

REGIONAL HOUSING COUNCIL

Wednesday June 22nd, 2022 Meeting Minutes

ATTENDEES:

Lacey: Carolyn Cox, Andy Ryder, Scott Spence, Rick Walk, Kelly Adams

Tumwater: Michael Althaus, Joan Cathey, Brad Medrud

Olympia: Dani Madrone, Keith Stahley

Thurston County: Carolina Mejia, Ramiro Chavez, Keylee Marineau, Tom Webster, Jacinda Steltjes, Meghan Porter

Yelm: Brian Hess

Public: Lisa Striedinger, Phillip Jenkins, Randy Morrow, Jimmy Mateson

Meeting began at 4:00 pm.

Agenda Item 1: Agenda approved, motion and second

Agenda Item 2: Public Comment

Lisa Striedinger: Lisa is the Director of Friends Without Homes in Lewis County, wants to learn more about the RHC. Lisa also works in Olympia at the tiny home village.

Phillip Jenkins: Would like to talk about funding to OlyMAP, this is the only assistance to people living on the streets. They have been helping people find jobs and housing. Phillip was provided assistance from OlyMAP and they helped him find housing. OlyMAP has been a huge help to a lot of people like himself.

Randy Morrow: Randy is presently homeless. OlyMAP brings them supplies, helps provide clean up. Noted that there are many unoccupied buildings, would be helpful if vacant buildings could be acquired for housing.

Jimmy Mateson: Encouraged the RHC to look at the mitigation site as a transitional facility, support that space as an entry point for more services and housing. Also asked RHC to consider helping Lacey look at the unused Sears building for shelter.

Agenda Item 3: Minutes from June 8th meeting, motion and second, approved

Agenda Item 4: OlyMAP Scattered Site Presentation

Tye Gundel from OlyMAP, one of the Cofounders and Codirectors of OlyMAP, and Jenny Milchenko from OlyMAP presented. Overview of OlyMAP: they are a relatively new homeless services organization working with unsheltered homeless. They provide case management and site support. Clients can access CE, housing, services, legal assistance etc. Case managers visit the camps 2 - 3 times per week. All case workers have a limit of ten clients. Site support program works on general outreach, camp problem reduction, site advocacy support, connecting residents with services. In June 2021 OlyMAP contracted with Thurston County to provide these services. Goals were to reduce impacts of unsheltered homelessness and to connect people experiencing homeless with housing and services.

Jennifer gave a summary of numbers of residents served at each camp, Ensign, Nickerson, Deschutes, as well as some smaller camp sites. Jennifer gave an overview of data goals and objectives. They did meet their case management objectives. The site support goals and objectives were impacted by some external factors, such as camp sweeps, which limited their ability to provide the site support as OlyMAP intended.

Specific outcomes: OlyMAP worked with roughly 250 residents at 15 camps. 31 people were moved into an improved housing situation. Every person who was moved into housing were enrolled in case management. The most frequent referrals were for medical, legal, housing and basic needs (hygiene) services. The most frequent application assistance was for identification and a phone. For site support, they provided weatherization, vehicle repair, self governance guidance, and residents reported better access to support and services due to OlyMAP intervention. 55% of Wheeler and Ensign residents said that OlyMAP's presence improved safety at the camps. Majority of residents reported that they want OlyMAP to continue working with their camps.

Tye gave an update of challenges identified at their 6 month report: reactionary approach, sweeps, lack of alignment of goals, lack of decision making control, staff burnout. Tye gave an overview of steps taken to reduce challenges, such as clarifying roles, better communication, education, structuring outreach to increase staff and training, wage increase and health care for employees. Two new challenges, 1) lack of regional alignment in response to unsheltered homeless, 2) ethical conflict of advocacy in the scattered site program. Discussion followed regarding challenges associated with the Deschutes camp sweep. Tye gave an overview of outcomes and next steps: need for case management, consistent place to stay, need for alternative shelter options.

Questions: Chair Cox asked if there was a gap of time between funding, how would OlyMAP staff back up? Tye indicated that staff may likely come back after a brief gap, will try to shift clients to other case managers if possible. Councilmember Althaus asked if they have any tools to increase number of people to enroll in case management? They do have waitlists for case management, the limitation being their staff capacity. Building trust with residents and being participant-led are crucial tools. If there were more supportive housing options, do they think more of their clients would be moved into housing? Yes. Councilmember Hess asked if there were other people to help their final clients into housing if they do not have funding in July. They are trying to connect people with other available case managers, but there is a shortage of outreach case managers in the community so that is a challenge.

Agenda Item 5: RHC and HAT retreat next steps

Tom gave an update: Technical Team had a mini retreat, to develop a plan for short term needs including amending the ILA, and long term goal of moving toward an independent agency. Anticipate bringing a draft organizational structure to the RHC in July. In July and August they intend to revise the ILA and bring revised ILA to RHC in September. Discussion followed regarding the possibility for RHC electeds to participate in the tech team development of the RHC structure plan.

Agenda Item 6: ROW Update

Keylee gave an update: They have 2 signed agreements between the County and Commerce for up to \$5M, \$3.4 will go to Interfaith to provide up to 24 beds for 3 years for those removed from Right of Way. The County has released the RFP for outreach to provide 3 years of outreach at \$300,000 each year. RFP

also includes \$200,000 in hotel stays for those actively fleeing DV living in ROW. This is just phase 1 of a larger plan, in which Thurston County is earmarked to receive \$19M including funds for capital acquisition. The Commerce RFP was released yesterday, the County has 30 days to respond to Commerce regarding the \$19M.

Keith gave an overview for the City of Olympia, the City Council has approved an ILA with Commerce to develop a tiny house village on the Franz Anderson property for \$6.2M for construction and operations.

Councilmember Althaus asked for clarification on RHC role? Discussion follows regarding the regional effort to compete the ROW work, and benefits of the funding on RHC's plans. Discussion follows regarding the different roles of each jurisdiction, ILA's with different jurisdictions and Commerce, and aligning the ROW work with the 5 year plan. County Manager Chavez added that they have been asking where the State is in assisting with the homeless response, and now the State is responding. It is happening very quickly. Stress the importance of moving forward to ensure they utilize this funding to achieve their goals and bring something tangible to region. They need to be flexible and meet the deadline, it is a great opportunity, and keep in mind the State's perspective and expectation to see outcomes. Tom added that the State is pleased with immediate regional response from the County, the existence of the RHC and Tech Team allowed them to respond quickly. Discussion followed regarding if the RHC will need to vote or recommend/endorse the proposal before it is submitted to the State, and before State MOUs are brought to each jurisdiction. Councilmember Hess voiced concern about representing the whole South County, and asked about seeing the MOU. Mayor Ryder asked to see MOU and have an opportunity to present the MOU to each Council. Discussion followed regarding what portions of the County Councilmember Hess represents and revising South County language in the ILA and/or the website.

Agenda Item 7: Technical Team Working Group Update

Arielle gave information regarding Commerce Anchor Community Initiative funds, including a \$50K planning fund and the next round of funding of \$380K to support youth and young adult housing initiatives to local community, could be used for outreach, diversion, rapid rehousing.

CHG and 1277 funding: Tom gave an update, the County was notified by Commerce that Thurston County will receive \$2.4M in 1277 rent assistance funding. This will be a permanent rent assistance program, funds required to be use for those at imminent risk of homelessness. Staff will be asking RHC to recommend an RFP to award these funds. The County will also be receiving an additional \$352K through CHG available July 1st. Asking for RHC to approve applying this \$352K to applications previously submitted under the April RFP. Staff will come back to RHC in July with Tech Team recommendation based on previous applications. Carolina added that she recently visited camps with OlyMAP and fully supports OlyMAP being able to continue their work and supports funding OlyMAP with these funds.

Keylee shared information regarding \$322M from HUD for permanent supportive housing, services, outreach, coordinated approach to unsheltered homeless. No timeline from HUD yet, funds will come through the CoC.

Agenda Item 8: Good of the Order

None

Meeting Adjourned: 5:58 pm

Next Meeting: July 13th, 4:00 pm