



Home, Opportunity, Planning, and Equity (HOPE) Advisory Board Meeting Approved Minutes

December 20, 2023 from 4 pm to 6 pm

Virtual Meeting



- Members Present:** Karyle Butcher; Bruce Butler; Alice Carter; Bryan Cotter; Matt Easdale; Joel Goodwin; Briae Lewis* (Corvallis City Councilor); Cindee Lolik*; Charles Maughan* (Corvallis Mayor); Pegge McGuire* CSC Director; Ailiah Schafer; Nancy Wyse* (County Commissioner).
- Excused:** Catherine Biscoe* (Co-Chair); Sarah Devine (Co-Chair); Ricardo Contreras; Cade Deloach; Aaron Lewis; Anita Earl; Ari Grossman-Naples; Barbara Hanley; Andrea Myhre
- Absent:**
- Staff Present:** Julie Arena (HOPE Coordinator); Paula Felipe (Benton County Public Health, recorder); Rebecca Taylor (Benton County Health Department).
- Guests:** *Executive Committee Members.

- I. **Welcome and Introductions.** Reminder of values such as inclusivity, curiosity, kindness, open mindedness and respect.
- II. **Public Comments (limited to 2-3 minutes).** No Comment.
- III. **Approval of Minutes: MOTION** made by Pegge McGuire to approve the October 25, 2023 minutes. (There was no meeting in November). **Seconded** by Nancy Wyse; All in favor; **MOTION** passed. **Abstained:** Bryan Cotter
- IV. **New Benton County Health Department Website.**
Review of Coordinated Homeless Response page: Our communications team has worked very hard on this website:
 - All old links/bookmarks, favorites, etc. will direct to the new website, but will encounter a “404 error” and folks will have to navigate through the site to find what they’re looking for.
 - Here’s the link to the sign-up form (it is a Constant Contact link so no change): <https://bit.ly/HOPENewsAndUpdates>
 - HOPE Advisory Board link will redirect you to the new page, even if you click this old link: <https://bit.ly/HopeAdvisoryBoard>
 - Current HOPE website: <https://health.bentoncountyor.gov/advisory-committees/#hope-board>
 - The former Housing and Homelessness page now redirects to: <https://health.bentoncountyor.gov/coordinated-homeless-response/>
- V. **Unity Shelter Update on HB 5019 and Services. (Shawn Collins, Executive Director; director@unityshelter.org).**
 - Overview. Spectrum of Need. (Focus on unhoused and transitional).

- See articles: https://www.kezi.com/news/local/corvallis-homeless-shelter-gets-1-2-million-to-reopen/article_667422d0-9ead-11ee-af15-ebc3b4531e86.html
- <https://nbc16.com/news/local/benton-county-awards-12-million-to-unity-shelter-to-increase-emergency-shelter-capacity>
- Mission: Provide Safe shelter through collaborative care.
- Vision: Community supported collaboration across services and sites, to ensure safe shelter, stability, access to basic hygiene and resources for persons experiencing homelessness, in a setting appropriate to each individual or couple's needs and circumstance.
- Values: Collaboration, Community Engagement, Safety
- Range of Services: Low barrier; Hygiene Center for unsheltered (showers, laundry, basic needs, food, toilets, fresh water, referrals to services, connections to case management); Emergency Shelter: Men's, Room at the Inn, Third St Commons: medical recovery rooms; access to case management and referrals, showers, laundry, food, safety; Transitional Housing: SafePlace Microshelters: Clean and sober options available; limited wheelchair accessible units; individual units with heat/ac, power, locking door; case management for housing next steps; singles and couples.
- Financial realities forced changes in June
- Stop shelter at 211 SE Chapman
- Co-Ed Shelter at Room at the Inn for 25 men and 25 women
- Changes across all programs to achieve \$75k-\$100k in monthly savings allowed us to run off reserves, donations, and grants from City of Corvallis Social Service Fund and IHN-CCO.
- Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) funding made available through the Coordinated Homeless Response Office, and direct support from OHCS, allowed a return to full service in all programs through March 2024, and through June 2025 at Men's.
- HB 5019 planning efforts began this summer in communities across Oregon through "local planning groups." In Benton County, the Coordinated Homeless Response Office and providers served as the local planning group.
- Men's Shelter funding requested through "Shelter Addendum" to the community plan. Reductions from original ask, but still able to re-open and renovate Men's and expand capacity for women at Room at the Inn.
- Renovations focused on meeting code requirements for year-round operations in the 211 SE Chapman building.
- Additional toilets and showers are primary target for renovation.
- Currently meeting required toilets and shower capacity through portable toilets and Benton County shower trailer.
- Year-round operations and expanded ability to deliver services by late 2024!
- Shelter Operations funding for Room, Third St, SafePlace, Emergency Hotel Shelter through March – short session may provide additional \$.
- Unity Shelter: Program Partnerships
- First Congregational United Church of Christ and partner churches
- First United Methodist Church
- Corvallis Evangelical Church
- Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
- Church of the Good Samaritan
- Life Community Church

- Corvallis Daytime Drop-In Center
- Good Samaritan Mobile Medical and the Homeless Resource Team
- Benton County Health Department Harm Reduction & Health Navigation
- Coordinated Homeless Response Office
- Veterans Services
- Corvallis Housing First Case Management Team
- Linn-Benton Food Share
- Stone Soup of Corvallis
- First Alternative Co-op
- Meals on Wheels
- Community Restaurants, Donors and Volunteers
- Website: www.unityshelter.org

Questions:

- Karyle: Men's shelter re-opened on Dec. 4th. What is long term sustainability plan for funding? Every year rely on grants? Shawn: Good question! As a non-profit, on-going challenge to generate revenue, so rely on state grants; foundations; private sources, and so on. Always on the hustle for funds and need more diverse mix of funding streams. Lucky we had the reserves that we did; from June thru Nov everyday we had discussion on whether to close everything—before we got funding, we had about 4 weeks of funding for payroll and basic rent to hold properties; but close to being insolvent. So, working hard to expand development and working with donors and to make more contacts with foundations and others. Some funds only available if adding new shelter beds. Hope State is learning a lot on how to keep shelter system running and keep funding streams going. Some economic realities will see increase in number of people who are homeless; need more affordable housing; have opioid crisis; economic structure does not support housing.
- Pegge McGuire: agree with Shawn: right now, education system is in crisis financially; legislators and people tired of issue of homelessness, and it is not going away; it is getting worse. Most falling into homelessness are seniors who cannot afford the housing they are in. Some funds for building affordable housing but can't keep people in the housing; complex needs with multiple wrap around services. E.g., 80-year-old owned his home; wife died; met someone who was homeless; acute health issues; got them into hotel and then rental housing; landlords nervous about their behavior; mental health issues prevented them from ability to function well in permanent housing.
- Julie: State is working on sustainable housing; costs to transition people out of homelessness; varies; OHCS reaching out asking how much it costs and what types of beds. They are trying to learn. Hopeful now because they are asking those questions.
- Coquille R. (Guest): Are you working with adult foster care system at all? Shawn: Unity partners with Corvallis Housing First on case management services; we have a lot who need assisted living or adult foster care. Access to those beds is limited; don't have enough of those beds; crisis is going to grow with aging population; physical and mental illness challenges. We operate 160 beds; and most are over 50 years old and health issues including Parkinson's and dementia and congestive heart failure and diabetes and other debilitating illnesses.
- Pegge: challenge getting the insurance coverage—some costs going up – and fewer providers covering them due to some fear of what could happen. So other factors involved

in providing these services.

- R. Coquille (Guest) shared the following in the CHAT: “I received mental health first aider training through this program. <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/coast-forest-mental-health-promotion-rural-oregon> Sharing it in case there is an opportunity to connect programs with OSU.”

VI. Continuum of Care services (CSC) Update. (Pegge McGuire pmcguire@communityservices.us). Printed in Albany Democrat-Herald, Nov. 14, 2023: “Acting Executive Director of the Community Services Consortium Pegge McGuire addresses the Adair Village City Council on Nov. 7. She is seeking support from cities across Linn, Benton, and Lincoln Counties for an effort that would see those counties break away from the state's rural counties in order to net more homeless dollars for service providers.”

- 22 municipalities so far given presentations on basics of Continuum of Care (COC).
- Local Planning Groups and other groups; overlap of homeless services providers.
- Coordinated Homeless response group; and other groups required by State fundings.
- To receive HUD funding (grant) must belong to a COC—term HUD uses.
- COC can be the think tank and leadership and structure and register with HUD.
- COC must oversee the point time count of homeless.
- Must have homeless management info system; store data of clients and services.
- Must have coordinated entry system/list. Identify and give HUD approved questionnaire to receive data/responses to assess vulnerability of client. Assign priorities based on vulnerabilities.
- Part of Rural Oregon Continuum of Care. Jackson, Clackamas; Multnomah; Deschutes; Jefferson; Marion, Polk, registered with HUD. Blue counties (26 are one continuum of care.) Capacities are different in the counties.
- Decides who to apply for funding and tool to assess vulnerability.
- How to manage and how to do point and time count.
- Marion and Polk pulled out of rural regional COC and doing well with grant funding.
- Time for us to pull out of regional COC.
- Traditional pipelines for funding no longer available; Governor made some changes to policy and funding streams.
- Pegge asking each community in Linn Benton and Lincoln to support idea of Tri county continuum, so far, of 22 municipalities, 6 say unsure; 2 said no; the rest said yes.
- In process of putting together materials about CSC providing services.
- CSC maintains coordinated entry and point in time count.
- CSC will show all the documents; to register as COC as pull out of regional system.
- Next year around summer, HUD will announce their annual competition; and we can decide which of our tri county partners can submit applications to obtain additional funding.
- HUD funding helpful funding beyond the state and local dollars.
- Julie: questions about need and benefits of COC; having autonomy to change.
- Julie: question about data tech system; tracking shelter provider system. Shawn’s group created Shelter ware.
- Pegge: Vulnerability Index Provider Service Tool; how people are rated and ranked for vulnerability; that tool lacks some elements related to equity.
- At city council meetings, people deeply engaged and interested in topic of homelessness;

people want to have own region of COC. Will send out requests to our provider partners and ask for letters of support. We have a draft letter for signatures.

- Email Pegge McGuire at: pmcguire@communityservices.us

VII. Updates from City of Corvallis Housing Services

- Hosting a hybrid class for grantees to share info about Corvallis funding programs outside the RFP process to answer questions. January 11th at 4pm at Madison Ave Meeting Room and virtual.
- COVID waivers are now gone for CDBG funding, now able to allocate about 15% like normal, roughly \$82k annually to all social services. The rest of CDBG is capital projects, brick and mortar, housing.
- The first of over 450 units of affordable housing in Corvallis is coming online. Families are moving into affordable rentals located at 53rd and County Club. The development is 53rd flats. Details about additional affordable units can be found here.
<https://www.corvallisoregon.gov/cd/page/affordable-housing>

VIII. HOPE Bylaws-Update & HB 4123 Strategic Plan (Julie Arena)

- Formation of a Coordinated Homeless Response Office (CHRO)
- Scope and Purpose of Amendments (see slide)
- New Structure; executive committee works with coordinated office staff.
- HOPE advisory board continues with forum and liaison with governing bodies and give input on on-going basis.
- **Integrating the organizational components required by House Bill 4123 for a Benton County Coordinated Homeless Response System that includes:**
 - Formation of a Coordinated Homeless Response Office (CHRO) and hiring necessary support staff. Includes:
 - HOPE Program Coordinator, HOPE Project Manager, and Grant Researcher and Writer.
 - An Advisory Board with representation from the governing body from each member government.
 - To date, Benton County has entered a Memorandum of Understanding (HB 4123 MOU) with the Cities of Corvallis and Philomath, and Community Services Consortium (CSC).
 - Support coordinated communications, public engagement and outreach for policy development.
- **Scope and Purpose of Amendments: Presented to Board of Commissioners 10/24 & HOPE on 10/27**
 - Create clear distinction between the operational and policy functions within the Coordinated Homeless Response System.
 - Formalize the formation of the Advisory Board as specifically required by HB 4123.
 - Define the role of the HOPE Board within the System.
 - Increase transparency of the System for improved community engagement.

IX. Coordinated Homeless Response System: The HOPE Advisory Board's Role.

- Forum for community and stakeholder engagement, consisting of a wide array of community expertise and representation of groups working on homelessness, housing, and social determinants of health.

- Liaison between the community and the governing boards of each member government of the Intergovernmental Council in collaboration with the Coordinated Office for policy improvement.
- Input to support the development and ongoing updates of the 5-year Strategic Plan.
- Next Steps: Meeting on 12/21 with city and county partners to discuss HB5019 rehousing funds. Also, working internally and with community partners to continue to align with local planning group priorities.
- HB4123: In January, HOPE Executive Committee meets to move forward HB 4123 Strategic Plan adoption.

X. HOPE Board Advocacy Discussion:

- Nancy: HOPE's role and advocacy: If interested, can show up as community member to meeting or email or call; but HOPE board is not an advocacy group. Say I am here as an individual and not speaking for HOPE.
- Roundtable opportunities: Pegge: we hear about opportunities on city council agenda and county agendas; to connect with media; so, if we are aware and can share with one another; we can appear as private citizens and share our interest.
- Nancy: If read something about elected officials, it is helpful and good to reach out and ask before getting angry about misunderstandings. Give us the chance to clarify.

Meeting Adjourned at 5:25 pm