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

Approved Minutes

July 8, 2026 from 4 pm to 5 pm

Virtual Meeting

Total Membership:	Jessica Andrade (HOPE Chair; Philomath City Councilor); Bruce Butler (IHN-CCO); Rick Crager (Benton County Administrator); Jim Moorefield (HOPE Co-Chair; Corvallis City Councilor); Jennifer Sanders (Linn-Benton Housing Authority); Mark Shepard (Corvallis City Manager); Ryan Vogt (Cascades West and CSC); Chris Workman (Philomath City Manager); and Nancy Wyse (Benton County Commissioner).
Excused Members:	Rick Crager (April Holland served as Rick's delegate); Mark Shepard (Brigitta Olson served as proxy); Chris Workman (Chelsea Starner served as Chris' proxy); Ryan Vogt; Nancy Wyse
Absent Members:	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**. Chair Jessica Andrade welcomes HOPE members to the meeting. Chelsea Starner, the Assistant City Manager of Philomath, is serving as a proxy for Chris Workman today. Reminder of culture and conduct, such as be respectful and have fun.

II. **Public Comment: Shawn Collins**: I want to speak about the conditions outside and what's needed in the community. PIT count over last couple of years has seen a dramatic jump from years 24 to 25; a smaller jump of about 3 ½ percent from years 25 to 26. But if you look at number of people out without shelter in January without shelter—it would take double the amount of shelter beds more than we currently have to actually bring everybody into shelter. I think that mirrors state of Oregon. There's a very large number of people that far exceeds the number of shelter beds. We need to acknowledge that, but it is not as simple as saying people need to just come into shelter; there are not enough beds available, and also difficult to line up the right kinds of shelter. Congregate shelter is roughly at capacity now. And it is not really an ideal shelter situation. We need shelter for families and couples. We need greater capacity to support recovery or medical respite. We need shelter that can support people that are in behavioral or health crisis. And we need a lot of wraparound support services. These things, none of them are easy or cheap to achieve. I think that part of the concern that we have right now generally is that funding is constrained. The kind of innovation that we need to actually really make a difference in the community and get more people inside and on their path to housing can't be done without additional resources and some innovation, some willingness to

try some new models and methods to bring people in, to make accommodations that work for people that really might not be able to function in a congregate shelter. And if they were coming into a non-congregate shelter, would still need significant wraparound supports. When you look at the funding that the state of Oregon has been providing, it's not adequate right now to sustain the baseline of services that we've built carefully over the last 10 years. And in the next year, that funding is likely to be reduced. So it's imperative that the broader community agencies beyond the city and county begin to find ways to creatively fund some of the needs that we have in this community. Because we have a lot of folks out that do deserve to be in a safe and healthy space. Thank you.

Jessica Andrade asked: Can you talk to me more or tell me the difference between congregate shelters and other types? I'm still very new to this area of knowledge, and so I would appreciate that.

Shawn Collins replied: Congregate shelter: we operate two different low barrier congregate shelters. Think of a large room with bunk beds or single beds on the floor. You're sharing a space with a lot of other people. At the men's shelter, we've got at Men's Inn, that room at the Inn, the women's shelter, we've got 50 beds in each of those. If you have social anxiety or PTSD or any number of things that might make that a really difficult space to be in, that can be a very uncomfortable space, even if it's not full. It can feel very full. Non-congregate shelter would be more like what we offered when we had 3rd Street Commons, and people have their own rooms, or in our micro shelters, which are considered transitional housing, where you've really got your own space with a locked door. I think that there are lots of different ways to offer some non-congregate shelter, such as setting up privacy barriers or even like cubicle walls to create some more private space for people. But right now, that's not an option that we could easily exercise in our shelters without dramatically curtailing the number of beds that we offer.

Chair Andrade: Thank you! I'm glad that you spoke more about those differences. It's very helpful.

III. Approval of prior meeting minutes.
   a. MOTION to approve the April 2026 minutes made by Bruce Butler; Seconded by Jim Moorefield; MOTION passed.

IV. CHRO (Coordinated Homeless Response Office): Staff Progress Update and Discussion: (Rebecca Taylor and Julie Arena) Refresher: What our coordinated system needs from HOPE in 2026:
   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.

Overarching Goal for 7/8:

- Recommendations to assist us in approaching these topics?
- Feedback or guidance to CHRO as we continue in this work?
- Understanding that shelters will close before next summer without additional funding.

d. **Shelter Funding Gap:** Estimated Need versus Capacity: 570 need shelter; 347 unsheltered individuals; 222 Sheltered individuals. (Estimate based on 2026 PIT data). Shelter Beds: 300:

- Unity (men's 50, women's 50, SafePlace 39, motel beds 38): 177 low barrier beds
- COI: 95 higher barrier beds (congregate & non-congregate)
- Jackson Street Youth Shelter (JSYS): 10 shelter beds for 10–17-year-olds
- CARDV 8 shelter beds for DV situations.
- Severe weather sheltering: congregate sheltering at church & motel rooms (varied based on severe weather activation)

*Determined by shelter bed survey in 2025

Shelter Funding 2024-2025 Snapshot:

Revenue Source:	Estimate:
State Funding: OHCS	2,878.864
Private Funding: (Corporate/Philanthropic/Individual)	2,079,928
IHN-CCO	799,095
Federal Funding	659,224
State Funding: Other	402,890
City Funding	271,063
Total:	7,091,064

*To see visual representation graph illustrating the shelter funding sources, see the PowerPoint of the meeting on page 12.

e. Uncertain Future Landscape

- SSP Phase II is approximately $2,460,058. '26-'27 Fiscal year.
- The SSP Phase II represents a ~$500k reduction from previous years. SSP will not meet the need for shelters that relied on previous OHCS shelter funding.
- As a result, we are facing a gap that will require difficult decisions, including how we prioritize resources and where additional support may be needed.

f. The Ask for HOPE Members (Rebecca Taylor):

- Engage in advocacy at the local and state level for increased funding for emergency sheltering.
- Articulate how the reduced shelter funding will negatively impact your sectors.

- Advocate for utilizing additional state funding to keep our shelters open to avoid the costs that will be incurred in your sector due to shelter closures.
- We need continued leadership support for areas beyond CHRO's purview.

g. CHRO Progress Updates:

- Improved Referral Pathways and Accurate Data Collection
  - Updating our documentation to create a Universal Referral Form (URF) for housing and supports for all providers. The URF incorporates our new coordinated entry (CE) assessment tool.
  - Implementing a Universal Referral Process to reduce duplication and streamline housing pathways. Leading collaborative CE case conferencing to roll out new URF with a pilot group of 10 households from the FHSP referral pool.
  - Hosting training on the new URF and process for consistent referrals and CE data entry into HMIS.
  - CHRO has engaged providers and has support to move forward with these improvements.
- Universal Referral for Housing and Supports System
- Street Outreach and Encampment Response Coordination
  - Executed a contract with Corvallis Daytime Drop-in Center (CDDC) for increased staff capacity with funding from Housing 360 grant for the street outreach and response team (SORT) side of encampment response.
  - CHRO working to make sure there is shelter capacity at Unity, however we are facing a funding shortfall.
  - Coordination and collaboration with Corvallis Parks & Rec and CPD, county forensic diversion and behavioral health.
  - Neighborhood focus areas – multijurisdictional response team included discussions with Parks & Rec, CPD, CDDC, and county BH.
  - City working on rehabilitation of two properties for next step housing transition capacity.
  - Finalized first draft of outcome measures for street outreach and submitted to OHCS.
- Regional Assessment and Plan for the Statewide Shelter Program
  - Informing the Statewide Sheltering Program (SSP) with ongoing feedback to the state about the structure and funding.
  - CHRO staff submitted a draft of the Plan to OHCS on June 29. Parts are left blank until CHRO staff present to the county Board of Commissioners (BOC) on July 7. Once the BOC have reviewed and acknowledged the budget implications in the plan, the CHRO will finalize the Plan and submit an updated copy to OHCS.

- More CHRO Progress Updates:
  - CHRO continues to engage property managers with coordination from City partners.
  - CHRO coordination with the City of Corvallis includes ongoing coordination around key properties, such as Van Buren and Harrison, to ensure local infrastructure planning complements our regional obligations.
  - CHRO staff are working closely with the City of Corvallis to align the scope of services supported by city and county homelessness funding with the expectations of the Statewide Shelter Program (SSP).
  - This collaboration is focused on creating consistent, integrated service standards that strengthen our regional system and ensure local investments directly support our shared state-mandated shelter and rehousing objectives.
- What is CHRO doing to fill gaps?
  - Aligning city-county funding priorities to strengthen systemwide impact.
  - Strengthening provider capacity with formal partnerships and contract requirements through the Flexible Housing Subsidy Pool. Measurable outcomes and accountability.
  - Delivering robust training and support for community wide provider network to improve service delivery and impact.
  - Partnering with United Way to steward a shared volunteer recruitment portal, reducing provider burden and increasing volunteer access.
  - Partnering with Affordable Housing developers and local property managers to improve access to affordable units so FHSP funds can stretch further. Finishing an MOU with another developer this month!
  - Pursued HRSN reimbursement to leverage Medicaid funding for rent and tenancy supports – we need support with this one.
- CHRO's Commitment to HOPE:
  - Summer CHRO News & Updates email sent out by end of July.
  - At 10/14/26 meeting:
  - CHRO returns with updates about the statewide sheltering plan and any funding updates.
  - CHRO plans to have progress with work group topics and may need further guidance from leadership.
  - We hope to hear any updates from HOPE members about advocacy efforts in their own networks that benefit shelters.

DISCUSSON/COMMENTS:

Jim Moorefield: more specific about the 500,000 reduction? Rebecca: it is an estimate at this point. We had investments during covid; able to sustain some shelter. Then we had

HB 5019; was budget executive order declaring emergency on homelessness. This is a general overview: Oregon's plan to sustain shelter over covid era. Benton County was administering dollars through the OPSS and HB 5019. The number of beds tied to funding was also tied to the phase one statewide shelter program allocation. The allocation that came through did not match the same level of investment with OPSS and HB 5029 combined. Phase one statewide shelter program grant and contract obligated Benton County to more than the beds that were funded by those previous investments (without the same allocation). So, House Bill 1519 was not an adequate allocation even to sustain the shelter that we originally applied for through HB 1519. Unity Shelter and our providers with help from city and county, were able to sustain that shelter through that fiscal year that HB 1519 applied to; but we still saw closure of beds. That 500,000 estimate is a moving target as far as that gap because it is based on the existing alternative funding resources available. I'm working with our shelter provider to make sure in future we are able to meet the needs of our community.

Jim Moorefield: besides our commitment to not lose shelter beds or not reduce services, we have to be heading in the other direction, as Shawn talked about earlier. I asked about the source of the reduction to know who to advocate with – it sounds complex in terms of how funding has rolled out in recent years. Sounds like some of sources were intended to be temporary. Question is not just where the reductions are coming from, but also where the opportunities for advocacy? Who are the affective advocates, especially with the state? One place to go is with the legislature and Oregon Housing and Community Services. They set up a regional system of shelter coordination. Who are advocacy groups putting together packages of requests and how do we support their efforts?

Rebecca: hope to get feedback from HOPE board members about effective advocacy. And, plan to give more targeted guidance where appropriate.

Jim Moorefield: what networks/service providers are involved in and what they say about opportunities for advocacy? Question for future discussion.

April: Efforts underway for several counties, including Oregon Association of Counties and advocacy groups to have conversation around asks and opportunities to participate. One space that is rapidly coming together and I'll be glad to report back to their group to keep you informed.

Julie: Just to clarify: you wanted to know who is putting together packages, so we can focus advocacy efforts and dial in. And, we are asking our staff to touch base with service providers to find out about whose involved with advocacy and if they would like to make recommendations for support.

Jim Moorefield: yes, and to expand on networks: CCOs have their network—like what is happening with Medicaid reimbrusements; and nonprofits have their networks—the Oregon Housing Alliance (Brigitta) might have a sense on how active they are; and then the League of Oregon Cities, and community action agencies—would want to hear how they are addressing this issue too.

Brigetta Olson: Next year is a long session for the legislature. So they're working now in the fall to figure out all the bills and what's going to move for 2027. It's probably too late to get stuff into 2020. We need to get into 2027, of course, but also we need to address some of the gaps that will be happening earlier before the biennium ends too. So it's twofold, emergency sort of situations and needs, and then also longer term sustainability and reaching out to all the entities that Jim just referenced is important, along with some others that we probably haven't thought about yet.

Jim: Yes, it is important to understand those legislative packages are being lined up now, so opening of legislative session is too late to get the ask packages together. The agenda is set this fall and what is being requested. Curious what OHCS will be asking.

Rebecca: Next chapter: leverage funding from state; advocate to OHSC for flexibility for rapid rehousing funding and shelter funding to reduce risk of unsheltered homelessness. Referral process helps with pathways. Look forward to reciprocity and collaboration that requires all the agencies around the table today. Ultimately, the goal of the statewide shelter program is to create a standardized approach to serving folks that access shelter throughout the state of Oregon, while also accounting for the unique flexibility and needs of each community.

We are proud to have submitted our plan to the state and also in that plan provides significant feedback on how local government can play a key role in helping the state understand how best to roll out a standardized statewide shelter program. So we do have that available if we want to make sure that that is accessible to all folks. But as we said in the beginning, it was challenging to truly set ourselves up for aspirational goals in that plan based on the funding situation we're under. But at the same time, we were able to highlight the magnitude of work that our community has made over many years and really demonstrate the foundational work that we have done with the investments that we got from the state and how we intend to move forward with those, that foundational work. So we're really proud to be in a position to give that type of information to the state on behalf of our whole community.

V. Coordinated Homeless Response Round Table Updates:

- Jim Moorefield: opportunities for advocacy: October is too far away; reasonable to have quarterly meetings for breadth of topics; wonder if we can do something in interim on funding gaps and advocacy; need to think about this sooner. Have a meeting in the interim. Talk about short term gap of $500,000—October too far away for that discussion too.
- April: want to share what plan is from city and county partners; might be space for another virtual connection; not ready to schedule it now; but will keep the group informed on those next steps and will need all support moving forward. Spaces to talk through our short-term funding needs; talking with county leadership about agenda items for local govts on sharing info on funding gaps and solutions and commitments. Those will be shared with you as well. Pieces in the works in next couple of weeks.

VI. HOPE Communications Resources:

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

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

The next HOPE meeting is: October 14, 2026 at 4 pm

Meeting Adjourned at 5 pm