

OHS Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

March 20, 2025

9:00am

Front Steps Housing & Services

Members Present: Chris Knestrick, Jane Nichols OBO Dorivette Nolan, Gillian Prater-Lee OBO Michiel Wackers, Kris Harsh, Levine Ross OBO Yvonne Conwell, Liam Haggerty, Ed Abshire, Allison Schaefer, Angela Sulak OBO Marcia Zashin, Chamomile Hendricks, Eric Milkie, Karen McHenry, Sherri Clancy, Mike Bernot, Beth Graham, Beau Hill, Elaine Gimmel, Tina Christian for Raymond Mills, Loh, Stephanie Thomas, Christian Anderson

Members Absent: Beverly Torres, Dr. Kate Nagel, Barb Karam, Shajuana Gaston, Linda Uveges, Jeanna Davis, Cynthia Dailey, Mike Sering.

Others Present: Megan Scheck, Nick Butina, Amanda Larson, Marcos Cortes, Nikki Eggert, Kellie Glenn, Chris Krueger, Terrel Valentine, Christina Palangio, Jennifer Harrison, Shawna Gurley, Jenny Eppich, Candace Robinson, Danielle Cosgrove, Samara McCullough, Ebony Clayton, Christie Sozio, Fred Berry, Matt White, Howard Burchman.

- I. Welcome and Opening Remarks
 - a. Elaine Gimmel welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:12am.
- II. Decision Issues
 - a. Approval of Advisory Board Minutes
 - i. Elaine presented the minutes from the 1/16/2025 Board meeting and asked for any discussion.
 - ii. Mike Bernot motioned to approve the minutes, Christian Anderson seconded.
 - iii. All were in favor with no opposition or abstentions. Motion carries.
 - b. Tri-Chair recommendation: Chris Knestrick
 - i. Governance Committee received two applicants for that seat and recommends Chris for the seat.
 - ii. Allison Schaefer motioned to accept Chris Knestrick as tri-chair, Kris Harsh seconded.
 - iii. Chris Knestrick abstained; all other voting members were in favor with no opposition. Motion carries.
 - c. RRH for Single pilot & Tool (Matt White)
 - i. PPC explored opportunities to extend RRH for singles rather than just for families.
 - ii. Developed a tool based on EBPs for the most successful factors for the single household, to help determine the most likely candidates who would be successful in this program. The tool is included in the packet.
 - iii. This would be a 3-month assistance package maximum, as a one-time payment.
 - iv. Unsure how many will be served through the project, but would like to get the tool approved to begin utilizing it.

- v. Program design is the same as that for families. Provides housing case management support, housing location, and financial assistance. Can continue case management up to 3 months after exit.
 - vi. One member asked about how many slots are available, Nick shared that currently 70 slots available for families, only a few were able to be filled, so now looking to expand to singles during this time. Nick does not anticipate that we will continuously have this number of slots available.
 - vii. Loh shared concern that the job requirement may be an obstacle for participants with temporary jobs.
 - viii. Chris K asked about the pilot program being extended. Matt shared that this pilot would be adjusted as needed, but the specific time period of the pilot has not been defined.
 - ix. One member asked about prioritizing – will singles be prioritized only after all families have been exhausted? Elaine stated the prioritization with both populations would happen concurrently, as of right now, it is not one over the other.
 - x. One member asked about a minimum time homeless for eligibility, Matt stated there is no minimum time required to be eligible.
 - xi. Elaine asked for a motion to accept. Liam asked if we could define a timeframe for the pilot. Matt recommended 6 months for the pilot. Others wondered if 12 months would be better, Matt agreed.
 - xii. Chamomile Hendricks motioned to approve the tool in a 12 month pilot period, then review and adjust as needed. Allison Schaefer seconded.
 - xiii. Loh abstained; all other members were in favor with no opposition. Motion carries.
- d. Policy for Compensating Community Representatives (Matt White)
- i. This policy outlines how people with lived experience can be compensated for their time and expertise at \$25 per hour, to include capacity building and training.
 - ii. Christian commented that the travel reimbursement preferring public transportation might be an issue for some persons with lived experience as utilizing public transportation might be triggering for them and they may need a reasonable accommodation.
 - iii. Loh shared opposition for the travel expenses being reimbursed, and expressed the need to have this financial assistance provided up front in order to utilize the service. Loh suggested giving a monthly bus pass so the individual can attend multiple meetings.
 - iv. Christian thanked Loh and shared that when he started attending these meetings, he did so with the understanding that he would get himself there, and is thankful that these opportunities will be available for others to help expand attendance from others with lived experience.
 - v. Loh expressed concern about being able to get a receipt and reimbursement and about getting travel paid up front.

- vi. Elaine summarized the two suggestions, and Matt stated he noted these as changes to the policy:
 - 1. Adding in an option to request a reasonable accommodation to be able to utilize other transportation outside of public transportation
 - 2. Changing reimbursement for transportation to paid up front.
- vii. Chris K suggested allowing rideshare/Uber/Lyft in general without having to request a reasonable accommodation. He also clarified that this would just be for Board members, PPC members, and Governance committee members that are persons with lived experience, not for everyone with lived experience.
- viii. There was some discussion on whether the payment up front would be able to happen from the County, and OHS staff were unsure this would realistically happen.
- ix. One member wondered if we could offer a bus pass up front, or reimburse for rideshare up to a certain amount, Loh agreed. A discussion ensued with several members in support.
- x. One member wondered if we could backdate the allowable payment to today's meeting since we cannot vote on this today with the changes. Marcos stated that was possible, but not guaranteed.
- xi. Christian shared that Uber and Lyft rates are unpredictable and this would need consideration.
- xii. Suggested changes regarding travel will need to be reviewed and integrated into the policy; as such, this item was tabled until the next meeting.
- e. By-law update – Workforce Board designated seat (Chris Knestrick)
 - i. This item suggests shifting one designated seat for the Workforce Board specifically, to anyone employed at a workforce development agency so that it could be expanded to other workforce development agencies.
 - ii. Elaine Gimmel motioned to approve shifting the designated seat Workforce Board seat to a seat for anyone employed at a workforce development agency, Loh seconded. All were in favor with no opposition, no abstentions. Motion carries.
- f. Addition of 2 Advisory Board seats (Chris Knestrick)
 - i. Public Safety/Law Enforcement
 - 1. This item suggested adding a designated seat to the Board for a person who work in public safety or law enforcement.
 - 2. Loh wondered why we want this representative on the Board and expressed concern that this would create problems.
 - 3. Chris and Elaine clarified that the goal of involving them on the Board is to provide a deeper understanding of interactions between law enforcement/public safety and homeless individuals and to have a better relationship with law enforcement/public safety. As police are often called to PSH buildings and encampments, this is important. It was also clarified that this seat could include the police or emergency services employees, for example EMS workers.
 - 4. Christian shared that this would be beneficial in his opinion

5. Mike Bernot motioned to approve the addition of a designated seat to the Board for a person who works in public safety or law enforcement, Allison seconded. Loh abstained; all other members were in favor with no opposition. Motion carries.
 - ii. County Office of Housing and Community Development
 1. This item suggested adding a designated seat to the Board for a person who works in the County Office of Housing and Community Development.
 2. Chris shared that this is a relatively new office, and the Governance committee feels this would be beneficial
 3. Loh motioned to approve the addition of a designated seat on the Board for a person employed in the County Office of Housing and Community Development, Stephanie seconded. All were in favor, with no opposition or abstentions. Motion carries.
- III. Status of CoC Grants (Howard Burchman)
- a. Chris K shared that the executive orders and federal government proceedings are causing distress and potential impact, and asked Howard to share information.
 - b. Howard shared that, as things are fast moving, this is what we know at this point but it could change rapidly.
 - c. The NOFO for the CoC builds procurement was rescinded; those funds are being reprogrammed into regular CoC program dollars.
 - d. It is currently unclear whether or not there will be regular CoC dollars continued for all currently funded programs. With the new supportive services increases and FMR increases regularly occurring for renewals, there may not be enough funds for renewal projects in the next NOFO and there may not be new projects awarded.
 - e. HUD sent renewal grant contracts to several agencies and within a 24 hour period, HUD then rescinded those grant agreements within 24 hours because they were not in conformance with the executive orders regarding "DEI" and "gender ideology".
 - f. Renewal grants are on standby until they are reissued with the approved language
 - g. Deadline for 8/29 for the NOFO has been announced, although HUD said all 2024 grant renewals would be automatically renewed, should be approved, and should get the FMR increase.
 - h. Anticipating significant staff reductions at HUD, hopefully contracts come out soon before those reductions are in effect.
 - i. HUD seems to be holding back action on any newly awarded funds.
 - j. Howard shared that the field offices are sympathetic and do want to get these awards and contracts out, but the HUD office is telling them no.
 - k. The CE contract expired 1/31 and the hope is that the contract will be renewed soon.
 - l. Elaine wondered if there was any advocacy or anything that can be done to help move things forward. Howard shared continuing to put pressure on representatives regarding the impact of these delays.
 - m. One guest wondered if there was any indication that newly awarded grants will not be awarded, and Howard said it appears they are just prioritizing the renewals first.

- n. Beau Hill wondered if there was a significant impact on cash flow, could we all be informed of that. Howard agreed. Beau also expressed that we need to place blame where blame is due – if an agency has to stop services we need to as a community stand behind them and make it known that this is happening because of the federal government. Beau stated it is important not to blame one another as agencies and workers in housing.
 - o. Elaine shared the impact and the ripple effect that these delays will have on the community.
 - p. Marcos shared the importance of sharing stories and impact statements. Agencies have reached out to the county to ask for financial assistance and the county is considering this.
- IV. RRH to PSH Bridging (Matt White)
- a. In process of revising the policy to allow someone to transfer from RRH to PSH if they were eligible for PSH from intake. Elaine clarified that PSH would include TBRA.
 - b. This includes an assessment tool, which would be completed by the case manager in HMIS.
 - c. Nick clarified that as long as there is documentation of a disability somewhere in the system prior to enrollment in RRH, the verification of disability can happen at time of application for PSH. He also clarified that the hope is that this will not happen often, as we aim to identify the correct housing trajectory from the beginning.
- V. OHS Updates (Marcos Cortes)
- a. The county changed the Executive Director OHS position to an at-will position that would be confirmed by county council. At-will positions generally pay higher, so this might be more attractive to candidates. Reopened the position for one week, just a few weeks ago. Marcos doesn't know how many applicants there were this round, but shared the hiring process, which included interviews with a hiring committee and meeting with County Council. The hope is that by May or early June someone will be in place. Marcos will continue to fill in the interim.
- VI. Advisory Board Subcommittees
- a. Elaine reminded everyone that there are a number of subcommittees to join, and that all Board members are required to join at least one subcommittee, listed below, and encouraged members to review the definitions within the bylaws and select a committee.
 - i. Christian asked if they could be on multiple committees, and Elaine said yes.
 - ii. Loh wondered why she was kicked off the Governance Committee. Elaine shared that she was not kicked off, but they will talk.
 - iii. Nick asked everyone to share with him which committees they are on and which they are interested in so he can create those lists.
 - iv. Below are the subcommittees:
 - 1. Executive
 - 2. Governance
 - 3. Program & Policy
 - 4. NOFO Review
 - 5. NOFO Strategy

- VII. A Home for Every Neighbor update (Liam Haggerty)
 - a. 147 people housed as of yesterday
 - b. Repairs being made for 3-4 others, which will reach the goal of 150. Original goal was 150 housed in 18 months, and this was accomplished in 7 months.
 - c. Will be able to continue to expand to serve more people through this program.
 - d. 73% of the housed self-identified as chronically homeless
 - e. 83% self-identified as disabled
 - f. 54% self-identified as white, 32.9% Black/African American, 6% Lantinx
 - g. Liam shared support for getting people housed quickly and then utilizing progressive engagement to continue to make progress
 - h. Nick shared that they are working with OHFA to work on getting people eligible for LIHTC properties
- VIII. Initiative Reports
 - a. Ending Veteran Homelessness (EVH)
 - i. As of March 1, the veteran census was 94.
 - ii. 9 chronically homeless veterans entering the system
 - iii. Longer length of stays to obtain permanent housing, 118 days in the last quarter on average.
 - iv. Increasing housing plans
 - v. HUD VASH team has continued to be a strong resource for housing
 - b. Rapid ReHousing (RRH)
 - i. Report was included in the packet.
 - ii. Jan-March of this year saw more people moving into RRH as compared to the prior year period
 - iii. 38 new clients were enrolled in DV-HT RRH, 34 new clients were enrolled in regular RRH.
 - iv. Have assisted 89 households for regular RRH, and 146 for DV-HT RRH
- IX. Meeting adjourned at 10:52am
- X. The next meeting of the OHS Advisory Board is May 15th.

Submitted by Megan Scheck 3/20/2025