

COMMUNITY ACTION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

4700 NE 78th Street, Vancouver, Washington

January 10, 2017

PRESENT	EXCUSED	ABSENT	STAFF
Lydia Sanders	Paula Martin		Michael Torres
Bridget McLeman	Ty Stober		Rebecca Royce
Julie Rotz			Janet Snook
Sheree Thun			Vanessa Gaston
Mavis Nickels			Ryan Treglown
Judith Walseth			John Jokela
Rebecca Anderson			Samantha Whitley

GUESTS: Councilor Olson (Clark County); Peggy Sheehan, Councilor Anne McEnerny-Ogle (City of Vancouver); Andy Silver (Council for the Homeless); Cary Retlin (Washington Department of Commerce); Bunk Moren (Community Services Northwest); Sharon Pesut (Partners in Careers)

I. Call to Order/Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

II. Election of Officers

A motion was made by Bridget McLeman and seconded by Sheree Thun to retain Lydia Sanders, Chair, Paula Martin, Vice Chair, and Mavis Nickels, Secretary, for another term in office. The motion passed.

III. Board Business

• CAAB By-Laws (Org Std. 5.4)

The revised CAAB By-Laws were adopted in March 2016. Members may obtain a copy from Rebecca Royce, or online at <https://www.clark.wa.gov/community-services/community-action-advisory-board>.

• January-September 2016 Funding Outcomes Report (Org. Std. 4.4, 5.9, 8.7)

All contracts are proceeding as expected through the third quarter. The report omits that Second Step Housing served 13 households, and Share ASPIRE served 15 households through September. This will be updated in the next report.

• Conflict of Interest Policy (Org. Std. 5.6)

To meet Organizational Standards, a signed Conflict of Interest Policy is requested of each member annually. Please review and sign the form and return to Janet Snook. The original will be returned to keep in your binder.

• Board Member Responsibilities (Org. Std. 5.8)

Rebecca reviewed board member roles. To meet Organizational Standards, a signed statement is requested annually. Please review and sign the form and return to Janet. The original will be returned to keep in your binder.

• 2017 Board Member Roster

An updated Board Member roster was provided.

• Everybody Reads, March 9, 2017, Portland, Oregon

Let Rebecca Royce know of interest in attending the *Everybody Reads* event featuring Matthew Desmond's *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*. Carpooling will be coordinated.

• Homeless and Housing Advocacy Day, February 2, 2017

Clark County will pay the registration fee for any members wanting to attend. Carpooling will be coordinated with Council for the Homeless attendees.

• Point-in-Time Count and Project Homeless Connect

The Point-in-Time Count and Project Homeless Connect occur on the last Thursday of January. Contact David Bilby of Council for the Homeless to participate.

- Representing CAAB
Brochures will be provided at the next CAAB meeting for members to take when advocating or presenting on behalf of the CAAB.

IV. Board Business

- Approval of November 2016 Minutes
The November meeting minutes were approved following a motion by Mavis that was seconded by Bridget.
- Adoption of 2017 Work Plan
The Work Plan was approved following a motion by Judith Walseth that was seconded by Mavis. The Plan is a living document that will be adjusted as needed throughout the year. Discussion in March will include whether to change the meeting dates, times, or frequency.

V. Emergency Food and Shelter (EFSP) Priorities

Samantha Whitley shared that Clark County was awarded \$247,078 this year. This amount is similar to last year's funding. It is recommended the funding be awarded at 40 percent to shelters, 40 percent for housing assistance, and 20 percent to food programs. Bridget made a motion to accept the funding recommendations; Mavis seconded. Motion carried.

VI. Advocacy Task Force Update

Sheree made a motion to adopt the Strategic Advocacy Plan. The motion was seconded by Judith, and carried. The Plan, along with an additional handout, guides ideas for Community Action advocacy and involvement. A thank you was extended to Councilor Ty Stober for offering advocacy training following the last meeting.

VII. Community Needs Assessment

Rebecca presented an initial overview of the Community Needs survey results. Surveys are used to collect data from families with low-incomes to determine the needs in the community. The results will be used for future decision-making. A total of 1,165 surveys were returned. The top four needs are food, housing, utility, and employment assistance. Ninety-two percent of respondents identified with incomes at less than 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level; and 73 percent had incomes at less than 125 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. More in-depth analysis will continue, and secondary data will be reviewed. The draft Community Needs Assessment is anticipated to be completed by the September CAAB meeting for review and for adoption at the November CAAB meeting.

VIII. Clark County Community Services Director Update

Vanessa Gaston shared the role and changes in the programs in the Department of Community Services. This includes the implementation of Early Adopter in 2016. Priority policy goals include: supporting the 0.001 sales tax funding for community-based support services; creating permanent supportive housing for persons with behavioral health needs; funding veterans, developmental disabilities, and mental health levies at State law rates; eliminating the sunset on document recording fees, which would reduce homeless funding a projected 62 percent; and funding a crisis stabilization, treatment, and detoxification center. The Board of County Councilors is moving towards priority-based budgeting. CAAB should work to ensure the BOCC understands the value of the document recording fees and programs that serve people.

IX. Theory of Change Update (Org. Std. 6.5)

Ryan Treglown and John Jokela explained the Theory of Change process Community Services staff has engaged to determine a long-term plan and to identify steps to achieve it. The department has identified four themes of services: Household Stability, Economic Advancement, Connected and Resilient Communities, and Well-Being. Multiple outcomes for each theme will be presented to staff for approval. These include increasing the number of affordable and subsidized housing rental units in the community; improving access to affordable childcare; creating and improving parks and community facilities in low-income areas; and meeting nutritional needs for households to become food-secure. There were also several department recommendations, including: increasing capacity to collect and analyze unduplicated data; using outcome-based contracting; continuously updating the strategic plan; providing opportunities for staff learning; engaging in cross-system collaboration and integration; and, funding best-practice, outcome-based programs.

X. Adopt Clark County Community Services Mission Statement (Org. Std. 4.1)

Theory of Change efforts resulted in an updated Community Services' mission statement. Organizational Standards require the CAAB to uphold and adopt the Department's mission a minimum of every five years. Mavis made a motion to adopt the new Community Services Mission and Vision Statements. Judith seconded. Motion carried.

XI. Statewide Picture of Homelessness and Housing

Cary Retlin, Department of Commerce, shared that youth and adult homeless systems have historically had different funding sources and definitions in Washington and nationally. Adult systems focus on crises and the utilization of traditional crisis response systems. Youth systems invest in the transition to healthy, productive adulthood. Washington's rent costs have increased as vacancy rates have decreased and wages have remained stagnant. For every \$100 increase in rent, homelessness increases six percent. Additional housing supply is needed to return rents to median income levels. Communities should evaluate zoning and building laws to encourage more housing. Clark County has been working to reduce barriers to housing. Cary strongly recommends advocating for resources, including eliminating the document recording fee sunset.

XII. State of Homelessness in Clark County

Andy Silver, Council for the Homeless, reported that 2,433 people who requested assistance through the Housing Solutions Center were not able to receive assistance. He also reported 496 unduplicated families and 1,482 unduplicated individuals requested emergency shelter in 2016, while 968 unduplicated individuals accessed the day center. The information cannot be unduplicated across the data points, but shows different ways of looking at the need in Clark County. Andy explained that Clark County has experienced a large population growth in the past five years while vacancy rates have dropped and rents have increased. The homeless crisis response system meets emergency needs through outreach, day centers, and emergency shelters, along with providing rapid re-housing, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing assistance, but the needs surpass the system. To alleviate the problem, more housing is needed and tenant protections enacted.

XIII. Homelessness Panel Discussion

Cary Retlin, Commerce; Andy Silver, Council for the Homeless (CFTH); Councilor Julie Olson, Clark County (CC); Councilor Anne McEnery-Ogle, City of Vancouver (CoV); Bunk Moren, Community Services Northwest (CSN); Sharon Pesut, Partners in Careers (PIC)

- I. State data shows that despite Washington State's efforts resulting in an overall decrease in per-capita homelessness of more than 17% since 2006, homelessness has been increasing since 2013. How is your agency helping to decrease the number of people living on the streets or at-risk of homelessness?

PIC: Staff helps clients understand and access community resources and remain in housing through employment guidance and through building relationships with families and landlords.

Commerce: The State has several coalitions working together to address homelessness and the value of affordable housing. Commerce is working to expose myths about homelessness, and is engaging the conversation regarding the sunset of the Document Recording Fees so that legislators know how the funds are being used and who is being served.

CFTH: The Housing Solutions Center screens applicants and utilizes diversions to provide the level of service needed to reserve resources for others. It is also involved in policy-making across Washington.

CSN: Over half of CSN's employees are community-based, providing homeless outreach and behavioral health case management. CSN provides 12-units of affordable housing and works with HUD to provide subsidized housing. It is also an active participant in the Health Care Authority, and is working on streamlining housing and services for persons who are low-income through the Medicaid Demonstration Project.

CC: The Community Housing and Development program funds the homeless crisis response system through working with community partners to create the Homeless Action Plan, provide Continuum of Care and coordinated entry systems, support the annual Point-in-Time count, and implement a housing-first model.

CoV: A Housing Task Force initiated by the City promoted and achieved the 2016 passage of the Affordable Housing Proposition 1, to raise money for low-income housing. The City also implemented ordinances to extend the notification period for no-cause evictions or rent increases, and to eliminate discrimination against renters based on their sources of income. City staff is implementing some tax abatements and streamlined permitting, and researching the option of small apartments, accessory dwelling units, and mixed-use dwellings to increase occupancy.

2. Recently, major cities in WA have created tenant protections ordinances to help ease renter burden in incredibly tight rental markets. One key ordinance the City of Vancouver passed last year makes it illegal for landlords to discriminate based on a renter's source of income. Due to this ordinance being in place, landlords in the city of Vancouver who rent to households with Section 8 or VASH vouchers may apply for a Commerce-coordinated Landlord Mitigation program to reduce their out-of-pocket costs should a tenant move out and leave damages and/or unpaid costs.

Commerce: Are landlords using the new Commerce landlord mitigation program? What was the impetus for this legislation?

The legislation was inspired by a discussion regarding the sunset of the Document Recording Fees. New language to reduce housing barriers and to add incentives to link landlords with tenants was encouraged. It was adopted about a year ago, and to date, no funds have been disbursed. Mitigation is intended for private market landlords to reduce the reluctance to rent. The mitigation program is to be a tool to develop relationships and get people into housing. It may need more publicity.

CoV: What effect have the new tenant protection ordinances had in the City?

It is unknown whether passage of tenant protection ordinances in 2015 has helped. Landlords appear to be following the rules, and the impact of the ordinances seems to have expanded beyond City limits. Mitigation in the City is handled through the Volunteer Lawyers Program and NW Justice Project.

CC: Has the County had any discussions about implementing anything similar to the ordinances passed by the City of Vancouver? Do you consider this politically feasible? Pros/Cons from your view?

Clark County has not had any discussion to adopt similar ordinances to those implemented in the City of Vancouver. These will be introduced when the timing is right. Landlords tend to agree that the source of rent is not as important as the quality of the tenant.

Andy, Sharon and Bunk, what would be the benefits of enacting tenant protection ordinances such as Source of Income protections or increasing the minimum notice time related to rent increases and notices to vacate?

CFTH: The income protection ordinances do not guarantee an applicant will receive housing, but they have initiated conversations. Landlords are becoming more educated on income sources.

PIC: Staff is able to advocate or communicate on behalf of the tenant, to reduce the stigma. The extended time to vacate, relocate, and access funding is huge for people with limited incomes, reducing stress and helping them to make good choices.

3. What are some recent changes outside of the homeless crisis response system that have led to, or will lead to, improvements for the homeless system?

CoV: The Day Center has been successful, but a new location is needed. Share has submitted a proposal for placing it on a lot at 13th and Lincoln, across from Share House. The City is also allowing a pilot program sponsored by Partners in Careers, Share, Waste Connections, and others, to pay people to clean up downtown Vancouver through solid waste funds. This produces skills and compensation for the participants. The Homelessness Ideas Group meets monthly to discuss how downtown Vancouver is taking care of homelessness. St. Luke's has opened more shelter beds; Our Lady is converting to women's housing; Veteran's Village is building 18 tiny homes for women; and many additional housing projects are in process. Partnerships are enabling these efforts to end homelessness.

CC: Clark County is looking at creative zoning and code changes to possibly include accessory dwelling units and tiny homes in rural areas, and is watching City of Vancouver successes. County Council approved the 0.001 sales tax to be used for Access to Recovery for client support for long-term recovery, and the Meriwether project, a housing project for individuals with a mental health issue.

CSN: The Medicaid Demonstration Project provides a five-year temporary influx of funding for supportive housing and case management with the intent of saving money in the long-term through streamlining the steps to obtaining housing and services. An initial agreement was reached with Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services on January 9, 2017. These funds will complement existing funding sources to allow more of the current funding to be spent on other housing needs.

CFTH: CFTH is working on trend-reversing policies and on developing housing using non-traditional funding that other providers will operate.

Commerce: Eighty percent of people who are homeless are employed, but wages need to increase. Conversations about homelessness are raising awareness.

PIC: Implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act serves the most vulnerable workers and encourages the building of job and renter skills through connecting learning and earning. PIC is administering a pilot program that helps with costs to prevent evictions or meet move-in requirements and encourages conversations and connections.

4. What are upcoming advocacy opportunities, related to supporting the needs and resources for people who are low-income, that CAAB members should focus on?

PIC: PIC encourages advocacy to simplify the background check process so that applicants do not have to pay multiple application fees during their housing search.

Commerce: The most important advocacy effort is the elimination of the Document Recording Fee sunset, which is the biggest funding source to fight homelessness. The Coalition of State Agencies is investigating ways to incentivize housing so the most vulnerable are served first, and is reviewing policies to remove and reduce barriers to housing and to open communication.

CFTH: Loss of the Document Recording Fee will nearly shut down homeless efforts in Clark County, so eliminating the sunset provision is critical. Efforts to coordinate health care and affordable housing are also important. Establishing affordability policies across all housing statewide and providing tools to the jurisdictions is helpful.

CSN: The Regional Health Alliance is forming under a new director, and would benefit from strong housing voices to influence homelessness through integrated care.

CC: Advocacy of the 0.001 sales tax for recovery housing and support services, support of Veterans housing, eliminating the Document Recording Fee sunset, and identifying ways to achieve functional zero homelessness across the State, which 30 communities and three states have achieved, is encouraged.

CoV: Vancouver encourages all cities and communities to set housing goals, not just move those who are homeless to the City. An additional warming shelter is needed, and eliminating the sunset on the Document Recording Fees is stressed.

XIV. Board Orientation

Rebecca reviewed the purpose of the CAAB through an orientation, which included promoting changes and innovative approaches to reduce poverty and remove barriers. This is done through understanding priority needs, reviewing program outcomes, advising Councilors on funding, and advocating for persons who are low-income. CAAB currently funds information, food, employment, asset development, and housing resources. It contains two task forces: Advocacy and Community Needs Assessment. Board members are encouraged to engage, learn, inquire, share, and support.

XV. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Next meeting: March 14, 2017, 8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m., 1601 E Fourth Plain, Bldg. 17, Room C210C

Mavis Nickels, Secretary

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