

Home, Opportunity, Planning, & Engagement (HOPE) Advisory Board to Benton County

Approved Minutes January 14, 2026 from 4 pm to 5 pm Virtual Meeting

Members Present: Jessica Andrade (Philomath City Councilor); Bruce Butler (IHN-CCO); Rachel McEneny (Benton County Administrator); Jim Moorefield (Corvallis City Councilor); Jennifer Sanders (Linn-Benton Housing Authority); Mark Shepard (Corvallis City Manager—excused—Paul Bilotta (City of Corvallis Community Development Director) as proxy for this meeting); Ryan Vogt (Cascades West and CSC); Chris Workman (Philomath City Manager); and Nancy Wyse (Benton County Commissioner).

Excused:

Absent: None

Staff Present: April Holland (Benton Health Department Director); Brigetta Olson (City of Corvallis Housing Manager); Rebecca Taylor (CHRO Program Manager); Julie Arena (CHRO); Paula Felipe (Recorder).

Community Members: None

I. Welcome and Introductions.

II. Public Comment: none.

III. Approval of prior meeting minutes.

- a. **MOTION** made by Nancy Wyse to approve the November 2025 meeting minutes; Seconded by Jessica Andrade; MOTION passed.
- b. Abstained from vote: Bruce Butler, Jim Moorefield, Jennifer Sanders, Paul Bilotta for Mark Shephard, Ryan Vogt.

IV. Board Member Introductions: All members shared something they are looking forward to in 2026 (professionally or personally). Highlights included:

- Organizational growth and team development
- Funding challenges and advocacy
- Regional housing coordination
- New career exploration
- Improved efficiency across agencies
- Personal goals (e.g., financial goals, physical health goals)

V. HOPE Priorities in 2026 and Work Group Topics

a. Co-Chair Elections in April: HOPE Bylaws: VI. OFFICERS:

- i. The following officers shall be elected from the HOPE Board membership annually at the first regular meeting of each year:
- ii. Chair: the Chair shall have the responsibility of conducting all meetings and

hearings in an orderly manner. The Chair may not initiate a motion, but may second, and shall vote on each issue after the question is called. The Chair, in consultation with CHRO staff and with input from HOPE Board members shall set the agenda for each meeting.

- iii. Vice Chair: the Vice Chair shall be responsible for conducting the meetings and hearings in the absence of the Chair.
- iv. Please let Rebecca or Julie know if anyone is interested in serving as Co-Chair.

b. Two main CHRO areas of interest that would be supported by a HOPE Work Group in 2026

- i. The Pathway from unsheltered homelessness into shelter/transitional living and to permanent housing.
- ii. Coordination between funders to leverage rental assistance from initial housing placement to long term rent support.

VI. Coordinated Homeless Response system needs from HOPE:

- a. Coordination between operational decision makers who have authority to include other departments to collaborate with CHRO in work groups for system improvements.
- b. Liaising back to member governments and organizations for awareness, buy-in, and policy change when relevant.
- c. Focus on where we have local and regional control to make change.

VII. The Strategic Plan

- a. Community and Organizational Systems and Policy Change
- b. Comprehensive Care Coordination
- c. Prevention
- d. Street Outreach and Rapid Response
- e. Housing
- f. Community Engagement, Inclusion, & Neighborhood Belonging

VIII. Two Main CHRO areas of interest that would be supported by a HOPE Work Group in 2026.

- a. **Improving the path from unsheltered homelessness to housing with Housing 360 Funding as an additional resource.**
 - i. Street Outreach best practices.
 - ii. Encampment response coordination across agencies.
 - iii. Connections and referrals to resources while stabilizing.
 - iv. Freeing up shelter and micro shelter beds to add space for people exiting encampments.
 - v. *Housing 360 Funding as an additional resource.

- b. **Coordination for best leveraging of funding streams that support sheltering, rehousing, short term rent, and long-term rent.**
 - i. Statewide Sheltering Plan (SSP) for shelter funds.
 - ii. Rapid Rehousing (RRH) funds to support housing navigation and housing entry costs.
 - iii. Rent Assistance:
 - 1115 Waiver rent assistance and ongoing tenancy supports.
 - CSC rent assistance – time limited
 - Long-term rental assistance (LTRA) from state to CHRO – duration unknown but up to 2 years at this time.
 - Section 8 Vouchers – can be lifelong.

IX. The Ask for HOPE Members:

- a. Your understanding of these two topic areas.
- b. Your Buy-in and endorsement that CHRO can move forward with the planning process to flesh out these work groups' scope/membership needs.
- c. Your commitment to identify staff and empower them to engage with CHRO and to help your staff understand the connections and importance of coordination.
- d. Your grace and flexibility as CHRO works to create a scope and timeline with a shifting landscape from the state.

X. CHRO's commitment to HOPE:

- a. At 4/8/26 meeting:
 - i. Co-Chairs election
 - ii. CHRO returns with more fleshed out proposals for work groups.

XI. Coordinated Homeless Response Office (CHRO) Update (Rebecca Taylor and Julie Arena)

- a. Regional Coordinator Role: Benton County as Regional Coordinator in Statewide Shelter Program.
- b. RFI/RFQ for system components: CHRO is preparing a Request for Information or Qualifications to gather models for operating supported housing at new sites (Van Buren and Harrison). Planning to release in early February.
- c. PIT Count 1/28-2/6: Scheduled for late January (Sheltered: Jan 28; Unsheltered: 10-day window).
 - CHRO is coordinating volunteers, site assignments, and incentives for participation.
 - City of Corvallis shared efforts to support accurate counting, including staff tracking tent locations.
- d. Property Manager outreach: Years-long effort funded through IHN-CCO's DST has led to strong relationships and **92% housing retention**.

- 58 households leased up (as of meeting date), including partnerships with private-market and affordable housing property managers.
 - Upcoming focus groups and surveys will gather structured feedback.
- e. Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool(FHSP): Continues to support housing case management, lease-ups, and ongoing tenancy support.
- Integrated with CHRO service delivery and state-funded programs.

XII. Partner Roundtable Updates:

- a. Benton County Health Department (April Holland)**
- Alerted the Board to national SAMHSA grant terminations (approx. \$2B nationwide).
 - No immediate notice of local impacts, but potential risks to behavioral health, overdose prevention, medication-assisted treatment, and peer services.
 - CHRO/County monitoring state communications.
- b. City of Corvallis (Paul Bilotta)**
- Described city support for PIT count through tracking of tents and expanded daytime drop-in options.
 - Observed shift in unsheltered locations due to changes in enforcement.
- c. Public Engagement & Volunteer Support**
- Jessica requested PIT count training information; Julie will follow up directly. This year's training is via short instructional videos rather than in-person sessions
- d. Philomath City and Commonwealth – affordable development of 30 to 40 units.** City of Philomath owns a parcel of property in Philomath.
- Rebecca worked directly with Commonwealth to set up an MOU so that we can have 10% of those 30 to 40 units set aside for FHSP participant referrals.
 - Example of successful coordination between cities and FHSP and affordable developers. Still awaiting State funding for development.

HOPE Website: <https://health.bentoncountyor.gov/advisory-committees/#hope-board>

Coordinated Homeless Response Office (CHRO) Website:
<https://health.bentoncountyor.gov/coordinated-homeless-response/>

Meeting Adjourned at 5:00 pm