

HOMELESS SERVICES OVERSIGHT COUNCIL (HSOC) MEETING MINUTES

Date

September 20, 2023

Time

1:00pm-2:53pm

Location

Conference Room, Family Care Network,
1255 Kendall Road, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Members (those approved with just cause/ emergency reasons) and the public were able to participate via Zoom.

Members Present:

Allison Brandum
Amelia Grover
Aurora William
Bettina Swigger
Brenda Mack
Christy Nichols (Alternate for Nicole Bennett)
Clint Weirick
Daniella Garcia (Alternate for Jessica Thomas)
(Supervisor) Dawn Ortiz-Legg
Devin Drake
Elaine Archer
Garrett Olson
Jack Lahey
Janna Nichols
Jeff Eckels
Kristen Barneich
Luke Dunn
Marcia Guthrie
Mark Lamore
Rick Gulino
Rick Scott
Rochelle Sonza
Star Graber
Susan Funk
Susan Lamont

Wendy Blacker
Wendy Lewis

Members Absent:

Garret Olson
Jeff Smith
Jessica Thomas
Jim Dantona
Kathy McClenathen
Michelle Shoresman
Nicole Bennett
Shay Stewart
Steve Gregory
William Crewe
Zara Landrum

Staff & Guests:

Daisy Wiberg
Deborah Erb
Erica Jaramillo
George Solis
James Worthley (Planning Director, SLOCOG)
Kari Howell
Kate Bourne
Kristin Ventresca
Laurel Weir
Lauryn Searles
Matt Leal
Merlie Livermore
Morgan Torell
Russ Francis
Sarah Montes Reinhart
Sarah Sanders (SLOCOG)
Skylar Caldwell
Staci Dewitt

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Chairperson Susan Funk called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm. Jeff Eckels introduced himself as alternate for Kathy McClenathen. Daniella Garcia represented Jessica Thomas for the County Office of Education. Susan Funk mentioned that the League of California Cities is currently having an annual conference, thus she welcomed City Council members who were participating via zoom. Kristen Barneich had a family emergency, and a vote was taken and approved at the meeting to allow her to participate via zoom.

2. Public Comment

Elaine Archer of HASLO (Housing Authority of San Luis Obispo) started the public comments by reporting that HUD (US Department of Housing and Urban Development) is restoring their voucher reserves of \$672,000 and participants whose vouchers were on hold are back on the waiting list.

Allison Brandum shared the need to have more porta potties provided in encampment areas for privacy and sanitary purposes. She cited how the City of Los Angeles has done a very successful program in this area and she hopes to see the City of San Luis Obispo adopt the same program. In terms of accountability during an encampment clearing, Allison mentioned maybe using a “report card” wherein people who have been moved out of encampments would grade how they were treated during the process.

Wendy Lewis shared that ECHO (El Camino Homeless Organization) has partnered with a donor who has helped fund a porta potty installation in their parking lot for individuals to use when public buildings are closed.

Brenda Mack shared her personal experience about not having access to bathrooms, especially when Covid-19 pandemic hit. She also suggested having porta potties placed where people are already encamped and providing easy access for those who are using walkers and wheelchairs. Amelia Grover announced the SLO Street Medicine convening on September 26 from 12 noon until 3pm.

Devin Drake announced that this is Joe Dzvonic’ s last week as the Homeless Services Division’s manager. Kristin Ventresca will act as the point person until a new manager is appointed.

Wendy Lewis mentioned ECHO’s upcoming walk awareness.

Janna Nichols shared about Empty Bowls event on September 21st at St. Patrick’s Catholic Church in Arroyo Grande.

Jeff Eckels from the Housing Trust Fund shared that they are celebrating their 20- year anniversary this year. Over the last 20 years, the trust fund has given out 65 loans, funding over \$40M, resulting in additional 1400 units in affordable housing in the San Luis Obispo County.

Jack Lahey from CAPSLO (Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo), in partnership with the City of San Luis Obispo, announced an initial community meeting at 5:15 pm today at the SLO Nazarene Church on Johnson Avenue to talk about a rotating model of Safe Parking. Jack also reported that there are 30 individuals enrolled in the 90-day shelter program at the Prado Day Center and already has two housing placements.

Wendy Lewis briefly mentioned that the Walmart Parking lot in Paso Robles has stopped overnight parking.

3. Consent: Approval of Minutes

Janna Nichols moved the minutes to be approved, seconded by Mark Lamore. Minutes passed by voice vote.

4. Action/Information/Discussion

4.1 Implementing Five-Year Plan Line of Effort 1 - Create Affordable and Appropriately Designed Housing Opportunities and Shelter Options for Underserved Populations

4.1.1 Discussion Item: Presentation by the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG) on the Regional Housing Needs Allocation

Sarah Sanders, a Transportation Planner from SLOCOG, along with Division Chief James Worthley, gave a presentation about RHNA (Regional Housing Needs Allocation) Plan, which identifies a projection of additional housing units needed to accommodate projected household growth of all income levels from the start until the end date of the projection period (10-year cycle).

4.1.2 Information Item: Interim Housing Projects Update

Kristin Ventresca shared that Welcome Home Village project was presented during a community information meeting on August 30th. This project is currently moving forward with contract negotiations, with Spring 2024 as the tentative move-in date for the interim housing units.

Other projects in the pipeline include Encampment Resolution Funds and opportunities to apply in Paso Robles as well as Morro Bay locations.

Janna Nichols provided an update on the “Balay Ko on Barca” housing project in Grover Beach.

“Balay Ko” is Filipino term for “My Home” and naming was approved by the Board and the Balay Ko Foundation. This will be similar in operation to the Cabins for Change project in the Long Branch location, wherein basic needs will be provided. There will be 30 cabins measuring 64 square feet each and will be a 90–180-day housing program. This project will be using Boss Cubez purchased by SLO County and projected to open and operate by the end of the year.

Janna also provided some matrix update on the Cabins for Change program. Cabins for Change opened on December 23, 2022. It has a current waiting list of 166 participants. The program has had 55 participants to date. Currently there are 23 people on site, eight dogs and three cats.

The average length of stay and exit is 97 days. Of those they are serving, the average length of being homeless is 1.9 years, 47 percent are chronically homeless, 33 percent have mental health disorder, those with substance abuse disorder at 22 percent, people with chronic health condition at 38 percent, people with physical disability at five percent. The average age group is 47 years old. Janna also mentioned that so far 75 percent of their participants are document-ready, 47 percent have completed health screenings and 95 percent qualified for health insurance.

4.2 Continuum of Care Administration

4.2. 1 Information Item: Expiring HSOC Membership seats and Call for Applications

Laurel Weir made a call for applications for HSOC membership. Russ Francis mentioned the names of HSOC members whose terms are expiring. Laurel shared the process for applying and mentioned that applications need to be received by October 9th. Ad Hoc nominating committee will look over the applications and to have recommended applicants approved by the end of the year.

Bettina Swigger announced that she will be vacating her seat as she is moving to Colorado.

4.3 Implementing Five-Year Plan Line of Effort 2: Reduce or Eliminate Barriers to Housing Stability

4.3.1 Action Item: Authorize the HSOC Chair to Sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the San Luis Obispo County Office of Education Regarding Informing Homeless Families of the Educational Rights of Homeless Children and Helping Homeless Families to Access the School-Based Resources Available to Them

Laurel Weir shared that the main goal of this Memorandum of Understanding is to keep homelessness from distracting homeless children from their education. Janna Nichols moved to approve the motion. Rick Gulino seconded, and the motion passed via roll call.

4.4 Implementing Five-Year Plan Line of Effort 3 – Improve and Expand Data Management Efforts Through HMIS and Coordinated Entry System to Strengthen Data-Driven Operational Guidance and Strategic Oversight

4.4.1 Discussion Item: Update on Planning for the 2024 Homeless Point in Time Count

Kari Howell, HMIS Program Manager, provided three specific updates on the Point in Time Count (PIT). She reported that the Selection Committee is continuing to consider proposals for an external vendor to lead the PIT count for the County. Secondly, Kari mentioned that HUD dictates the timing and methodology of PIT count to achieve nationwide consistency, so the PIT count will take place in the last 10 days of January. A date and time are anticipated to be announced soon. The last update reiterated the importance of having the participation of everybody to have a successful PIT count. Details will be provided by the team for opportunities for involvement by the community.

4.5 Implementing Five-Year Plan Line of Effort 4 – Create, Identify, and Streamline Funding and Resources

4.5.1 Action Item: Authorize the HSOC Chair to Sign a Letter of Support for the 5Cities Homeless Coalition to Apply for the 2023 Homeless Prevention Grant Funding from the California Department of Housing and Community Development

George Solis shared that the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) will soon be releasing a special funding availability for Emergencies Solutions Grant (ESG) homeless prevention funding. There will be \$1.7M available statewide and to be eligible, applicants must have an HCD approved homeless prevention policies and procedures to be awarded funding. The HCD approved the 5Cities' homeless prevention policies and procedures in March.

Supervisor Dawn Ortiz-Legg moved the motion to authorize the HSOC Chair to sign this letter of support. Garrett Olson seconded the motion; roll was called, and the motion passed.

4.6 County Homeless Services Division Update

4.6.1 Information Item: Update from County Homeless Services Division Leadership

For the HMIS (Homeless Management Information System), Kristin Ventresca reported that the Board of Supervisors approved the contracts with Bitfocus (software provider) and Institute for Community Alliances (ICA) as service and technical assistance implementation provider. For the last week and a half since the contracts have been approved, several meetings have been held with the providers in preparation for the data migration process from BellData.

Kristin also mentioned that this is the last week of Joe Dzvonic as Division Manager and expressed how the Homeless Services Division appreciated his leadership.

She mentioned that the division is moving forward with the same mission of having a countywide plan to address homelessness in the next five years and to reduce that by 50 percent.

Susan Funk followed up by leading a standing ovation to express the HSOC's appreciation for Joe's service and shared that the HSOC will continue to support the division in its mission.

4.6.2 Information Item: Update on the 2024 Action Plan and Related Grants

George shared that the Homeless Services Division will soon be releasing the 2024 Action Plan Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) in October. Funding programs will include the HUD Entitlement programs, as well as the State and County programs. He also presented a tentative timeline which includes releasing the NOFA on October 6th, alongside an online needs assessment survey on the same day. There will be two needs assessments workshops via zoom on October 11th, one in the afternoon and one in the evening. The needs assessment workshops are part of the community participation plan intended to help identify housing and community development needs, priorities, and goals in the County. The staff uses the feedback from these workshops in determining funding recommendations for projects. There will also be a mandatory applicant workshop on October 19th. Applications are due November 3rd via email.

5. Future Discussion/Report Items

- Conversation with Public Health
- Medical detox program- female services

6. Next Regular Meeting: November 15, 2023

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:53pm.