

# Regional Housing Council

**Agenda:** Wednesday February 28, 2024 (4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.)

(Hybrid – Zoom & Lacey City Hall Rm 1037)

**Carolyn Cox: Chair, Emily Clouse: Vice-Chair**

#	TIME	AGENDA ITEM	LEAD	ACTION
1	4:00 – 4:05	Welcome and Introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check-in</li> <li>• Review Agenda/Meeting Purpose</li> </ul>	Carolyn Cox	
2	4:05 – 4:07	Approval of January 24 Minutes	Carolyn Cox	Action
3	4:07 – 4:15	Public Comment	Carolyn Cox	
4	4:15 – 4:25	Affordable Housing Advisory Board – Recommendation of New Members	Grace Lee	Action
5	4:25 – 4:35	Homeless Services Advisory Board – Recommendation of New Members	Keylee Marineau	Action
6	4:35 – 5:00	Fair Housing Plan Action Items	Christa Lenssen	Information & Discussion
7	5:00 – 5:15	RHC Policy Discussion	Carolyn Cox	Discussion
8	5:15 – 5:25	Communications Update	Elisa Sparkman	Information
9	5:25 – 5:35	Good of the Order	Carolyn Cox	Information
10	5:35	Upcoming Meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Next RHC Meeting Wednesday March 27, 2024, 4 p.m. Location: Zoom &amp; Lacey City Hall 1037</li> </ul>		

# REGIONAL HOUSING COUNCIL

Wednesday, January 24, 2024, Meeting Minutes

## **ATTENDEES:**

Lacey: Carolyn Cox, Jennifer Adams, and Ryan Andrews

Tumwater: Michael Althaus, Joan Cathey, Lisa Parks, and Brad Medrud

Olympia: Rich Hoey, Dani Madrone, Darian Lightfoot, Robert Vanderpool, and Jacinda Steltjes

Yelm: Gary Cooper and Trevor Palmer

Thurston County: Robin Campbell, Carolina Mejia, Emily Clouse, Tom Webster, Keylee Marineau, Elisa Sparkman, Alex Persse, and Leah Tangeman

Affordable Housing Advisory Board: Talauna Reed

Homeless Services Advisory Board: Tammie Smith and KayVin Hill

Meeting began at 4:00 p.m.

**Agenda Item 1:** Agenda approved, motion, and second.

**Agenda Item 2:** Minutes from December 13 meeting, motion and second, approved.

**Agenda Item 3:** Public Comment – No Comment

## **Agenda Item 4: Affirm Commissioner Clouse as Vice Chair & Scheduling of Election for Chair & Vice Chair**

Dani motioned to approve Commissioner Clouse as a member of the RHC and as Vice Chair of the RHC, Michael seconded, unanimously approved. Carolyn recommended delaying the election of Chair & Vice Chair until the March meeting, as Trevor and Emily are new members.

## **Agenda Item 5: 2024 Request for Proposal/Request for Information**

Keylee reported on the Homeless Services Request for Proposals (RFP) for 2024. Thurston County is accepting applications for the use of 2163 funds for Cold Weather Shelter and Hazardous Weather Shelter. Cold Weather Shelter programs provide overnight emergency shelter beds during the cold weather season of November 1, 2024, through April 30, 2025. Hazardous Weather Shelter programs provide services during hazardous or dangerous weather events as defined in the Thurston County Hazardous Weather Plan. Both programs are awarded on an annual basis. All other contracts for Thurston County Homeless Services will be up for renewal.

Next, Keylee shared a chart that detailed the Estimated Homeless Services Revenues for February 2024 RFP. Based on the County's estimation, 2024 revenue for 2163 funds will be 1.5 million. The County also projected that the Local Home Fund will be 5.1 million with 30% of those funds used for Homeless Services. The sub-total for Homeless Services Revenues equals \$3,048,000 dollars. The Human Services Fund (HSF) is projected to be awarded \$350,821 in 2024 which is an increase from their \$333,323 award in 2023. The Homeless Services Advisory Board (HSAB) met and discussed spreading the extra HSF proportionate to the contracts that are out for renewal for that fund.

Last, Keylee presented the 2163 Set Asides for 2024. The one year set asides are projected to remain the same in 2024 as they were in 2023; Cold and Hazardous Weather projected at \$265,800, Point in Time

Count at \$25,000, and Emergency Funds at \$200,000. The two-year set asides are also projected to remain the same for Coordinated Entry (CE) at \$350,000, Housing Basic Needs (HBN) at \$270,963, Lived Experience Housing Steering Committee (LEHSC) stipends and support at \$50,000, Advisory Board stipends up to \$25,000, and DEI Training for Agencies at \$22,500 totaling \$1,109,263 in set-asides for 2024.

Michael and Carolyn asked about remaining Emergency funds for 2023 and 2024. Keylee clarified that, although there are \$0 spent as of January 2024, the 2024 Emergency Fund contracts began September 1, 2023, and will end August 31, 2024. Tom clarified that any Emergency Funds that were unspent in 2023 will roll into available funds for future RFPs. Dani expressed concern that the projections in 2024 remain the same from 2023 which may not address issues like inflation and cost of living increases. Tom explained that values remain the same because the 2163 Document Recording Fees revenue is projecting to be flat. There was discussion around using remaining funds, such as Emergency Funds, to offset inflation by distributing them to providers at the end of the year.

Dani motioned to approve the one-year set asides as proposed, Michael seconded, unanimously approved.

Jacinda reported on the Affordable Housing RFP for 2024. She shared the recommendations from Thurston Affordable Housing Advisory Board (TAHAB) concerning the RFP for Housing Capital Funds. Thurston County is soliciting applications for federal HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME), HOME American Rescue Plan Act (HOME ARP) funds, local SHB 2060 Affordable Housing (2060), local SHB 1406 (1406), and Thurston County & City of Olympia combined Local Home Fund. There is an increase in estimated projections with a sub-total of \$8,990,401 in 2024 compared to \$7,925,621 in 2023. Jacinda outlined the scoring criteria at a high level. The TAHAB has spent a lot of time discussing how projects should be scored, including adding points to Supports Vulnerable and Historically Disadvantaged Populations and By and For/Culturally Specific Organization and/or BIPOC leadership in Organization. The TAHAB is recommending that 80% of the total funds be made available to the RFP, to reserve 20% of the total funds for an Opportunity Fund, to not set any funding priorities, and to approve the scoring criteria.

Dani motioned to approve the Affordable Housing RFP for 2024 as proposed, Trevor seconded, unanimously approved.

Next, Jacinda reported on the RHC's 2024 Request for Information (RFI): Priorities and Scoring Criteria. Historically, a RFI has gone out at the same time as the RFP. The timing is the same, but the application looks slightly different. The last RFI was put out in 2021. The recommendation from the TAHAB is to reestablish the RFI to place projects into the Housing Pipeline for years 2025, 2026, and 2027 with a set aside of 60% of annually anticipated available funding for these three years to be dedicated toward projects placed onto the Pipeline through the 2024 RFI process. Like the RFP, the board has decided not to set funding priorities for these projects. Per funding requirements, projects must serve low-income households, primarily those with incomes at or below 60% area median income. The board decided not to solicit applications for these three years for rental assistance through the RFI process. Additionally, the TAHAB is recommending the approval of the RFI Scoring Criteria.

Trevor motioned to approve the 2024 RFI Priorities and Scoring Criteria, Dani seconded, unanimously approved.

## **Agenda Item 6: Off-Cycle Funding Request Policies**

Keylee and Alex presented the HSAB and TAHAB proposed Off-Cycle Funding Request Policies. TAHAB recommends that the RHC reserve a portion of local funds available for capital projects for potential off-cycle requests. As stated previously, the board recommends that 20% of the total RFP funds be reserved for an Opportunity Fund. The policy states that if funds remain unobligated at the end of a calendar year, the RHC may either roll unused funds back into the following year's annual RFP processor maintain or add to the reserve for future Opportunity Fund awards. Within this request, the board intends to include requests for activities that support the preservation of manufactured home communities (MHC) or to assist residents to acquire the MHC. These funds are primarily intended to be used for acquisition. Rehabilitation may be appropriate when accompanied by acquisition of a property or building. The process for this Off-Cycle Funding Request would be to apply for the Opportunity Funds within the RFI application. The application would come to the RHC Technical Team, and they would review it for eligibility before presenting it to the TAHAB to determine if it is a priority or crucial project. The TAHAB would decide whether to recommend the project to the RHC for funding. If the project is presented to the RHC and the RHC decides to recommend the project for funding, the Thurston County Office of Housing and Homeless Prevention (OHHP) will recommend the project to the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) at the next available meeting.

Trevor motioned to approve the Opportunity Fund Policy, Dani seconded, unanimously approved.

The HSAB recommends that the RHC establish a Homeless Services Emergency Fund (HSE) to assist service providers facing an imminent loss of client housing and homeless services. Like the Emergency Fund, this fund would provide an interim solution to an urgent and acute problem that was unforeseen by the applicant. Keylee explained that it is not intended to solely address emergency needs based on budgeting shortfalls, however, the board recognizes that budgeting or funding gaps can cause an emergency. The policy states that requests for HSE funds must be submitted to Thurston County and discussion of the request will be added to the agenda for the upcoming HSAB meeting. If there is no HSAB/RHC meeting scheduled within two weeks from date of submission, an emergency meeting will be called. HSAB members will discuss and vote on the request at the first available meeting. The HSAB chair/co-chair will present the request and their recommendations at the first available RHC meeting. RHC will make the final decision to approve the request. HSE funding awards must be approved by Thurston's Board of County Commissioners (BoCC). Contracts will be executed in a timely fashion following BoCC approval. The HSAB recommends that the RHC set aside a minimum of \$200,000 of available homeless services funds to establish an HSE fund allocation.

Trevor motioned to approve the RHC Homeless Services Emergency Fund Policy and Procedures for Homeless Services, Carolyn seconded, unanimously approved.

## **Agenda Item 7: Right of Way Update**

Tom began the update on the State's Right of Way Initiative (ROW). While the initial five ROW encampments have been cleared and individuals offered better housing solutions, the Department of Commerce has added new sites within the ROW during the past few months including the Desmond Encampment in Lacey and the Percival Encampment in Olympia. Keylee continued the update and stated that in the fall, the RHC discussed what to do about these remaining two encampments. On January 2, 2024, the Department of Commerce notified the County that they were moving forward with

clearing Desmond. From that point, there has been a question of who is on the By Name List from the encampment and how many individuals live on the site. Providers have described that it is difficult to determine how many individuals live in the encampment as many of them fear being trespassed. Ryan stated that the RHC Executive Team discussed requesting that the RHC create a letter that would give direction to Department of Enterprise Services to allow for more time create a new By Name List within the encampment. They also discussed requesting that the Department of Commerce open the balance of any additional ROW rooms for use by Coordinated Entry (CE). The intention is that the new By Name List at Desmond would be the first of any list to utilize available housing. There was discussion around the Desmond Drive Encampment Timeline.

Dani moved to authorize staff to write a letter to the Department of Enterprise Services requesting two additional weeks to create a new By Name List and a letter to Department of Commerce to open ROW beds for use by CE and for the RHC Executive Team to approve and sign it, Trevor seconded, unanimously approved.

#### **Agenda Item 8: Advisory Board Recruitment Update**

The RHC's two Advisory Boards, Thurston Affordable Housing Advisory Board and Homeless Service Advisory Board, are recruiting new members. Applications can be found on the County's RHC website and are due January 31, 2024.

#### **Agenda Item 9: Communications Update**

Elisa gave a communications update. Elisa created social media images for the Advisory Board Recruitment and distributed them to the communications specialists at each jurisdiction as well as emailed the Advisory Board Recruitment letter to a communications distribution list. She also created a Thurston County Rights of Way (ROW) Initiative 2023 Snapshot infographic that highlights the work that has been done with ROW within the past year. Additionally, she explained that Thurston County is looking to get new software for newsletters, which may delay when the first newsletter will be issued.

#### **Agenda Item 10: RHC 2024 Meeting Schedule and Location**

Tom presented the proposed RHC Meeting Schedule and Location. The board approved that all the 2024 RHC meetings will have a hybrid option and will be in person at the Lacey City Hall and virtual on Zoom. The meetings will be held on the fourth Wednesday of every month at 4:00 p.m. except for May, November and December 2024 which are rescheduled for the second Wednesday of the month.

#### **Agenda Item 11: Good of the Order**

Olympia: No update.

Thurston County: The Thurston County Annual Point in Time Count (PIT) is Friday, January 26 – Wednesday, January 31.

Tumwater: It is Tumwater's year for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). Within their work session, Tumwater decided to focus 80% of the funds on housing for low-income individuals and families. They will administer an RFP in the Spring.

Yelm: No update.

Lacey: No update.

**Meeting Adjourned:** 6:00 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** February 28, 2024, 4:00 p.m. – hybrid (Zoom & Lacey City Hall Rm 1037)



**Topic:** Thurston Affordable Housing Advisory Board Membership Recommendations

<b>Date</b>	February 28, 2024
<b>Request</b>	Approve recommended TAHAB new members
<b>Background</b>	<p>The Thurston Affordable Housing Advisory Board and the Homeless Services Board both have a handful of board vacancies. In November, the executive leadership of both boards met to discuss an advisory board recruitment process that would apply to both boards. A volunteer sub-committee of TAHAB and Homeless Services Board members was then created to review and revise the application used for board member recruitment, recruit new members, score applications, and make new board member recommendations to the Regional Housing Council.</p> <p>Applications for each board were made available on January 17<sup>th</sup> and closed on January 31<sup>st</sup>. The Advisory Board Recruitment Subcommittee accepted all applications and prioritized applicants who have lived experience of homelessness or housing instability, are over-represented in the homeless services system, have a real estate background, are knowledgeable about affordable homeownership, or are knowledgeable about affordable housing lending.</p> <p>Twelve applicants applied for the TAHAB. Of those, the sub-committee chose to interview six applicants for TAHAB on February 13 and 14. Three applicants are being recommended for placement on the TAHAB.</p> <p>TAHAB recommends appointing Karen Hall, Jamie Milletary, and Tonya Hennen to TAHAB. Karen is a resident of Tumwater and currently works as Director of Housing for the South Puget Sound Habitat for Humanity. Jamie is an Olympia resident who is the owner and operator of Piece by Peace Logistics, a moving company which has assisted many low-income households moving from housing situations which are no longer affordable or sustainable. Tonya Hennen resides in unincorporated Thurston County and is a real estate broker and housing advocate.</p>
<b>Proposed Solution</b>	Appoint Karen Hall, Jamie Milletary, and Tonya Hennen to the TAHAB for three-year terms to end December 2027.
<b>Financial Implications</b>	None
<b>Recommendation</b>	Approve the proposed solution as presented.



**Topic: Homeless Services Advisory Board Membership Recommendations**

<b>Date</b>	February 28, 2024
<b>Request</b>	Approve recommended HSAB new members
<b>Background</b>	<p>The Homeless Services Advisory Board and the Thurston Affordable Housing Advisory Board both have a handful of board vacancies. In November, the executive leadership of both boards met to discuss an advisory board recruitment process that would apply to both boards. A volunteer sub-committee of HSAB and Affordable Housing Board members was then created to review and revise the application used for board member recruitment, recruit new members, score applications, and make new board member recommendations to the Regional Housing Council.</p> <p>Applications for each board were made available on January 17<sup>th</sup> and closed on January 31<sup>st</sup>. The Advisory Board Recruitment Sub-Committee accepted all applications and prioritized applicants who have lived experience of homelessness, are over-represented in the homeless services system, and are frontline homeless services staff.</p> <p>Six applicants applied for membership on the HSAB. Of those, the sub-committee chose to interview three applicants for HSAB on February 13 and 14. Two applicants are being recommended for placement on the HSAB.</p> <p>HSAB recommends appointing Teri Cochran-Frederick, and Casper Cramblette to HSAB. Teri is an Unincorporated Thurston County resident, has lived experience, and provides subject matter expertise as a Peer. Casper has lived experience and currently works in Lacey at the Low-Income Housing Alliance at Maple Court and provides subject matter expertise in shelter operations, peer advocacy, and behavioral health services.</p>
<b>Proposed Solution</b>	Appoint Teri Cochran-Frederick and Casper Cramblette to the HSAB for two-year terms to end December 2027.
<b>Financial Implications</b>	None
<b>Recommendation</b>	Approve the proposed solution as presented.



## Staff Report

**Topic:** Update on Assessment of Fair Housing

<b>Date</b>	February 28, 2024
<b>Request</b>	Discussion and scheduling action steps from the Assessment of Fair Housing
<b>Background</b>	<p>The Fair Housing Act protects people from discrimination in housing based on protected classes: race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including sexual orientation and gender identity), disability and families with children status.</p> <p>Counties, cities and public housing authorities that receive federal funding from HUD are required to create plans for how they will spend funds. In 2023, Thurston County and City of Olympia partnered to create a Consolidated Plan to direct how they would spend CDBG funding. Jurisdictions are also required to undertake fair housing planning to ensure the projects and efforts they are funding do not (intentionally or unintentionally) continue or worsen segregation, discrimination, housing problems, or disparities. Staff from City of Olympia completed an Assessment of Fair Housing for Thurston County, as a part of the Consolidated Plan process. The Housing Authority of Thurston County partnered with the City of Olympia and Thurston County to complete the Assessment of Fair Housing.</p> <p>The current Consolidated Plan and Assessment of Fair Housing cover 2023-2027. While we are not currently required to report any specific outcomes to HUD, future funding cycles will have much more stringent requirements for jurisdictions to demonstrate that they are creating goals that will meaningfully address disparities and segregation, and report annually on progress made on the goals identified.</p> <p>An Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rulemaking process is underway and the proposed rule has a stronger emphasis on transparency and accountability. In future cycles, HUD will review and approve jurisdictions' Equity Plans and will track progress on goals annually to ensure they are working to address disparities they identified.</p> <p>Staff from City of Lacey, City of Olympia, City of Yelm, and Thurston County met on February 8, 2024 to discuss identified goals and tasks in the Assessment of Fair Housing. Staff reviewed progress on tasks by each jurisdiction, tasks that are already underway, and prioritized next steps to make progress on goals for consideration by the RHC.</p>
<b>Proposed Solution</b>	Staff recommends three actions are prioritized over the next year, with presentations and discussion at future RHC meetings.



	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Development of affordable housing is key to addressing gaps in housing needs for the most marginalized community members. People of color, people with disabilities, single parents, and people who are transgender experience higher rates of housing cost burden and/or homelessness. Each jurisdiction will create a list of incentives for affordable housing and one staff lead will compile the incentives. Developers have indicated that it would be helpful to have more consistency or one place to easily find information about all the incentives available—which could be compiled and hosted on the RHC webpage. Staff will present this information to the RHC for further discussion, and to identify gaps or opportunities for greater alignment among jurisdictions. With the RHC’s input, each jurisdiction can consider if they’d like to make any changes.</li> <li>2. Fair housing survey participants provided input about environmental health of housing units, especially the impacts of mold on health of people with disabilities. Staff will prepare a presentation to the RHC on best practices and sample code language that jurisdictions could consider adopting to address mold in housing units.</li> <li>3. Each jurisdiction will list any tenant protections enacted and identify any gaps or opportunities for alignment between jurisdictions. Staff will prepare a presentation for the RHC to discuss current tenant protections and hold discussion on policies that could be pursued.</li> </ol>
<b>Financial Implications</b>	None at this time.
<b>Recommendation</b>	Hold a discussion on action steps recommended by staff and schedule presentations to RHC.



## RHC Meeting Schedule 2024

Date	Time	Type	Location
January 24	4-6pm	In-Person & Virtual	Atrium, Rm 110
February 28	4-6pm	In-Person & Virtual	Lacey City Hall, Rm 1037
March 27	4-6pm	In-Person & Virtual	Lacey City Hall, Rm 1037
April 24	4-6pm	In-Person & Virtual	Lacey City Hall, Rm 1037
May 8	4-6pm	In-Person & Virtual	Lacey City Hall, Rm 1037
June 26	4-6pm	In-Person & Virtual	Lacey City Hall, Rm 1037
July 24	4-6pm	In-Person & Virtual	Lacey City Hall, Rm 1037
August 28	4-6pm	In-Person & Virtual	Lacey City Hall, Rm 1037
September 25	4-6pm	In-Person & Virtual	Lacey City Hall, Rm 1037
October 23	4-6pm	In-Person & Virtual	Lacey City Hall, Rm 1037
November 13	4-6pm	In-Person & Virtual	Lacey City Hall, Rm 1037
December 11	4-6pm	In-Person & Virtual	Lacey City Hall, Rm 1037

- The RHC meets the fourth Wednesday of every month at 4:00 p.m. excluding May, November, and December which will be held on the second Wednesday. All meetings will be hybrid and are in person with a virtual option.
- Virtual meetings are held online through Zoom. Those who are not regular panelists, please [register to attend online meeting](#). Regular panelists will be emailed a panelist link before each meeting or be elevated to panelist once they join the regular Zoom meeting.