

# COORDINATED HOUSELESS RESPONSE OFFICE (CHRO)

## Board of Director Working Session Minutes

10:00 am – 2:00 pm on Thursday, April 20, 2023  
Deschutes Services Building, Allen Room, 1300 NW Wall St., Bend, OR

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*Attendance: Commissioner Adair, Chair; Councilor Perkins, City of Bend; Councilor Blum, City of Sisters; Councilor Zwicker, City of Redmond; Mayor Richer (joined late), City of La Pine; Cheyenne Purrington, Director – CHRO; Chris Ogren, Houseless Response Analyst; Erik Kropp, Deputy County Administrator; Stefanie Crowe, Admin Support; Eliza Wilson, Director of Runaway Youth & HLC Chair; Commissioner Chang; Commissioner DeBone; (via zoom) Kathy Skidmore, Central Oregon Veterans Outreach; Emily Horton, Deschutes County Behavioral Health; James Cook, Community-member; Whitney Hale, Deputy County Administrator; Alan Evans, Founder of Helping Hands ReEntry.*

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

Chair Adair called the meeting to order at 10:12 am. Participants in the room introduced themselves. Chris Ogren, the Office's newly hired houseless response analyst introduced himself to the attendees. Mayor Richer was absent. Cheyenne Purrington noted some necessary agenda adjustments to allow Eliza Wilson to participate in the discussion related to the Advisory Council. Chair Adair also noted that representatives from Helping Hands ReEntry would be presenting to the board at 1:30 pm, which would require a schedule shift.

### 2. **Prior Meeting Minutes Review**

Chris Ogren reviewed the March minutes for the Board. Chair Adair asked about the minutes from the meeting in February. Staff noted those minutes were still being developed and Erik Kropp would present them in a future meeting.

**Vote:** Councilor Perkins motioned approval of the March Minutes, Councilor Blum seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Mayor Richer was absent.

### 3. **Change Management Notes and Lessons Learned**

*This agenda item was postponed.*

### 4. **Staff Capacity and Time Study Discussion**

*This agenda item was postponed.*

### 5. **Website Review**

Staff walked the Board through the draft webpage. The Board discussed the website, and expressed a preference to have the CHRO site be more of a "landing page" than a fully developed website. The goal of the page is to inform the public about the CHRO's purpose, efforts, and accomplishments. There was some discussion about preferences for how the page is designed, like the ability to create

links that “pop up” new pages. Staff requested an initial approval of the page’s content.

**Vote:** Councilor Perkins motioned approval of the initial website design, Councilor Zwicker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Mayor Richer was absent.

**6. Advisory Council Discussion (moved up)**

Cheyenne invited Eliza Wilson to the table. Cheyenne expressed a desire to have a panel of experts to help strategize on key decisions. Cheyenne noted that the Board of Directors was necessary, but there is a need to coordinate support from community leaders. The Office needs a body to help decipher and screen out what can and can’t be done, and how to prioritize simultaneous requests for support.

Eliza introduced herself to the Board and spoke about her past participation on the Emergency Homelessness Task Force (EHTF). Eliza felt that the work of the Coordinated Office and the EHTF were complimentary, but an advisory board may be necessary to help define what work will be prioritized. Eliza acknowledged that Cheyenne was in a difficult position, being guided by a document that she did not contribute to. Eliza noted that Cheyenne would benefit from support by an advisory council comprised of regional homelessness experts.

Councilors Perkins, Zwicker, and Blum expressed a desire to avoid duplicity and pondered if there was already a board that could serve this purpose. Councilor Perkins noted that burnout is real in this line of work, and she wants the Office to be conscious about asking people to volunteer more of their time.

Councilor Perkins then posed a question to the Board about how they want to interact with the advisory board. Would the Director be the conduit between the two groups? Do the two groups meet amongst themselves? Erik Kropp suggested the Board could request feedback from the advisory board on specific topics.

Chair Adair noted her satisfaction about the Safe Parking Program’s recent performance. She also expressed concern about the Homeless Management Information System being antiquated. Councilor Zwicker noted a desire for a more-user friendly app with geo-location capabilities to help track data on homelessness.

Councilor Blum requested clarity on what the ask before the Board was. Cheyenne noted that the ask was for board approval for the Office moving forward on developing an advisory committee. Staff noted they would work on an advisory board model and approach the board once a model has been decided upon. Cheyenne noted the importance of an ad-hoc group of advisors to provide feedback in real time, as well as an advisory board. Councilor Blum was supportive of the request, noting she had a similar cohort experience when she became a City Councilor. Commissioner Adair, Councilor Zwicker, and Councilor Perkins all supported the ad-hoc group request. Erik Kropp noted that an informal board would likely serve the CHRO’s needs best, and that Cheyenne could be trusted to identify these individuals on her own.

Councilor Perkins expressed a desire for a future agenda item discussing the CHRO's geography in comparison to other regional efforts on homelessness.

**7. Annual Work Plan Presentation and Discussion**

Cheyenne introduced the workplan as the next topic and emphasized the need to create a process that involved other entities, so that all those working on homelessness can align efforts to mitigate conflict.

Cheyenne clarified that the Office's intent was never to merge the Strategic Plan and the work plan, but to find compliments between them. The work plan is intended to focus on what will be achieved in the upcoming year, and is not at all intended to replace the broader strategic plan. Cheyenne clarified that not everything that is included in the Strategic Plan is noted in the workplan, because the Office has limited capacity. Cheyenne asked the Board for clarity on where to focus initial efforts, what happens in Year 1 compared to Year 2, and so on.

Cheyenne noted that due to the nature of the work and the high visibility of homelessness in Central Oregon right now, there is a lot of attention and resources directed towards homelessness. Cheyenne expressed a need for nimbleness, and a need for the Office to be able to respond to needs as they arise, in a dynamic way. She suggested the EO 23-02 process was a prime example of the importance of remaining flexible. Cheyenne also noted that due to the fast-paced nature of this work, it may be necessary to check in with the Board more frequently. Councilors Perkins and Zwicker agreed that more frequent check ins and updates made sense. Commissioner Adair said that homelessness is a crisis and should be treated as such. Chris Ogren noted he would work to reschedule the May meeting due to standing conflicts with City Club.

The meeting paused at 11:27, and restarted at 11:36 am.

**8. Roles, Responsibilities, and Relationships Discussion**

Cheyenne reviewed the updated workplan again, this time focusing on the objectives and outcomes section. Commissioner Adair asked about the vacancy rate at the Bethlehem Inn and inquired about how we could increase the bed utilization rate. Chris spoke to some of the reasons why someone may not be interested in utilizing a high-barrier bed.

Councilor Zwicker noted that there are some gaps in the community, and expressed her desire to have the Office help identify and remedy these community gaps. Cheyenne noted that the need would always exceed the resources available, and the Office can have a role in helping prioritize needs.

Councilor Perkins noted her belief that the Board's role isn't evaluating the data, it's advocating for each community's needs. Mayor Richer asked for clarity on who the Office is trying to help. Cheyenne noted that the Office is trying to help anyone that needs it. She explained that homelessness is a result of system challenges and historic marginalization. Councilor Zwicker noted a desire to see more data on efforts. Cheyenne noted that the Advisory Board may be a helpful in helping identify relevant information to share with the board.

**9. Break for Lunch**

The meeting paused at 12:20, and restarted at 12:43 pm.

**10. Roles, Responsibilities, & Relationships Discussion**

Councilor Zwicker expressed a desire to talk about how councilors communicate with service providers about the role of the CHRO. Zwicker noted that the public has expressed frustration related to the CHRO's perceived lack of accomplishments.

Cheyenne acknowledged the concerns, and noted that the Office is operating in a gray area. The Office is new, and a lack of structure and formality have people asking questions as the Office's role is further defined. Cheyenne spoke about recent discussions around encampments as an example, and reiterated that the Coordinated Office would not be the most appropriate entity for messaging on camp removals.

Cheyenne acknowledged some friction in the community with the CHRO, and asked the board's advice on how to help avoid and mitigate that friction. Cheyenne acknowledged the Office's limitations, she's trying to do it all and it isn't working. There is too much for one person to do.

Cheyenne was asked by Councilor Zwicker what are three things she'd like to prioritize and three things she'd like to do less of. Cheyenne noted that onboarding new staff, participating in the EO process, and developing more housing are her top priorities. Cheyenne noted that encampment work and meeting coordination are things she'd like to do less of. Cheyenne noted that setting up the advisory group is the first step in defining the workplan for the upcoming year.

Councilor Perkins expressed concern about the CHRO's progress on meeting the State's deadline of June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023 to submit the Strategic Plan for the Office. Cheyenne noted that the Office is actually ahead of the deadline, and many communities have requested extensions. Cheyenne noted that the Office was planning to submit the EHTF plan to the State on the 30<sup>th</sup>. Councilor Perkins asked what, specifically, would be submitted. Cheyenne asked Councilor Perkins what she wanted the Office to submit on the 30<sup>th</sup> and requested guidance from the Board on what they want to see the Office submit. Councilor Perkins noted that the most important conversation that needs to happen is one about roles and responsibilities.

Cheyenne noted that she created a worksheet for Board members to fill out to try to prioritize which projects we want to take action on. Commissioner Adair suggested that Board Members fill out the form and then email it to Chris. Councilor Perkins noted that the Board doesn't feel sure of their role as Board members either. Erik noted he would facilitate next month's discussion about roles and responsibilities.

**11. Helping Hands ReEntry**

Alan Evans joined the meeting via Zoom and introduced Helping Hands ReEntry, which is an organization he founded. Alan explained that Helping Hands operates

11 facilities across 5 counties in Oregon, totaling 618 beds per night. Alan explained the services he provides across Oregon to help people experiencing homelessness.

**12. Annual Operating Budget Overview and Discussion**

*This agenda item was postponed.*

**13. Agenda Topics for Next Meeting**

*This agenda item was postponed.*

**14. Schedule Next Meeting**

Chris noted he would schedule the next meeting via Doodle Poll.

**15. Public Comment**

Public Comment began at 1:57 pm.

- Linda Murrer – resident of Bend – frustrated at how long this process is taking. Actively requesting information, data, and guidance from the CHRO and not getting it. Linda doesn't like either strategic plan. She wants to see tangible results. When is this madness going to stop? Expedite Strategic plan and create action items that can be done in the near future.
- Jennifer Lingard – Helped coordinate April town halls last year. Likes helping hands. She has been begging the City of Bend's Housing Staff to work with helping hands. Upset that the City of Bend or Cheyenne won't return her calls or emails. Upset Cheyenne's email isn't public. 300 people want helping hands in Central Oregon. Jennifer will help coordinate private donations. Please consider helping hands.
- Commissioner Tony Debone – Thinks the CHRO's goal should be ending unauthorized public camping. Fixing the camping is Commissioner Debone's top priority.

**Chair Adair adjourned the meeting at 2:09 pm.**