

**Thurston County HOME Consortium
MEETING MINUTES
January 12 2015 11:00 AM-1:00 PM
Thurston County Public Health & Social Services Department
412 Lilly Rd NE, Olympia WA 98506-5132
Conference Room 107ABC**

In Attendance: Consortium Members					
Cathy Wolfe	Thurston County	X	Jeannine Roe	Olympia	X
Virgil Clarkson	Lacey	X	Dennis McVey	Rainier	X
Neil McClanahan (Chair)	Tumwater	X	Craig Lester	Tenino	
Jen Littlefield	Yelm	X	<i>Vacant</i>	<i>Bucoda</i>	
Other Attendees					
Paul Knox	Theresa Slusher		Schelli Slaughter		
Danille Kettel	Brett Rader		Anna Schlecht		
Tim Ransom	Curt Andino		Don Sloma		
Diane Harris	Bob Ricks		Gary Aden		
Charles Shelan	Trudy Soucoup		Dan Schnabel		
Andrew Oommen	Bonnie Hill		Linda Abell	*Minutes*	
Welcome and Introductions					
<p>Introductions were made and two new members were welcomed: Commissioner Cathy Wolfe, the Thurston County representative and Jen Littlefield, completing the 9 months remaining from Yelm city council member Mike McGowan.</p>					
Public Comments/Announcements					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no Public Comments • Jeannine Roe announced that her alternate for the HOME Consortium is Olympia City Councilmember Cheryl Selby. 					
Approval of Agenda for December 8, 2014					
<p>Gary Aden requested the addition of one item to the agenda: Approval for State Contract Amendments. The revised agenda was approved by Virgil Clarkson and seconded by Jeannine Roe.</p>					
Approval of Minutes for November 10, 2014					
<p>Minutes from the December 8, 2014 meeting were reviewed. Dennis McVey requested a correction to his comments about Sidewalks' performance and goals. Motion made to approve by Jeannine Roe and seconded by Virgil Clarkson.</p>					
Review of Financial Report - Gary Aden					
<p>Gary thanked agencies for submitting invoices on time. The financial report has been updated for all Homeless and Affordable housing contracts and reminded members that Emergency funds will not be replenished until September.</p>					
Review HOME Consortium Timeline Calendar - Gary Aden					
<p>Gary provided an overview of current projects. Staff continue to meet with providers to monitor for compliance. Looking ahead, Gary learned that HUD does not plan to monitor the county this year but will wait until next year and monitor both HOME and CDBG. February brings the final preparations for the HOME RFP and March will see its release as well as the final Homeless Coordinator Report.</p>					

State Contract Amendments

Gary was recently contacted by the Washington State Department of Commerce regarding the availability of additional funds which are available in the form of two State Contract Amendments. If Thurston County does not respond with the required documentation in a timely manner (4 days) the funding will be offered to other counties who are also in need. The end date for these contracts would be Dec 31, 2015.

Amendment Request 1 is an offer to the county of an additional \$345,000 in Housing and Essential Needs (HEN) funding. The recommended action is to approve this amendment and contract for the additional HEN dollars with the Community Action Council.

Motion made by Dennis McVey to ask for BOCC approval of Amendment 1 for HEN funding through a contract with Community Action Council. Seconded by Jeannine Roe.

Amendment Request 2 is an offer to the county of \$89,188 in CHG Incentive Funds which can be used for CHG activities which include Rapid Rehousing. These funds were previously used for a rapid rehousing program operated by NW Resources serving homeless single persons, who have been released from institutions such as substance abuse treatment, jail, and mental health facilities. NW Resources (NWR) has expended all their CHG Incentive funds in the first 12 months of their program even though they have a contract for 24 months, which ends December 2015.

The recommended action is to approve this amendment and contract with any or all of the eligible CHG rapid rehousing agencies: Interfaith Works-Sidewalk, Family Support Center and NW Resources.

Gary responded to questions about how the funds can be used. Some members stated that they were unfamiliar with who NWR is and the services they provide. Trudy offered that many residents in the Oxford House program come directly from NWR. In consideration of how to divide the funds, members wondered who provided better service. Gary suggested looking at the population served and not the quality of service. He explained that unlike Sidewalk and Family Support Center, NW Resources serves street alcoholics and those coming out of treatment, providing them with a range of services that include rapid rehousing. Funds awarded to NWR could also be leveraged with funds from Treatment Sales Tax (TST).

Jeannine Roe pointed out that there is no representation from any of these three agencies at today's meeting. Charles commented that both FSC and Sidewalk provide regular feedback to the HOME Consortium.

Motion made by Dennis McVey to ask for BOCC approval to split the CHG Incentive Funds in the amount of \$89,188 evenly between IFW (\$44,594) and FSC (\$44,594). Motion seconded by Virgil Clarkson.

Coordinated Entry Discussion

Theresa provided an update to a prior discussion about whether or not the county should mandate Coordinated Entry (CE). She pointed out that there are some situations where mandating CE may not be a best practice, such as for victims of domestic violence and for those using project based vouchers. Theresa's personal recommendation falls short of mandating or incentivizing and she feels it may be too early in the CE process to mandate. She asked the Consortium if they wanted to make a decision or leave it to staff to decide.

Gary stated that if we mandate CE there must be a clear definition of what mandate means. He stressed the importance of making sure that providers are informed and understand the impact. Theresa stated that all providers have been part of the CE conversation and all providers are aware of what a mandate for CE would mean.

Community Youth Services – Funding Request

Charles Shelan from Community Youth Services referred to a recent request to the HOME Consortium for additional funding in the amount of \$15,000 to keep the Young Adult Shelter open beyond the month of May 2015. The shelter costs about \$14,000 per month to operate, and he reminded members that HOME funding fell short of what was requested and necessary to keep operations going through the year.

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Commissioner Wolfe asked what will happen to shelter operations after May or June and Charles stated that CYS has made a strong commitment to the community to keep the shelter open and that the solution is a work in progress between donors and other funding options. He hopes that between fundraising, donors and this additional funding, he would not have to close this shelter.

Neil asked Gary to confirm the amount of contingency funds at \$22,000 and stated it cannot be spent down to zero. Virgil is cautious of spending so much of the reserves so early in the year and suggested that Charles continue to explore other sources of funding first and then report back in a few months. Charles responded that he needs the funds to keep staff and to continue the momentum for donations and support. He said it would be a misuse of resources to shut down a program like this which saves kids, saves lives and reduces a public nuisance. Jeannine supports keeping the shelter open, especially going into the summer months when there are typically a larger number of youth in the downtown Olympia area. Dennis stated his concern with "out of system" requests but supports this request in the hope that early prevention will help these youth stay on the right path.

Cathy Wolfe asked if this matter would eventually come before the BOCC for approval and was told yes. Hearing that, she stated she would abstain from voting.

Jeannine Roe made a motion to approve the request by Community Youth Services for \$15,000 from the HOME contingency funds for the Young Adult Shelter. Motion was seconded by Dennis McVey.

A discussion followed about Commissioner Cathy Wolfe's decision to abstain from the vote. After Cathy learned that former commissioner Karen Valenzuela did not abstain from voting, and becoming clear on what this board's preference is, she will participate in voting matters going forward.

2015 RFP Budget/Set Asides

Gary reviewed the HOME RFP budget and the 2015 Set-asides for distribution during the 2015-2017 program years. Historically approximately \$282,700 has been set aside for projects such as Cold Weather Shelters, Emergency/Contingency fund, and the Homeless Coordinator contract. He explained that the proposed budget is just an estimate of funding that may be available and that any reduction in the total set-asides will increase the current amount (\$492,300) available to programs. This year there are some moving pieces such as HEN contract dates and amounts (the funding is not guaranteed), an adjustment in the CHG program year and a reduction by Commerce and the continued reduction in the collection of 2163 recording fees all of which can change the total dollars available. Don Sloma asked if the 2163 Set-asides were required or mandated. Gary responded that they (set-asides) were not required.

Jeannine Roe made a motion to accept the HOME Consortium RFP Budget and Set asides for 2015. Virgil Clarkson seconded the motion.

Review Committee Selection

The HOME Consortium RFP will be released soon and a review committee will need to be selected. Neil mentioned that because the committees are made up of representation by the cities and local elected officials, many at the table today have participated in the past.

Jeannine is interested in serving and asked for more information about the balance of participation (staff, elected, public) the Consortium is looking for. Gary responded that the Consortium can decide how they would like to build the committee. After further discussion it was agreed that anyone with an understanding of housing needs in the community, able to be impartial, not a recipient of the funds and able to be a team player would be a candidate for the committee.

Neil mentioned that he has participated on the review committees for the last several years and stated it would be good to have a breath of fresh air. Gary said the review committee selections will be made next month.

Trudi wondered if there is crossover with CIP review committee and if not, should there be? There was agreement that it makes some sense however Paul pointed out that it would be a large time commitment and a lot of work for review committee members to participate in both RFP processes.

Don pointed out the goals for the HOME and CIP funds are a bit different, for example: The CIP funding goals are closely aligned with the Thurston Thrives Strategies which include community needs and not exclusively about housing.

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Charles asked if a 2-year funding cycle would be better for both the process and the providers. Discussion followed as this is a subject that has come up previously. Part of the challenge is that funds are difficult to estimate for a 2 year period. Paul suggests that there are some core services that could be provided under multi-year contracts but this is a larger conversation and should be looked at later.

Curt Andino reiterated that he would like to see the public sector represented in the HOME RFP review process. Many of the HOME dollars are coming from the public through recording fees and he believes the public sector cares as much as anyone else about their community. Additionally, Curt feels there is an unfortunate imbalance because the county has a Homeless Coordinator but not an Affordable Housing Coordinator.

Homeless Coordinator Monthly Report

Theresa reported on her duties for the last month including a meeting with county staff and Commerce staff to discuss Coordinated Entry and continued planning for the Homeless Connect events at the end of January. Theresa provided information about the upcoming Shared Learning Event being coordinated with help from the Asset Building Coalition. The event on February 18th will bring together providers of mental health services, health care and those representing the criminal justice system to discuss the need for Permanent Supportive housing.

Don Sloma mentioned he just learned about this event in an unrelated meeting with Schelli Slaughter. He pointed out that the Thurston County Public Health and Social Services Department operates the Thurston - Mason Regional Support Network, (TMRSN) which is a county program responsible for the administration of publicly-funded mental health services for Thurston and Mason Counties. The TMRSN contracts for outpatient, crisis, residential and inpatient services.

Mr. Sloma stated that county RSN staff look forward to helping with and participating in the event.

Theresa attended a recent meeting of the Downtown Ambassadors program and learned there would be an encampment clearing on Burlington Northern railroad property near Capitol Lake at the end of January. She reports the clearing would involve the Washington State Patrol, the Department of Enterprise Services (DES) and the local provider community. A flyer was created to hand to those using the encampment to refer them to community resources such as the Housing Hotline.

Cathy asked how the decision is made to clear an encampment. Theresa stated that in this case the property owner complained and the DES responded.

Jeannine wondered how or if the city of Olympia was notified. She said the City Council hears about these types of issues from constituents as does the Public Works department. When there is a plan to clear an encampment, she wants to be sure that the city is made aware of it. She stated that since most encampments are within the city limits, the city incurs much of the expense of clean up and removal of garbage. Jeannine suggests, for example, that besides providing flyers, garbage bags should be distributed to those using the encampments so they can take responsibility for cleaning up the mess left behind when they vacate. She would like to see a much broader conversation take place when these situations arise. Commissioner Wolfe agrees and feels the other elected officials should be involved and aware of the decision making.

HCAC Report

Paul spoke about HCAC's idea to develop a media strategy so that positive information such as the Annual Plan and other successes and accomplishments can be shared with the community through the media. Paul wondered if this is something the county can help direct. It was suggested as a way to "control the conversation" around work the HOME Consortium is doing rather than leaving the media to respond.

Additional Public Comments/Announcements

- Virgil reminded members of an event at SPSCC taking place on Martin Luther King Day, January 19th. Tickets are \$40 each and include music and dinner, with the proceeds benefitting scholarships.
- Anna Schlecht with the City of Olympia is still looking for volunteers for the Homeless Connect Event on January 29.

NEXT MEETING

Monday, February 9, 2015 11:00 a.m. – 1p.m.

**Thurston County Public Health
412 Lilly Road, Olympia 98506**

Meeting Adjourned at 1:00 PM