board to do so as appropriate when conflicts of interests arise.

Dave Kiff adds that the charter does not give any specific powers, other than supervising the meetings, to the Chair of the Board, but that each member of the Board has the same right and obligation to vote and to recuse when they have a potential conflict of interest.

Michael Gause stated that in previous conversations with the Funding & Evaluation Committee it was determined that conflicted members could not participate in making decisions but there was ongoing debate about whether they should participate in discussions.

Alea Tantarelli stated that, after conversation with a consultant some months ago, it was determined via the Board that service providers can be excluded from discussion of their individual projects but could then be reunited with the group as a whole for discussions of the larger pieces.

- In response to a comment about the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) scoring tool, Michael Gause stated that an error was found in the scoring tools that biased small non-profits, which is being adjusted via the F&E Committee.

Motion: Mayor Rogers moves to approve the Consent Calendar with the aforementioned additions:

- a. Authorize Dave Kiff to send letters of support to other jurisdictions in support of ERF grant applications
- b. Authorize Michael Gause to sign a contract on behalf of the Homeless Coalition Board transferring a HUD grant for Permanent Supportive Housing from SAY to CSN.
- c. Allow an apparent scoring tool error to be corrected via the F&E Committee.
- d. Pull Consent Calendar Item #3 for further information and discussion of the MOU going to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) for approval.

Second: Dannielle Danforth seconds the motion.

Objections or Abstentions: None

Motion passes. The Consent Agenda is approved with the additions indicated in the motion and the pulling of Item #3 for further discussion

- **Consent Calendar #3:** Summary of Follow-ups from the Previous Meeting(s)

Mayor Rogers stated that she would like to move forward with the MOU that is intended to go to the BOS for approval, which was the result of substantial effort from stakeholders. Dave Kiff appreciates the comment and will pass the concern along to those who can act on it.

7. Reports from Lead Agency Staff (00:25:28– 0029:29)

- **Open Application Period for Committees**

Chelli Rivera reported that applications are open for the following Homeless Coalition Board Committees:

Coordinated Entry Advisory (CEA) – Two (2) vacant seats

Funding and Evaluation (F&E) Two (2) vacant seats

Homeless Management Information System Data (HMIS) – Seven (7) vacancies

Strategic Planning – Four (4) vacant seats

The application period opened on February 21, 2024, and will be closing on March 13, 2024. Applications can be submitted via email, hand-delivery, or postal mail until 5 pm on March 13, 2024.

8. Service Provider Roundtable (SPR) and Presentation from Interfaith Shelter Network (00:29:30 – 1:08:25)

- **Homeless Prevention Project:**

Margaret Slyke referenced the centralized homeless prevention partnership between the County of Sonoma, the cities of Petaluma and Santa Rosa, among others, which would centralize homeless prevention funding in the county.

Service providers would like more information about the project and would appreciate notification of the timeline, as well as clear communication about the process, funding streams, and potential impacts to funding for smaller non-profits.

Michael Gause confirmed that additional information will be forthcoming about the homeless prevention project. The County of Sonoma, City of Petaluma, and City of Santa Rosa have together identified \$1.3 million available for a county-wide prevention program. All-Home has committed to matching dollar-for-dollar, for a total of up to \$2.6 million available for a two-year pilot, which could serve about 150 households for prevention. Once the details are developed, outreach will be extended to regional providers. Michael Gause and Kelli Kuykendall are available to answer questions.

- **NOFA Process:**

Margaret Slyke reported that Service Providers would like an opportunity to engage in feedback sessions before the scores are finalized.

- With less funding available this year, service providers would like input into which areas of their projects will be subject to cuts.

- Service Providers would like attention to be focused on the individual needs of each subregion, rather than a blanket approach with proportionally equal allocations. Different subregions have different needs.

- The component of 80% renewals / 20% new projects was implemented when there was not scarcity. Now there is scarcity of funding, and some subregions may not be able to keep their current projects if 20% goes to new projects. Service providers would like this to be a consideration for next year's NOFA, if not this year's.

Jennielynn Holmes commented that the funding mechanism makeup was unknown when decisions were made last year. In the wake of the closure of SAY, Jennielynn Holmes expressed the hope that the F&E Committee, staff, and others involved in the process will be cognizant of the importance of sustaining critical existing programs before implementing new.

Michael Gause stated that scoring will hopefully be finalized by tomorrow, February 29, 2024. The scoring is just one tool, not the deciding factor. Need and performance are also taken into consideration. The 80/20 component is also not absolutely rigid and may allow for some flexibility.

Dave Kiff explained that the Homeless Coalition Board also has the discretion to make adjustments to the F&E Committee recommendations.

Dennis Pocekay recalled that when the Strategic Plan was approved the 80/20 component was included as a goal to strive towards, but was not rigid and allowed for the flexibility to make alterations in such instances as scarcity or the loss of a provider. Michael Gause agrees that the terminology was “strive.” John Baxter interpreted the guidance as being 0-20% for new projects based on various considerations, not automatically 20%.

John Baxter would appreciate a presentation, from those directly informed, relating the lessons learned from the closure of SAY.

Presentation from Interfaith Shelter Network (IFSN):

Monica Savon and Juan Reyes of IFSN were in attendance. Juan Reyes, IFSN Director of Programs, presented slides depicting the four components of IFSN: Transitional Housing Programs, Rapid Rehousing, Joint Transitional and Rapid Programs, and a clinical department.

- The IFSN Transitional Housing Program operates three houses under Assembly Bill 109, contracted with the probation department. With referral, individuals who are on formal probation are provided 90-day bed stays, and case management to meet immediate needs and readiness for employment. Blair House has 9 beds, Carina House, 8 beds, and Bennett house has 5 beds.

- Three additional houses are funded through the Department of Finance (DOF) which provide 180 day stays for men and women on formal probation, as a transition to permanent housing. When extra beds are available the housing can be opened up to referrals to Coordinated Entry (CE).

- Other housing programs serve families on Sonoma Works (Cooper House), and homeless individuals applying for disability income (Steele).

- One of IFSN’S Rapid Rehousing programs serves formerly incarcerated individuals and their families who are homeless and residing in Sonoma County. The program can house 84 households annually. Another program is contracted with the Department of Health Services (DHS) and serves transitional age youth (TAY) as well as individuals and families on CE and can serve 25 households per year.

-IFSN's Youth Housing Program contracts with Family, Youth, and Children Services, (FYC), to serve former foster youth between ages 18-25. The program capacity is 21 clients per fiscal year. The majority enter with a voucher.

-A Joint Transitional – Rapid Rehousing Program is contracted with FY&C and can accommodate 100 families per fiscal year between county and state funding.

-Clinical Programs are contracted with DHS to serve those who are currently incarcerated in the Sonoma County Main Adult Detention Center and have been more than once, to provide resources to reduce the likelihood of recidivism.

-The Justice & Mental Health Collaboration Program (JMHCP), contracted with the Probation Department, works with pretrial releases who have a mental health diagnosis.

-An additional clinical program offers free clinical supervision to interns, who then provide free therapy to clients.

Public Comment: Gregory Fearon, Teddie Pierce, Garry La Londe-Berg, Ludmilla Bade

9. Homeless Housing Assistance Prevention (HHAP) 5 Application (1:08:27 – 1:16:40)

- Michael Gause went through his staff report concerning the timeline and key details of the draft HHAP 5 application and regional action plan. Feedback and suggestions are welcome via email throughout the next month before being submitted. Funding is about \$500,000 less this year as our homeless count has decreased. Three meetings have already been held, as required by the State. The deadline for submission is March 27, 2024. The State will conduct a 90-day review period, after which the contract will be executed.

Public Comment: None.

Motion: Martha Cheever moves to authorize the Chair or Vice-Chair to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in March 2024.

Second: Dennis Pocekay seconds the motion.

Abstentions or Objections: None

Motion passes unanimously.

10. Word from the Street: (1:16:40 – 1:17:23): Presenters were not available.

11: 10-Minute Break: Deferred until after Item #12.

12. Update on Prioritization Assessment Redesign Working Group: (1:17:33 – 1:33:45)

- Thai Hilton presented slides about the Coordinated Entry Assessment and Prioritization Redesign; the lead agency has been working with Coordinated Entry (CE) stakeholders to redesign the processes for assessing and prioritizing vulnerable individuals. Vi-SPDAT is the assessment tool that has historically been used to determine levels of vulnerability, and prioritization is the process used to determine which vulnerable individuals will receive a housing referral.

The working group has decided to use current data collected by VI-SPDAT, but to change the way the questions are framed and the data that they have access to avoid re-assessment of all in Coordinated Entry.

In the future, CE will utilize four separate lists:

- Individuals
- Transitional Aged Youth
- Families with Minors
- Seniors (new list – ¼ of referrals)

Public Comment: Garry La Londe-Berg

- **12-Minute Break: 2:28 - 2:40 pm, Deferred from Item 11 (1:33:52 – 1:45:25)**

13. Strategic Plan Year-Two Priorities (1:45:36 – 1:58:14)

- Dave Kiff presented content from Attachment A, “Strategic Planning Committee Staff Recommendations,” of the Staff Report, which details eleven (11) “Year 2 Priority Recommendations 2024,” as approved at a previous meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee.

Public Comment: Gregory Fearon

Motion: Mayor Natalie Rogers moves to approve the Year 2 Priority Recommendations.

Second: Dennis Pocekay seconds.

Abstentions or Objections: None

Motion is approved.

14. Review Agenda for March Coalition Board Meeting (1:58:17 – 2:00:56)

- Jennielynn Holmes presented the proposed agenda for the March 27, 2024, Coalition Board meeting.

Suggestions for additions to future meeting agendas included:

1. Group discussion for lessons learned from the closure of SAY
2. Presentation about current homelessness prevention work.

Public Comment: None

15: Board Member Questions & Comments: (2:00:58 – 2:06:59)

- How should cities ask the County for assistance with warming and cooling centers?

Funding currently would come from each city's general fund. There are no eligible funding sources at the state level this year.

Dave Kiff offered that a group of cities might draft a letter(s) to County Administration and/or the Homeless Coalition to request assistance. Mayor Rogers will coordinate those efforts. The issue will also be added to a future Homeless Coalition Board meeting agenda.

- A discussion is needed to clarify the process for selecting new committee chairs.

Public Comment: Ludmilla Bade

16. Public Comment on Items not on the Agenda: (2:07:00 – 2:07:08)

- None.

Adjournment: 3:08 pm