

# COORDINATED HOUSELESS RESPONSE OFFICE (CHRO)

## Board Meeting Minutes

11 – 12:30 pm on Thursday, January 18th, 2024

Deschutes Services Building, Allen Room (2nd floor), 1300 NW Wall St., Bend, OR

---

*Attendance: Commissioner Adair, Chair, Deschutes County; Councilor Perkins, City of Bend; Councilor Blum, City of Sisters; Councilor Zwicker, City of Redmond; Nick Lelack, Deschutes County Administrator; Chris Ogren, CHRO; Erik Kropp, Deschutes County; William Bailey, Deschutes County Sheriff's Office; Eric King, City Manager – City of Bend; Keith Witcosky, City Manager – City of Redmond; Tom Kuhn, Deschutes County; Mickie Derting, City of Bend; Amy Fraley, City of Bend; Tammy Baney, Executive Director – COIC; Jean Hrabik, COIC; Molly Heiss, NeighborImpact; Eliza Wilson, Homeless Leadership Coalition; Linda Cline, City of Redmond; Colleen Sinsky, FUSE; Steven Emerson, Deschutes County; Angie Powers, Deschutes County; Eleanor Bessonette, Oasis Village; Josie Anders-Mize, Oasis Village; Commissioner Tony Debone, Deschutes County; Linda Murrer, Community Member; Ed Murrer, Community Member; Chuck Hemingway, Community Member, Jenny Lingard, Community Member, Lynd Wieman, Community Member; and James Cook, Community Member.*

### 1. **Introductions and Agenda Review**

Chair Adair called the meeting to order at 11:00 and asked participants to introduce themselves.

### 2. **CHRO Leadership Discussion & Vote**

Chris Ogren explained that the CHRO bylaws require the Board to select a board chair and vice-chair in the first meeting of the calendar year.

**VOTE:** Councilor Zwicker made a motion to nominate Chair Adair to serve as the Board Chair for 2024. Councilor Perkins seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Mayor Richer was absent.

**VOTE:** Councilor Zwicker made a motion to nominate Vice-Chair Perkins to serve as the Board Vice-Chair for 2024. Chair Adair seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Mayor Richer was absent.

### 3. **Approval of Minutes**

Commissioner Adair noted that the packet had been shared with the board later than normal. Councilor Zwicker requested packets be shared with the board the week prior to the meeting.

The group reviewed the minutes from the meeting on December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Commissioner Adair noted her comments about rental vacancies in Bend had

been mischaracterized and that Bend was experiencing rental vacancies, and asked staff to correct the minutes.

**VOTE:** Councilor Perkins motioned approval of the minutes from December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Councilor Zwicker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Mayor Richer was absent.

**4. Public Health Advisory Board (PHAB)**

Tom Kuhn shared the concept of the Public Health Advisory Board with the CHRO Board. Tom explained the Board is appointed by Deschutes County Commissioners, and exists to increase public health knowledge in Deschutes County. The PHAB also advocates for services that public health delivers and informs and advises the Board of County Commissioners on Public Health Issues. Tom introduced Colleen Sinky, the Vice-Chair of the PHAB, who introduced the minimum care advisory for the homeless, which had been developed by Sphere. Colleen reviewed some of the best practices in the minimum care standards, and acknowledged that although these standards are globally recognized benchmarks, they are designed to impact people fleeing disasters in rural areas, and are not catered to long term homelessness in urban communities.

Commissioner Adair asked if the amount of portable toilets located at Juniper Ridge met the minimum standards. Erik Kropp noted that the PHAB minimum standards were considered when deciding the number of toilets to provide at Juniper Ridge, and that there were currently 59 portable toilets located there. Councilor Zwicker asked what the CHRO Board could do to encourage adoption of minimum care standards when serving houseless populations. Councilor Perkins suggested that could be a good opportunity for the CHRO Advisory Board to discuss. Councilor Perkins also suggested that there could also be a tie-in to this work and natural resources. Colleen Sinky offered a research article about similar work being done in Las Vegas. Commissioner Adair requested a copy of the study.

Eliza Wilson noted it's good that the CHRO board is thinking about these minimum standards. Eliza suggested the minimum care standards could be tied into the high desert home. Eliza also said providers in Central Oregon already do a good job of covering the basics of the minimum care standards, but a greater focus will help further mitigate downstream effects. Molly Heiss offered that the minimum care standards are a good way of talking about what's offered to people living unhoused in Central Oregon. Molly explained that often providers are fighting a narrative that offering basic needs to people is "providing a benefit", and that discussing basic needs and minimum standards in this way helps create impetus to provide basic needs for health and safety. Councilor Blum said she

thinks these standards will help change public perspective, and that people need to understand that the health of the community is the health of the forest.

**5. Public Partners Roundtable - RFP Key Elements**

Chris Ogren reviewed key elements of the draft Request for Qualifications (RFQ) being prepared by staff in the Public Partners Roundtable (PPR) Workgroup. Chris reviewed the list of community partners contributing to the work, and highlighted the commitments that each entity involved has made, namely: Community Engagement, Assuring safety and quality of life for residents and community, Commitment to respecting and protecting public partnerships. Chris reviewed the anticipated process at a high level, noting that COIC is facilitating the process on behalf of the CHRO, and that the RFP design will be a two-part submission. Chris shared the anticipated timeline with the Board. Councilor Perkins asked if staff thought the timeline could be achieved. Staff shared they thought the timeline was fast-paced, but possible. Councilor Perkins asked Molly and Eliza for their opinions. Molly shared support for the two-part submission to reduce the burden on providers, and noted that the proposed timeline didn't conflict with other deadlines that providers may have upcoming, to her knowledge.

**6. Advisory Board Request**

Mickie Derting shared staff's recommendation to expand the Advisory Committee by two seats. Staff recommend increasing the lived experience role on the Advisory Board to two seats rather than one, because it is less isolating and tokenizing. Staff also recommend increasing the Public Agency role on the Advisory Board to two seats, from one, due to the expressed commitment to public partnerships, and in support of future collaboration with public agencies on the topic of homelessness.

Councilor Zwicker asked if the two seats could be filled through the open at-large seats. Councilor Perkins replied. Saying that the point of the dedicated seats is to ensure there is always representation from those groups. Councilor Zwicker didn't disagree, but shared concerns about expanding an already large board. Councilor Zwicker also shared concerns about the budget implications of adding two paid seats to the advisory board without having updated financials available for the Office. Commissioner Adair shared that she also didn't want the advisory board to get too large.

**VOTE:** Councilor Perkins motioned approval of staff's recommendation to add two additional seats to the CHRO advisory board, one for lived experience and one for public agencies. Councilor Zwicker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Mayor Richer was absent.

**7. Public Partners Roundtable - Public Engagement**

Mickie Derting presented on staff's recommendations to set aside \$50,000 for public engagement, to support the requested CHRO road show and support the work of the Public Partners Roundtable in engaging the community. Councilor Zwicker noted she could not make a financial decision without having information on the current financial position of the Office. Councilor Perkins expressed a desire for regular financial updates. Commissioner Adair agreed. Nick Lelack explained that the CHRO had roughly \$800,000 remaining, but couldn't confirm the exact amount until a later date. Councilor Perkins requested that with staffing changes to the Office, come regular financial updates in CHRO meetings. Councilor Perkins explained that she couldn't vote yes for the request because it was too vague, and requested more clarity on how the funding would be utilized and what it would accomplish. Councilor Perkins also expressed a desire to see a more robust website and social media presence. Board members all agreed that they wanted more reporting on what was being accomplished with CHRO funding. Councilor Zwicker noted she was available to meet sooner than the next scheduled CHRO board meeting to discuss the request again, if staff were prepared to discuss. Councilor Zwicker suggested staff try to utilize an underutilized staffperson or consider hiring an intern to accomplish the public engagement, rather than spending the money on an out-of-town consultant. Councilor Zwicker emphasized her desire to use CHRO funds judiciously.

8. **Community Updates**

Councilor Blum – Sisters

Not many people in Sisters utilized the Cold Weather Shelters that opened up during the cold snap. The people who did utilize the shelters were grateful. People in Sisters need more affordable housing, but may not need more shelter.

Councilor Zwicker – Redmond

Deferring to Josie and Eleanor with Oasis Village who are set to present next. Councilor Zwicker called out Oasis Village and Shepherd's House for stepping up during the cold weather.

Commissioner Adair – Deschutes County

Commissioner Adair shared the statistic that winter weather is 7 times more deadly than summer heat. She mentioned that back in 2014, it was -29 degrees. Commissioner Adair thanked the City of Sisters for getting the Cold Weather Shelter up and running for Sisters residents.

Councilor Perkins – Bend

Councilor Perkins explained that she was filled with gratitude looking at the community response in Bend and thanked those that donated time, money, clothing, etc to help support the vulnerable in Bend. Councilor Perkins also

mentioned Unitarian Church, First Presbyterian, and Shepherd's House for taking as many people as they possibly could.

**9. Provider Update – Oasis Village**

Eleanor Bessonette, Oasis Village's outgoing Executive Director, introduced herself, and Josie Anders-Mize, Oasis' incoming Executive Director. Eleanor explained that Oasis Village formally opened on January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024. She explained that they have placed initial clients in each of the units, and that clients were selected through Coordinated Entry. There are 1-2 individuals per cabin, and they're available to men or women. The program is intended to support clients from 6 months to 2 years.

Eleanor shared that several staff had been brought on to support operations at Oasis Village and that Oasis is already offering several programs for residents. Eleanor thanked community partners that had been involved throughout the process, notably Hayden Home and Simplicity Homes, The City of Redmond, Deschutes County, and more.

Councilor Zwicker noted how important it was to get 21<sup>st</sup> street developed to increase access to the site. Eleanor agreed, and noted how important continued conversations with ODOT are, expressing a desire for a left hand turn lane on the road to access Oasis. Commissioner Adair asked if the units have Air Conditioning. Eleanor explained that they don't have heat, but have good ventilation and heaters for the winter. Eleanor also shared that there is a community building that guests have access to, which includes 4 bathrooms, showers, a bathtub, walk in cooler, and a fully stocked kitchen. There are also 3 laundry machines available. Eleanor concluded the presentation sharing the additional facilities Oasis has supported, like a community garden, fenced dog areas, and a storage lot for trailers and RVs.

**10. Public Comment**

Lynd Wieman, Community-member – Lynd is a member of the Unitarian Universalist Homeless Outreach Group and volunteers with Shepherd's House. Lynd is trying to help however he can with the Gale's property. Lynd hears comments from the public, his friends and neighbors, and in the news, that the biggest problem is people camping by roads and the garbage. Lynd said our community doesn't have a solution that works, the only thing we've tried to do in the past is move people, which accomplishes nothing. If we move people who live in tents or RVs that don't run, there isn't somewhere else they can go. For whatever reason, some of these folks may not want to go to shelter. Oasis Village works for 18 people, but there are hundreds living in China Hat. Lynd said he has looked through the public locations that are available. Lynd said there are two properties in the City of Bend that would allow tents, and the space for tents is

very limited. Lynd noted that people living in tents are often those with the highest needs. Lynd thinks we need to prioritize space for people living unsheltered, because that will have the most impact on public perception. Lynd suggested an incentive for private property owners that allow people to camp on their property. Lynd explained that Craig Gales has stepped up with his property, but is concerned that other private property isn't being considered. Commissioner Adair explained that she is working with churches to expand safe parking. Lynd said safe parking doesn't help people living in tents. Lynd explained that sleeping in tents is not allowed on property within the county, based on State law.

Ed Murrer, Community-member – Ed said he had a comment and a question. Ed commented that before things are implemented, we need to see real numbers. Ed said there are way more than 200 people at dirt world – probably 300 or 400. Ed said don't put any port-a-potties out there until we have an accurate count of the amount of people that live out there. Ed suggested that the problem be fully defined before the Board considers any solutions. Ed said his question relates to bed utilization. Ed said there are supposedly 600 beds available on a given night, but we don't know how many are being used every night. Ed said he'd done some forensics, and had traced \$30 million spent on homelessness over the past 18 months. Ed said if local governments continue to pour money into things that aren't being used then the public will be frustrated. Councilor Perkins noted that Amy Fraley publishes a monthly report on shelter bed utilization. Linda Murrer, Community-member, asked where the report could be found. Amy Fraley said that the report is presented to council each month. Amy said that posting the monthly report on the City website is a great idea and thanked Linda for her suggestion.

Jenny Lingard, Community-member – Jenny said she has done 2 years of research and agrees with Ed's comments. Jenny said the public needs more transparent data. Jenny said she knows millions of dollars are being spent, and asked if rates of people experiencing homelessness have improved. Jenny said she knows and agrees others that the Point In Time (PIT) Count is flawed and its only a snapshot in time. Jenny mentioned Built for Zero that Central Oregon joined in 2021. Jenny said that Lane County has Built for Zero dialed in and has 5 times the population Central Oregon does. Jenny said Lane County has open source data. Jenny suggested the CHRO dedicate part of the budget to be used to embrace built for zero, or start requiring data from providers on what's working. Jenny suggested that then the CHRO can analyze the data and publish it to the community on a regular basis.

## **11. Other Items & Adjourn**

Councilor Perkins suggested a Legislative Update on the agenda for the February meeting. Chair Adair mentioned the next CHRO meeting would be held on February 15<sup>th</sup>.

Chair Adair adjourned the meeting at 12:41 pm.