

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**COORDINATED HOUSELESS RESPONSE OFFICE**

11:00 a.m. Wednesday, March 15, 2023  
Deschutes Services Building, Barnes/Sawyer Rooms

*In attendance: Patti Adair, Chair and County Commissioner; Councilor Megan Perkins, City of Bend; Councilor Andrea Blum, City of Sisters; Councilor Cat Zwicker, City of Redmond (via Zoom); Geoff Wullschlager, City Manager for City of La Pine (via Zoom); Cheyenne Purrington, Houseless Strategies and Solutions Director; Nick Lelack, County Administrator; Mickie Derting, City of Bend Strategic Initiatives Manager; Angie Powers, BOCC Administrative Assistant; Kerry Prosser, City of Sisters; Chris Ogren, COIC Housing Coordinator*

**1. Introductions and Agenda Review**

Chair Adair called the meeting to order at 11:02 a.m. Megan Perkins, Bend City Councilor; Andrea Blum, Sisters City Councilor; Geoff Wullschlager, La Pine City Manager (via Zoom); and Cat Zwicker, Redmond City Councilor (via Zoom), introduced themselves. La Pine Mayor Daniel Richer was absent. Chair Adair asked Cheyenne Purrington for the meeting minutes from the last meeting to review at the Board's next meeting in April.

**2. Strategic Work Plan Overview and Discussion**

Cheyenne Purrington, Houseless Strategies and Solutions Director, provided an overview of the Coordinated Houseless Response Office's (CHRO's) draft Strategic Plan. Chair Adair suggested removing the word "divorce" from the Letter from the Director section of the plan, as she was given the same feedback on a document she drafted relative to the ADUs and wildfire risk mapping. The plan is organized with an introduction, cornerstones, goals, strategies, administration and resources. Achieving measurable outcomes is a major focus of the plan.

The cornerstones of the plan are: mission, vision, core values and guiding principles. The clear mission of this Office, funded through HB 4123, is to create a "coordinated houseless response system". Ms. Purrington acknowledged that there is already a system to address homelessness in place and the work is not starting from scratch. She acknowledged all of the incredible work that is already taking place. The Office's mission is to create a more coordinated and higher performance system than the one already in place. It is a start-up office, which will adapt and eventually become an ongoing, operating office to maintain. The vision is to create equitable access to safe, affordable housing and stabilizing support services. Chair Adair expressed hope that substance use disorder and mental health treatment services will increase in our region.

The Office's strategic objective is for homelessness to be rare, brief and non-recurring by utilizing the tools of prevention, crisis response and housing & services. Responding to Chair Adair, Ms. Purrington reported that Central Oregon has approximately 1,500 individuals

experiencing homelessness, the majority of whom are in Deschutes County, and \$1.377 million from the governor's plan is slated towards prevention in Central Oregon. Chair Adair asked Ms. Purrington for information on the homeless numbers in the China Hat area, as the U.S. Forest Service did not have a count. Once CoC provides these numbers, Ms. Purrington is willing to present on their findings.

Ms. Purrington spoke about measurable performance data. The data source is the regional Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), a centralized database. The intent is for data to be complete, timely and accurate. She compared our region's data to Continuum of Care (CoC) System Performance Data from other regions in Oregon. This data represents a snapshot in time. Point-in-Time (PIT) data from the January 2023 count will become available in a couple of months. This data is needed to determine what needs to be done and to track progress. Showing performance in improvements over time is the best way to become eligible for more funding from CoC.

Ms. Purrington elaborated on the strategic framework consisting of prevention, crisis response and housing/services in a number of different areas of the system: capability, capacity, coordination, performance, equity/access, data and outcomes. In response to Chair Adair, Ms. Purrington reported that Bend is short between six and ten respite care beds, acknowledging that it is a strain on the shelter care system for individuals with respite care needs show up to a shelter. The governor's plan may allow for additional respite care beds. Ms. Purrington emphasized that there is a need for low barrier shelter options. In response to Councilor Perkins, Ms. Purrington hopes that there will be targets or metrics within the plan. Quality and complete data are necessary to set targets. Quality data will allow the Office to customize and tailor interventions. Ms. Purrington added that we know what works and we do not need to come up with brand new interventions as we are not starting from scratch. Evidence and data-based best practices from years of data will be shared and borrowed.

Councilor Perkins spoke to the importance of community engagement, a topic which isn't directly addressed in the draft Strategic Plan, and asked Ms. Purrington to elaborate. Ms. Purrington wished to understand and clarify the objective of this goal of community engagement. A community engagement toolkit would be useful. A broad community action plan isn't feasible given the size of the Office, and although the staffing and funding doesn't allow for this she's open to future discussions on the topic as the Office evolves. Ms. Purrington clarified that the Office is a coordinating body, not a consolidating body. Councilor Perkins said that a coordinated approach to homelessness, including the community members, is an important topic for future conversations. The Office was established as many responsibilities but little/no authority, and this is another important theme to keep in mind. Ms. Purrington shared that she hopes to have a newly-hired team member join her Office in April.

Ms. Purrington touched on each type of strategic initiative: capability, capacity, coordination, performance, equity & access and data. Chair Adair spoke to the importance of being respectful

of neighboring businesses and residents in siting future navigation/stabilization centers, shelters and camps. Chair Adair highlighted the progress that has been made in affordable housing increases in our region. Councilor Blum agreed that it would be helpful to see data on affordable housing from the Office in the future.

Responding to a question by Councilor Perkins about coordination initiatives, and communication/collaboration amongst service providers, Ms. Purrington shared that it is a goal for her Office not to duplicate efforts. It is critical to have a broad range of perspectives from the Advisory Council.

Ms. Purrington believes that it is important to move individuals through the system quickly, and for people not to stay in the shelter system for a long time. 120 days is the average length of time a person is in the system. Programs such as Veteran's Village, with stays of up to two years, are considered transitional housing and these have been phased out federally for funding. She touched on equity and access, and the importance of having additional low barrier options available. This Strategic Plan document is intended to be evolving and not static. The Coordinated Entry System (CES) means that there is one centralized place to go, with one intake and standard assessment. Everyone goes onto one list, and individuals are prioritized based on level of need.

Discussion took place regarding future meetings. The City Club Presentation on the draft Strategic Plan will take place on May 18, and Ms. Purrington invited the Board to attend. It was determined that the Office's first quarterly retreat will take place on April 20, 2023, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

### **3. Annual Operating Budget Overview and Discussion**

The new fiscal year begins on July 1, 2023 and Ms. Purrington asked the Board for funding opportunities. In response to a question by Chair Adair asked about the \$125,000 program expense, Ms. Purrington shared that this funding is designated for technical assistance for special projects. Any unused contract funds could be used beyond the initial two-year period, and may be used for hiring additional staff. The intent was to purchase an RV to be used as a mobile office space, but may not be necessary until additional staff are added. Direct outreach and case management services are not being provided by the Office, but it is critical to work with the outreach service partners and may become necessary to utilize a mobile office.

### **4. Advisory Council Discussion**

The hope is to have an Advisory Council to ensure a broad diversity of perspectives. A cohesive approach towards determining potential membership is ideal. Councilor Blum asked for clarity on which items the Advisory Council would be tasked with, prior to suggesting individuals to serve on the council. A clear outline of tasks is critical. Councilor Perkins suggested the council would be a team of experts, and membership would be a transparent process. Following the

April retreat, the Office may have a clearer indication of council tasks. Chair Adair suggested the U.S. Forest Service have representation on the council.

## **5. Update on the Governor's EO 23-02 (Emergency Declaration)**

Ms. Purrington highlighted some of the key points from Governor Kotek's Executive Order No. 23-02, declaring a state of emergency due to homelessness. Central Oregon is designated as one of the Continuum of Care regions, due to the region experiencing an increase in unsheltered homelessness of 50% or more between 2017 and 2022. The Multi Agency Coordination (MAC) meeting established that Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC) will represent the region administratively and functionally. \$1.377 million will go towards for homelessness prevention. \$14 million will go towards the creation of 81 shelter beds and ensuring individuals go from unsheltered status into housing. The interventions are focused on increasing capacity for housing.

"Shelter" definition requires a rigid frame, electricity and heat but not plumbing. Tents do not qualify. Pallet shelters can be utilized. Safe parking does not qualify if the client provides their own RV. Safe parking qualifies if RV is provided to the client and they have access to restrooms and showers on-site. Chair Adair expressed disappointment that the Safe Parking program is not a qualifier, and Ms. Purrington added that Safe Parking are high barrier due to screening processes. The EO has a requirement of low barrier with coordinated entry.

In response to Councilor Perkins, Ms. Purrington shared that the MAC group decides what the priorities are, how to make decisions based on requests. COIC disburses the money to viable projects. These are one-time funds and they need to be spent quickly. The programs must not have ongoing funding. Projects must be viable and proven to work. Winter shelters could qualify but would be prorated (example, providing 12 beds for 4 months). If shelter beds are planned to close down, these funds could potentially be used.

In response to Chair Adair, Ms. Purrington shared that the funds will go towards 81 shelter beds and getting 163 individuals housed. Funds must be spent by January 10, 2024.

In response to Chair Adair, Colleen Thomas (via Zoom) provided a link to a list of MAC group members: <https://www.coic.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/EO-23-02-MAC-Team-Roster-as-of-2023-03-02.pdf>.

We must meet the objectives with the funding, but the funding can be used for other projects once the objectives are met. Strategic, phased use of the funds will be important, and Ms. Purrington is optimistic that in 2-3 years we'll need less and less investment. Chair Adair shared that Oregon is 50<sup>th</sup> in the nation for substance abuse treatment beds.

## **6. County and Cities Roles and Responsibilities**

*This agenda item was postponed until the next meeting.*

**7. Agenda Topics for Next Meeting**

- a. Next Meeting (Retreat): April 20, 2023 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

**8. Public Comment**

- Donna Burklo, Executive Director of Family Kitchen (via Zoom), said that she appreciated the framework presented today.
- “Bend Resident” (via Zoom) believes that quality data is an urgent need for targets to be designated. She’s concerned about it taking too long for the community to engage, and hopes for transparency.

**Chair Adair adjourned the meeting at 12:42 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

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Angie Powers, BOCC Administrative Assistant