



Sonoma County Homeless Coalition Board

Homeless Coalition Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 20th, 2024

1:00 – 5:00 PM, Pacific Time – Meeting held via Zoom

Zoom Recording:

https://sonomacounty.zoom.us/rec/share/GBRCEFo-xmWvV0zFIdPHGSsnEdlFleSABYI1zdUQOf9U8HwRAk7PtNK_qBFGRWEj.B6x2ksHkD1nBlriQ

Passcode: gj^8C%TK

Welcome and Roll Call Introductions (00:03:21–00:10:57)

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

Present: Jennielynn Holmes, Catholic Charities | Ben Leroi, Santa Rosa Community Health | Natalie Rogers, City of Santa Rosa | Dennis Pocekay, City of Petaluma | Sean Hamlin, proxy for Chris Coursey, Sonoma County Board of Supervisors | Martha Cheever, Community Development Commission | Una Glass, City of Sebastopol | Jackie Elward, City of Rohnert Park | Dannielle Danforth, West County Community Services | Margaret Sluyk, Reach For Home | Chessy Etheridge, Lived Experience Advisory Board (LEAP) | Chris Cabral, Committee on the Shelterless (COTS) | Kristi Lozinto, Member At-Large | Ron Wellander, City of Sonoma | Angelica Smith, Tribal Seat | Aaron Mello, LEAP Board

Absent: Chris Coursey, Sonoma County Board of Supervisors | Salvina Norris, Sonoma County Indian Health Project (SCHIP)

A quorum was present.

1 - 4. Approval of Consent Calendar (00:10:59 – 00:12:07)

- Jennielynn Holmes, CoC Board Chair, presented the consent calendar items:
 1. 11/20/24 meeting agenda
 2. 10/23/24 meeting minutes
 3. Summary of Follow-ups from Previous Meeting(s)
 4. Reports for Standing Committee Updates
- **Public Comment:** None
- **Motion:** Una Glass moves to approve the Consent Calendar.

Second: Martha Cheever seconds the motion.

Abstentions or Objections: None.

Motion passes. The consent calendar is approved.

5. Reports from Lead Agency Staff (00:12:18 –00:33:12)

- HEART Team: James Alexander, Homelessness Services Division Director, reported that Chris Inclan is in place now as the new Health Program Manager (HPM) for the Homeless Encampment Access and Resource (HEART) Team. The new HPM will be coordinating plans for outreach services across Sonoma County, approving and monitoring shelter placements, and also managing contracts.

The Street Outreach Team collaboration meetings are continuing, with the third monthly meeting upcoming on December 2, 2024.

- SoCo Homeless Coalition 2025 Elections: Karissa White reported that the deadline for nominations to the Homeless Coalition Board is tomorrow, November 21, 2024. Only three nominations have been received to date, all for the Homeless Advocacy seat. The vacant Transitional Age Youth (TAY) Lived Experience seat, Adult Lived Experience seat, and the new Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) Led/Serving Organization seat are all lacking nominations. Board direction is requested regarding potentially extending the deadline by one week.
- **Public Comment on Reports from Lead Agency Staff:** Rebecca Sammet
- **Motion:** Dennis Pocekay moves to extend the Homeless Coalition Board nominations window by one week. Jackie Elward seconds.

Abstentions/Objections: None

Motion is approved.

- Discussion proceeded around two issues, resulting in agreement that they be presented for review at the next Charter Committee Ad Hoc meeting:
 - Potentially expanding the definition of the TAY seat by increasing the age limit (currently 18-24) to facilitate interest from a larger pool of candidates.
 - Potentially enhancing the Lived Experience Advisory Panel (LEAP) seat to include voting rights.

6. Service Provider Roundtable (SPR) Update and Presentation (00:34:05 – 00:55:52)

- Margaret Sluyk reported that the Service Provider Roundtable will be convening a short-term workgroup to develop a recommendation to the Homeless Coalition Board

regarding the need for a safety policy. Tom Bieri will be the interim Chair of the workgroup, which plans to complete their work over a span of 2-4 meetings.

The Roundtable also engaged in discussion of potential forthcoming changes due to the change in federal leadership, and preparation for the possible impacts on homelessness services in Sonoma County.

- **Public Comment:** None
- Chris Cabral delivered a presentation providing details about the upcoming “Keep People Housed” (KPH) pilot program, which will open for applications on December 16th, 2024. The program is a new county-wide effort to address homelessness prevention and will serve 350-400 households during the two-year pilot program. Interested households can apply at <https://www.keeppeoplehoused.org/>
- **Public Comment:** None.

Informational item only; no action taken

7. Lead Agency Designation (00:56:01 – 02:28:52)

- Interim Department of Health Services (DHS) Director, Jennifer Solito, prefaced the introduction of the topic by offering her perspective on circumstances encountered by DHS in recent years which led to negative impacts and public scrutiny of the department. The resultant concerns affecting both staff and the Homeless Coalition Board were acknowledged, particularly with regard to contracting, invoicing, and payments. The department is now engaged in a period of transformation, the issues are actively being addressed, and the Interim DHS Director welcomes HC Board members to contact her at any time with questions or concerns about specific operations of the department.

Despite the challenges and uncertainties that may be forthcoming at the federal level, particularly with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Director Solito indicated that, should the HC Board choose to transition to another Lead Agency, DHS will work with the Board and their selected agency during the transition process, which could conceivably span 2-3 years.

Alternatively, should the HC Board choose to continue to partner with the County of Sonoma as Lead Agency, Director Solito would like to initiate a conversation as a future agenda item to deliberate about the optimal way to move forward and rebuild a successful collaborative relationship, ensuring that the efforts of the Lead Agency are appreciated, and the needs of the HC Board are met.

- Michael Gause presented slides detailing the responsibilities of the Lead Agency and Collaborative Applicant, practices within similar Continuums of Care (CoC) and Lead Agencies, costs and staffing considerations of the Lead Agency, and the process for transitioning to a new Lead Agency.

Additional information is available in Agenda Report Item #7 (*Lead Agency Designation*) in the packet of meeting materials.

- **Public Comment:** None

Staff fielded questions and comments in an in-depth dissection of the topic and information presented. Ultimately, the tendency of the Board is to not engage in transitioning to a new Lead Agency at this time. In conclusion, Jennielynn Holmes proposed that ideas for initiating a recommitment process between the Board and Lead Agency be brought forward at the next HC Board meeting. The Board Chair offers to meet with other interested members to brainstorm some ideas to present at the December 18th meeting, conceivably including a conversation about initiating an annual performance evaluation process.

- **Public Comment:** None.

Informational item only; no action taken.

8. 10-Minute Break 3:25 – 3:35 PM (2:28:55– 2:39:42)

- A quorum remained after return from the break.

9. Word from the LEAP Board: (02:39:49 – 02:54:17)

- Chessy Etheridge and Rebekah Sammet reported on the exciting and motivating 3-day Lived Experienced Conference attended at the San Jose Marriott for which they were awarded scholarships, enabling their attendance. The conference was presented by Destination Home in partnership with the National Coalition of the Homeless. This was the second year of the conference but the first time located on the West Coast, and attracted representatives from twenty-one states. The abundance of curriculum options and networking opportunities available was inspiring and the LEAP Board participants hope to return next year as presenters.

- **Public Comment:** None

10. Review Agenda for December Coalition Board Meeting (02:54:19 – 02:56:35)

- Due to the upcoming Christmas holiday, the December meeting will be moved up one week, to December 18th, 2024. Please let staff know if you will be unable to attend and/or will be sending a proxy.

The draft agenda was presented for review. Item #7, the MOU conversation, will include some follow-up from today's discussion.

- **Public Comment:** None

11. Board Member Questions and Comments (02:56:38 –3:00:00)

- Jackie Elward - expressed appreciation for Jennielynn Holmes' service and leadership as Board Chair this year, and reported that the Rohnert Park City Council will be working with Luther Burbank Housing in contemplation of developing two locations for Homekey Sites.

Jennielynn Holmes - informed the Board of the "Know Your Rights" education workshops provided by Catholic Charities for the immigrant community.

Angelica Smith – reported that each of the cities within Sonoma County have issued proclamations in recognition of November as American Heritage month.

Martha Cheever – the Community Development Commission (CDC) has seven project-based voucher waitlists open for providers to sign up their clients.

- **Public Comment:** Rebekah Sammet

12. Public Comment on Items not on the Agenda: (03:03:12 – 03:07:15)

- Hunter Scott – Homeless Memorial Day, Friday, December 20th, 11:00 am – 12:30 pm, at the Arlene Francis Center – the public is invited.
- Martha Cheever – the Community Development Commission (CDC) has seven project-based voucher waitlists open for providers to sign up their clients.

Adjournment: 3:03 pm (03:07:17 – 03:07:51)