



MEETING MINUTES

HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF WASHINGTON COUNTY

January 25, 2024 - 9:00 a.m.
Hybrid Meeting In-Person & Via Zoom

<u>COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT</u>	<u>STAFF PRESENT</u>
Dave Bachman	Allie Alexander-Sheridan
Deena Feldes (Castrejon)	Andrew Crampton
Hayley Purdy	Bianetth Valdez
John Epstein	Jacob Boyett
Melinda Bell	Jes Larson
Narendar Sahgal	Katherine Galian
Nina Stafford	Liz Morris
Renee Brouse	Melissa Sonsalla
Ryan Cain	Meredith Cook
	Michael Clark
<u>ABSENT</u>	Molly Rogers
Bruce Dickinson	Nadia Mohammad
Carine Arendes	Nicole Stingh
Eric Schmidt	Tatiana Gammett
Fernando Lira	Will Seals
Gena Briggs	
Nina Sparr	<u>GUESTS</u>
	Jacquilyn Saito

I. **MEETING CALLED TO ORDER** – 9:00 a.m. A quorum was present.

II. **PUBLIC COMMENTS – ATTENDEES (INCLUDING ONLINE GUESTS)**
None.

III. **DISCUSSION – ORAL COMMUNICATIONS and MEMBER UPDATES**
None.

IV. **ACTION – APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
The committee voted to approve the November 16, 2023 meeting minutes.
Motion: John Epstein



Second: Hayley Purdy

Vote: All in favor

V. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Molly thanked the committee members for their service and the diverse perspectives that they bring to Washington County Housing Services, and then shared her background of 25 years in Community Development and Affordable Housing for the cities of New York, Minneapolis, and Portland (for the last 12 years). Her first goal in coming here is to listen and hear about the work needing to be done, and secondly to build out the team. She will be focusing on sustainable growth, continuous improvement, engaging with the community, strategic framework, as well as re-energizing the mission statement, vision statement, strategic goals, websites, and communications.

Molly announced that we have just hired a new Assistant Director for the Housing Authority of Washington County, Jill Chen. Jill is currently in her 7th year serving at the Portland Housing Bureau as the Housing Investments & Portfolio Preservation Manager, and is highly regarded as an expert with an international development background and has been doing residential and commercial real estate for the last 10+ years.

In the past several months, we've had several ground-breakings with both new projects and openings. Recently, we had the privilege of hosting the Governor of Oregon, Tina Kotek, at the Re-opening celebration of Safe Rest Pods on SW 17th Avenue, as she wanted to see first-hand the work of her Executive Order of unsheltered people moving into housing. Just Compassion in Tigard was highlighted by Jes and what they now provide in terms of shelter, meals, showers, laundry, storage, case managers, and extended hours – investing in long-term operations.

Ryan Cain asked if the groundbreakings were open to the public and if the Housing Advisory Committee members could be invited in the future. Jes Larson stated there is a third groundbreaking for the last pod shelter coming up next month in Aloha. There is a capacity issue, so they are working on how they can extend invitations. Nicole also confirmed that there are capacity issues. There is an Open House happening that is before the event for neighbors that is a come-one-come-all for the Safe Rest pods, along with Open Door (the service provider) and the church leadership who made their parking lot available to us for the Safe Rest pods. The Open House will be Thursday, February 1st from 4:00-6:00pm, and anyone interested in attending can let Nicole know. In the future, when there is space, the Housing Advisory Committee will be invited to groundbreakings and openings.

Molly added that the groundbreakings create opportunity to utilize various resources, like funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), plus other federal community development grants, and supportive housing services (SHS) resources, combining local and federal resources. Another program highlighted was the metro-funded Regional Long-term Rental Assistance program (RLRA), headed by Liz. We have just housed 1,000 households (which is about 1,700 people) since we

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started the program two years ago. Due to Washington County receiving \$8 million from the Governor's Executive Order to address homelessness, in addition to other sources, we were able to meet this goal of housing 1,700 by the end of 2023. We will get a little more resources again this year for shelter operations, such as the pod villages, that will eventually be supported by Supportive Housing Services (SHS).

The floor was opened for questions or comments for Molly:

John Epstein: How do we get data points that are needed to prove the work that's been done and to know the funding is being used correctly? How do we find out how the money was used, how many people were housed, where are they now, are they back on the street, and are they in permanent housing? Do we have mechanisms set up for that?

Molly responded by saying we have a whole data analyst team doing exactly that; tracking all the people so we can report to Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and everyone who gets federal resources. We work within a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to track people who are experiencing homelessness and benefitting not just from Continuum of Care funding, but also the Supportive Housing Services measure. Stakeholders want to know where the investments are going to. Considerations are not just the data, but how to package it, with the human stories and where the interventions have been most effective to identify the programs that are best able to prevent or end homelessness. We are using public relations firms as a communications strategy to help get the story out to the public.

Jes spoke about data quality and how we're able to track that data. We don't have a way to track people minute-to-minute and aren't aiming to do that. What our data shows is how people move from one part of our housing assistance to another. People's lives are complicated in how they move through the system. We cannot know in real-time where everybody is, and it's probably not humane to aspire to that as a goal, but we can get better and clearer at telling the story of how the resources are used with the data we do have.

David Bachman: There is tremendous value in transparency of the story. There are operational challenges and things being done to mitigate the challenges and get people to the next level. Getting ahead of that story is important and to not just look at the numbers, but everything that is behind the numbers.

Deena commented on RLRA vouchers:

Transcending Hope has had some great success in placing participants coming out of our Aid and Assist Community Restoration program. We were able to renovate one other property, and in Aid and Assist Community Restoration, once someone is found able, you need to scramble to find them housing. They might be on a list waiting for housing with Community Connect or some other wait list, and the RLRA vouchers have been amazing because we've been able to place them into



supportive housing with the RLRA vouchers. We've been able to place them into some nice, comfortable environments that are family-like and not discharging them back to homelessness. In doing this, we're able to gather data just for a certain period of time. We do entry and exit intakes, and because they're coming from one of our programs into one of our rentals, we have more longevity with them and have some great success stories. We are able to gather some real data. We also have Measure 110 houses where we have to collect data, but it is a difficult task if you're not connected to all the community partners, and you don't have the HMIS to clearly state exactly what the outcomes were 5 years out or 2 years out if someone transitions out of the programs.

Ryan: At the end of last year there were a lot of articles coming out about the success rate of permanent supportive housing. We know there's a lot of funding going into it right now. Washington County, from an OPB article, said that 98% of the permanent supportive housing tenants remained housed after 1 year, which is way above what people expected. Getting that word out there more is on-topic with this conversation.

Melinda Bell: **My question is can there be another organization like Community Connect that will also take calls for Washington County's homeless? Is Community Connect the only organization that is taking calls for Washington County's homeless population?**

Jes: Yes, we used to have one place (one door), Community Connect, which is still operated by Community Action. What we've added are assessors (about 75 of them) who are spread out throughout our community (outreach workers, shelter workers, housing liaisons, and 25 different organizations) that are also now doors into the same Community Connect system. If you are an individual unconnected to any one of those organizations, you're probably going to get connected through the Community Action phone line, but our goal is for all (especially unsheltered) to come through the system through personal relationships and interventions with trained case managers and not phone lines. For families who are seeking eviction prevention, which is a common experience, it makes sense to send those folks through the phone line rather than the outreach workers.

VII. RESOLUTIONS / ACTION ITEMS

A. Vote to Elect the 2024 HAC Chair and Vice-Chair

Melissa Sonsalla reached out to both Renee and Melinda last month regarding their positions as our existing Chair and Vice Chair. Both Renee and Melinda have expressed interest in continuing with another year in these positions. Because of the amount of new leadership on the Department side, we really support the continuity of having Renee and Melinda for another year. If other people are really interested in the role or have input, the time for that is now, and the topic was opened for discussion.



Motion to elect Renee Brouse as HAC Chair for 2024: John Epstein

Second: Nina Stafford

Vote: All in favor

Motion to elect Melinda Bell as HAC Vice-Chair for 2024: Dave Bachman

Second: Hayley Purdy

Vote: All in favor

VII. ONGOING BUSINESS

None

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Supportive Housing Services Updated Forecast

Allie Alexander-Sheridan & Nicole Stingham presented Supportive Housing Services Revenue Forecast and program planning updates:

- We housed the 1000th formerly homeless household through the Regional Long-term Rental Assistance (RLRA), with an overall system target goal of 1,650 households.
- By the end of 2023, we exceeded all of Governor Kotek's Executive Order goals (homeless state of emergency), including creating or extending 175 shelter beds.
- In 2021 we had 12 Case Managers and Outreach Workers; in 2023 that grew to 144.
- Shelter Capacity increased from 49 units in 2021 to 426 units in 2023.
- Housing Capacity increased from 775 households in 2021 to 2,510 households in 2023.
- SHS Expenditures: Year 1 (FY21/22) was about \$13 million, Year 2 (FY22/23) was close to \$47 million, Year 3 (FY23/24) is planned at \$86 million. This includes Regional Investment Fund, Other Supportive Services, Capacity Building, Short-term Housing Assistance, Long-term Rent Assistance, Permanent Supportive Housing, and Shelter Services.
- Metro Revenue forecasts for Washington County anticipated allocation of SHS revenue was presented from 2020-2023. For 2020 and 2021, there was not a lot of data yet to create a clear revenue projection. The revenue projection from 2022-2023 was compared with an updated projection created last fall 2023 from data from Metro, which is the most recent forecast. The projection from the SHS measure has increased by \$30-35 million from this current fiscal year to the FY28/29.
- SHS Financial Overview: We were planning on spending \$86 million, but now are planning to spend just over \$120 million in this fiscal year 23/24 via SHS funds. These are largely investments in one-time capacity building projects.
- Currently, we are planning on spending \$115 million in SHS revenue for FY24/25 to continue the ongoing homeless services expenditures that have been initiated in the past 2-1/2 years and will be sustainable long-term.



- **Nicole:** Discussed SHS current Carry-over planning well suited for one-time costs (for built infrastructure, fiscal stability, upstream interventions, and system infrastructure). This current three-year plan includes permanent supportive housing (PSH) acquisition, shelters, CATT and Access Centers, capacity building, eviction prevention, and program reserves.
- Supportive Housing will have 3 key components: Building a physical site where housing and services are co-located, providing ongoing rental assistance, and on-sight supportive services (such as addiction recovery, behavioral health supportive housing, and more).
- The Supportive Housing goal is 500 units. It will require a new strategy to reach this goal. Delays in supportive housing causes system challenges. The main issue is that there are very limited options for PSH units to be built into the existing affordable housing pipeline. This lack of permanent housing creates bottlenecks in the current shelter system. The remaining people who need housing also need a higher level of support. We're excited about a potential strategy to leverage these funds to take immediate action.
- Ways to enhance the system of care to meet community needs are to use Capital funding Notice of Fund Availability (NOFA) for supportive housing, use carry-over funds and newly anticipated revenue, catalyze potential and pending projects, and leverage Medicaid and other funding. NOFA could provide \$30-50 million starting in the Spring of 2024 for recovery housing, transitional housing, hotel conversion, and permanent supportive housing (PSH), while committing to ongoing operations funding with SHS.

John Epstein asked if this was one source or multiple sources of tax revenue and if it is sustainable. Nicole clarified it was one source. Molly stated she believes it is a sustainable tax revenue, but there are also reserves and contingency plans built into this.

Narendar Sahgal shared two comments:

1. He asked presenters to show the comparison of what is being accomplished in housing against the overall societal need in the county when showing charts/graphs of data and metrics. For example, homelessness, what percentage of the population is the county serving today versus what the demand or what the need is out there. It always helps to understand the progress we are making against the goal. The goal is not the budget itself. The goal is the demand that society needs from the county. He would like to see every presentation that has metrics for the data to be compared against what the demand is.
2. Regarding new capital supportive housing projects that we are undertaking, he would like to see a Net Zero goal established. The recent weather incidents continue to show that these things are going to be more of the norm rather than one or two incidents.

Nicole: It's challenging to discuss resources-to-need. SHS funds are revolutionary, but not scaled to the full need. We look at our local implementation plan as a metric and examine if we are meeting the goals that we collectively set as a community. Regarding the metric for shelter, for example, we exceeded that goal. For severe weather sheltering, 137 people were housed.

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Did we get everyone? No. Not everyone prefers to come inside. There were 400+ shelter beds opened and 137 people accessed the shelter. We are gearing towards year-round shelter beds. Other goals we have: We are about 2/3's of the way to our goal for our regional Long-term Rental Assistance program (RLRA) after 3 years towards a 10-year goal. We are also 3 years into a 10-year supportive housing goal of providing 500 units.

Jes added: We set ambitious and achievable goals with the resources we have to significantly scale up our capacity to address the emergency of homelessness and help people exit homelessness into housing stability. Looking at the bigger picture, homelessness is a by-product of a housing crisis writ large in our country across all income levels. We will always be the “emergency room” system responding to that crisis. As an example, our first regional affordable housing bond funded over 4,000 affordable homes, while the analysis showed the need was for 80,000 units. The need is tremendously greater than any one funding measure can address. As a society, we need to build back housing infrastructure.

Ryan Cain: I just wanted to bring up something that was impressive from the Center for Addictions Triage and Treatment (CATT) presentation. When they were planning their budget, they planned for the shortage of providers that are out there for supportive services and allocated budget before the project was opened to those providers so they could staff up, sometimes 6 months in advance. We’re going to be seeing that significant decrease in provider availability as all this funding gets new permanent supportive housing built around our state, and it’s an issue we need to address.

Allie: I appreciate you calling that out. We have actually borrowed from the CATT and our behavior health colleagues to implement that for some of our pilot programs. I think what you’re referring to is the pre-development work that they allocate to their partners. At times, our partners are allocating time and staff resources to support us for the launching of these projects, and we want to make sure they are fairly compensated for that.

Hayley expressed concern that there would not be adequate ongoing funding for the permanent supportive housing (PSH) being developed based on the pie chart presented. She also expressed concern that it was not possible to provide PSH on a larger scale. She observed that the current participants have much greater needs and have become a stress on the operators.

Jes gave a quick clarification to Hayley: The pie chart you saw was one-time capacity building. The ongoing operations of supportive housing are the other bar charts of funding the operations.

Melinda: Will these units accommodate participants who qualify for The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and be ADA accessible? Are the shelters and safe pods ADA accessible?



During her time as a shelter manager, she encountered a lot of people in wheelchairs that were not able to access hotel rooms, because they weren't ADA accessible.

Jes: Some of the pods are not ADA accessible. What we make sure of, as a system, is that there are ADA accessible options for anyone who will need that. Everyone who's asking for shelter comes in through that centralized system, and then we find the best shelter availability to serve them to make sure they have that option.

Melinda: Hotels don't have ADA accessible rooms. They have long-term tenants who don't move. When we want to place people who are in the HMIS system, we have nowhere to place them, because there are no openings for them. We need somewhere for them to be placed that are ADA accessible.

Jes: We agree we need to find housing where ADA participants can go. We need to learn about participants by name to help them via the case managers, outreach workers, and shelter providers who are providing advocacy so people can get their basic needs met.

Hayley: Regarding goal setting, she believes sustainability and having an enhanced- accessibility approach to development should be prioritized. The building code they are given as architects is not currently meeting the need for handicapped accessible structures, so that needs to be added.

Molly: We would like to have a discussion at a future date to address this topic of exploring different housing models to accommodate more people with disabilities.

Dave Bachman: We need to explore how much money is really needed to support permanent supportive housing units that are handicapped accessible.

B. Community Budget Outreach Survey Overview

Melissa Sonsalla & Nicole Stingh began covering the overview by stating that they are working to get the budget ready for the next fiscal year (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025). To support the planning, they created a survey and presented it to the Resident Advisory Board and the Housing and Supportive Services Network. The survey reflected Organizational Affiliation, Community, and Population Being Served. Feedback was solicited for ranking solutions to address housing/homelessness, how to advance racial equity, and identifying the largest unmet and/or ongoing housing needs in their community. Overall, the responses emphasize using budget commitments to uplift and empower communities of color towards more equitable outcomes across measures like housing, employment, health, and safety. The key unmet needs were lack of affordable housing supply and rental assistance programs to cover rising housing costs that outpace incomes in the community. Wraparound services for vulnerable groups and at-risk families were also emphasized.



Renee: This will be used as part of our budgeting process. This type of survey has not been done before, but instead used to use Listening Sessions. This community feedback is important.

C. Aloha Safe Rest Village Opening Event

Jes informed the committee that in two weeks we will open the Aloha Safe Rest Village on Monday, February 5th. There is an Open House next Thursday, February 1st from 4:00-6:00pm. Please contact Nicole Stingh if you are interested in attending.

D. Introduction of Bianetth Valdez and Nadia Mohammad

Melissa Sonsalla & Nicole Stingh began by announcing that the department has been able to hire three amazing new staff to fulfill our goal of prioritizing community engagement. Two are focused on the Homeless Services side. Bianetth Valdez will be serving the Affordable Housing side and will focus on our advisory committees. She will be the main point of contact as far as taking over the facilitation and guidance of this (HAC) committee and helping it grow. She will also serve with the Board of County Commissioners, Housing Authority Board of Directors, general community engagement, and engagement with our residents and tenants. She will also be working with our Resident Advisory Board, which was started a few years ago. Nadia Mohammad and Valentina Barrett are our Community Engagement and Advisory Bodies staff. Valentina will be focused on community engagement and supporting projects that will be externally focused. Nadia will be supporting the Homeless Solutions Advisory Council (which is our new body that combines the Continuum of Care and Homeless Plan Advisory Council).

Bianetth Valdez stated that she is happy and excited to be here and to combine her passions for equity and housing. She previously worked for the City of Beaverton and had a lot of experience with affordable housing and community engagement there. Before that, she worked at HomePlate for 5 years which serves homeless youth.

Nadia Mohammad stated that the orientation is tomorrow for the Homeless Solutions Advisory Council. They will start setting up subcommittees. She is open to suggestions and recommendations for people who you think might be helpful to the subcommittees. Right now, they are focusing on the Lived Experience Subcommittee as well as a Performance and Evaluation Subcommittee. Nadia also worked for the City of Beaverton at the Center for Mediation & Dialogue, focused on housing mediation and eviction prevention. She is happy to be serving here.



IX. DEPARTMENT UPDATES

A. Development Division Update/Presentation

Andrew Crampton introduced himself and provided a presentation on details for the Housing Authority's Portfolio Rehab project, next steps on projects that the department is beginning to scope for new construction, and the strategic planning the department will be doing as a Development Division with goals we would like to accomplish over the next 5 years. He began by providing an overview of the first and second phases of the Housing Authority's portfolio rehab project, calling out specifics on the Holly Tree and Tarkington Square buildings due to their scope and needs as the largest building in the project.

Moving onto the scope of work for the project, Andrew discussed that we will be addressing immediate needs for all the properties, as well as addressing ADA compliance, energy efficiency upgrades, life/safety concerns, and what are the most critical items to "triage" first. This fed into an overview of the current status of the Holly Tree and Tarkington Square properties and their specific concerns and needs with this scope of work. To highlight these needs and their costs, Andrew presented a funding/budget line item breakdown of costs for the properties and seeing how much the department is investing in these properties. Andrew continued by covering the project timeline, by highlighting the items like County Board authorization to approve the project in 2022, soliciting investor and lender proposals in the first two quarters of 2023, closing on the project in December of 2023, and finishing with property rehabilitation work being completed in 2025.

Hayley began the open floor questioning by asking how much of your costs when you're doing these renovations (for example Tarkington Square) require you to move residents out of these facilities, and how much of your costs are attributed to that?

Andrew: Residents relocate within the same unit. The budget for relocation is \$2 million, which is substantial. This is a key component to the project team and owners, and there is a relocation specialist who communicates with the residents. We do full moving services when they move out. A moving company comes and helps them with the move. Subs are well lined up. Once the unit is done, it's done, and people can move back into their home.

Molly thanked Andrew Crampton for all the work without a supervisor or a supervisor's supervisor, and for Cascade Management doing the property management.

B. Additional/Written Department Updates

Additional department updates can be found in the January 2024 HAC packet.



X. MEMBER COMMUNITY UPDATE

Melinda Bell: Sometimes participants are using RLRA vouchers to pay their utilities. Some don't have income to pay their utilities. Sometimes their utilities aren't being paid. Sometimes they're using their checks for other things. Have we figured out a way to not let that happen?

Liz Morris: Supportive Housing caseworkers are working with participants to build the skill to pay their bills. There needs to be some coaching and supporting of caseworkers to have the conversation with participants.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Melinda Bell

Second: Narendar Sahgal

Vote: All in favor

Meeting adjourned at 10:52 a.m.

Molly Rogers
Secretary / Executive Director