



Supportive Housing Services Oversight Committee Meeting Summary

Meeting: Supportive Housing Services Oversight Committee Meeting
Date: December 4, 2023
Time: 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Place: Virtual meeting (Zoom)
Purpose: Discuss committee reflection and questions on county FY23 annual reports; Multnomah County Corrective Action Plan (CAP) update through September; Metro tax collection and disbursement update; and presentation on Metro five-year forecast.

Member attendees

Co-chair Susan Emmons (she/her), Dan Fowler (he/him), Jenny Lee (she/her), Seth Lyon (he/him), Carter MacNichol (he/him), Jeremiah Rigsby (he/him), Mike Savara (he/him), Co-Chair Dr. Mandrill Taylor (he/him), Becky Wilkinson (she/her)

Absent members

Felicita Monteblanco (she/her)

Elected delegates

Metro Councilor Christine Lewis (she/her), Multnomah County Commissioner Jessica Vega Pederson (she/her), Washington County Chair Kathryn Harrington (she/her)

Absent elected delegates

Clackamas County Chair Tootie Smith (she/her), City of Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler (he/him), Multnomah County Commissioner Susheela Jayapal (she/her)

Metro

Israel Bayer (he/him), Finn Budd (they/them), Yesenia Delgado (she/her), Liam Frost (he/him), Josh Harwood (he/him), Breanna Hudson (she/her), Rachael Lembo (she/her), Patricia Rojas (she/her)

Kearns & West Facilitator

Ben Duncan (he/him)

Welcome and Introductions

Ben Duncan, Kearns & West, introduced himself as a neutral third-party facilitator and facilitated introductions between Supportive Housing Services (SHS) Oversight Committee members.

Co-chairs Dr. Mandrill Taylor and Susan Emmons provided opening remarks and welcomed the SHS Oversight Committee to the meeting.

Co-chair Emmons announced that this was Seth Lyon's last meeting and that new members will join the Committee in early 2024.

Seth shared that it was an honor to be part of the Committee during a time of unprecedented funding and flexibility.

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Co-chair Emmons motioned to approve the meeting summaries for Oct. 23 and Nov. 6. The meeting minutes were approved with one revision to the Nov. 6 meeting minutes that the Committee will respond to public comment from Tom Cusack.

Conflict of Interest Declaration

Dan Fowler and Carter MacNichol shared potential or perceived conflicts of interest.

Public Comment

No written or verbal public comments were received.

Discussion: FY23 Annual Report Reflection and Questions

Patricia Rojas, Regional Housing Director, Metro, reminded members that the Committee's role is to provide SHS fiscal and programmatic oversight and ensure that investments advance the goals included in Measure 26-210 and the Metro Work Plan. She stated that Committee members are responsible for reviewing each county's quarterly and annual reports and developing a Regional Comprehensive Report (Report) to share with Metro Council and the three county boards of commissioners. She noted that the Report is used to evaluate how well investments were aligned with local implementation plans (LIPs), how well regional outcomes were incorporated into the Metro Work Plan, and how well the goals for populations A and B were advanced. She shared that the Committee can make recommendations to Metro Council through the Report, including changes to LIPs.

Patricia continued that the Committee will discuss what to share from the last fiscal year, including challenges, opportunities, and programmatic highlights. She added that in January, the Committee will discuss potential recommendations and that the Report will be presented in March. Patricia reviewed requirements for populations A and B and stated that this information is not included in the county reports due to historic data tracking methodologies. She shared that the counties will provide a memo outlining the investments by population in December.

Carter MacNichol shared that he did not recall seeing aggregation of the data and would review further.

Dan asked if data on the number of individuals coming into the system was available in addition to the number of individuals placed into housing.

Patricia replied that data is a critical piece of effectively and accurately telling the story and that Metro is working to incorporate this information.

Co-chair Emmons asked for more information on outreach and the number of workers at encampments. She shared that she doesn't have a clear understanding of how outreach works.

Seth added that there have been phenomenal changes in technology to end homelessness and acknowledged existing issues around population inflow. He emphasized the importance of showing the public the results of the measure and that life-sustaining services should be funded. He stated that the Committee should communicate to the counties the importance of investing in outreach and building a system that is sustainable and gets funds to the organizations that need it.

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Washington County Chair Kathryn Harrington noted that she looks forward to the Committee learning more about what outreach has been done. She shared that her State of the County address received criticism for focusing too much on homelessness and not enough on public safety. She shared appreciation for Israel Bayer, Housing Communications Manager, Metro, supporting good regional communication.

Co-chair Taylor shared that communication and outreach are two things the Committee is focusing on, specifically when it comes to targeting misinformation. He shared that he was struck by the equity analysis in the reports and asked if culturally specific services would be incorporated. He explained the importance of considering data governance and how counties know when it's time to make a change based on the data.

Israel shared that the communications team is six months out from being on the ground. He stressed that communication needs to be uplifted with county partners. He noted that the annual reports from Washington and Clackamas Counties told a story about building infrastructure and supporting people. He explained the importance of telling the story that housing is a necessary investment to support a healthy society.

Co-chair Emmons clarified that she was asking how to operationalize outreach, not how to improve communications. She noted that Washington and Clackamas County are making strides and acknowledged that Multnomah County has a bigger lift and hasn't been able to get the money out the door. She urged the Committee to consider recommendations to help fund small organizations that can't go through the procurement process. She asked if it would be helpful to recommend that Multnomah County declare a state of emergency as an effective way to reduce funding barriers.

Multnomah County Commissioner Jessica Vega Pederson responded that executive orders were declared for the Joint Office of Human Services during the summer of 2023. She explained that a state of emergency encompasses the entire county which can be problematic for equity in procurement processes if it doesn't apply to a specific department. She noted that the executive orders ensured that SHS funds, Corrective Action Plan (CAP) funds and the unanticipated revenue that the Board allocated in September would be spent by the end of the fiscal year.

Carter reflected that evaluating against annual goals and LIPs is a heavy lift as behavioral issues are an ongoing challenge for providers. He noted that this is a priority in the LIPs but was not addressed in last year's Report or identified as a challenge. Carter requested that this year's Report speak to safety issues for providers more clearly.

Patricia replied that all three counties have made significant investments in behavioral health, which is embedded in other programming, including shelter programming, rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing. She acknowledged the importance of telling the story and shared that Metro would do better to outline the work underway. She noted that the deficiencies in the behavioral health system are significant and will not be fixed through SHS. She shared that the Tri-County Planning Body (TCPB) has named this a priority and is working with behavioral health partners. She posited that it might be helpful to have a behavioral health initiative presentation in a future meeting.

Co-chair Taylor expressed support for Carter and acknowledged that the way behavioral health data is reported could be improved. He shared that behavioral health integration checklists could be created to improve the way data is recorded.

Ben acknowledged that there is a broader story and different ways to capture it. He asked the Committee to think about what recommendations could look like.

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Carter agreed that this should be reported on and acknowledged that the Committee can't fix the issue. He noted that the outreach around coordinated access is what will get people into housing.

Liam Frost, Deputy Director of Housing, Metro, shared that coordinated entry alignment is one of six goals the TCPB has identified and that Metro staff will give an update on this work in January.

Jeremiah Rigsby reflected that part of being on the Oversight Committee means discussing what oversight means and doesn't mean.

Kris Smock, Kris Smock Consulting, provided context on the Report outline, which represents the Committee's assessment of county work and recommendations. She shared that during the Jan. 8 meeting, the Committee will have the opportunity to provide feedback and recommendations on the first draft, and during the Jan. 29 meeting, the Committee will review and discuss the final draft Report.

Kris outlined key differences between the Reports for Year 1 and Year 2 and highlighted that the Year 2 Report will include the use of regional templates and methodology to roll up metrics and include progress on Year 1 recommendations and any areas for improvement. She asked the Committee to consider what they would like the overall tone to be for the Year 2 Report. She reviewed the Report outline and asked for feedback.

Carter shared that the outline is helpful and suggested adding outreach and coordinated access to the Report. He asked if the regional goal should be adjusted since collections are approximately \$200 million more than anticipated. He also shared his appreciation for the performance assessment section and asked who would conduct the analysis.

Kris responded that staff would complete the draft Report and the Committee would view and provide comments and suggestions for improvement.

Dan agreed that it's a good outline and added that it provides the Committee with a lot of the information they've requested. He noted that the amount of information could overwhelm the public and asked if Israel could review the Report and help develop an executive summary.

Kris responded that she would primarily complete the technical pieces and she has begun working with Israel on strategic elements that will be reflected in the transmittal letter and introduction. She shared her interest in making the transmittal letter as accessible as possible.

Co-chair Taylor reiterated the importance of including outreach in the Report. He stated that he would also like to see a system to evaluate when goals need to be updated.

Co-chair Emmons stated that she still believes homelessness can end. She recommended including a beginning statement on having more money and flexibility than ever before to highlight funds getting out to the community. She recommended narrowing recommendations in addition to naming what's been done and providing updates. She asked if the recommendations from the previous Report would be included in the meeting packet for January.

Kris shared that she intends to provide a narrative and initial details in the Report around what has been accomplished and noted that she would like to strategize about how to keep the update streamlined and manageable.

Ben shared that the tone last year was a balance between needing to build infrastructure to move the work forward and recommending opportunities for improvement. He reflected that

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in the next iteration, it's important to maintain the work underway while diving into the challenge of tracking funds and getting money out the door.

Mike Savara shared that the Committee has spent a lot of time discussing public perception and noted that the public knows there is money, but the results are not always visible. He suggested leaning into the Committee's commitment to improving performance and seeing changes in the system. He also noted the importance of accountability and ensuring investments are tied to outcomes so that the Committee sets the tone that they are committed to making changes and increasing public trust.

Carter added that there needs to be a tone of urgency and that it's important to be upfront with the challenges that the counties are facing without sugarcoating them.

Dan reflected that it's important to share that results are happening and that the Committee values the critique of the community.

Seth shared it would be helpful to provide context setting since the measure passed, including Governor Tina Kotek declaring this a top priority and highlighting some of her convening.

Mike responded that Seth made a good point and noted that the investments are augmenting and supporting emergency work from the state.

Kris shared that it's a challenge to weave all of this together and she looks forward to receiving additional feedback and suggestions.

Discussion: Multnomah County Corrective Action Plan (CAP) Update

Daniel Field, Joint Office of Homeless Services Director, Multnomah County, shared that the CAP is on track and that the update would focus on one area of risk where there has been significant advancement.

Kanoe Egleston, Joint Office of Homeless Services, Multnomah County, updated the Committee that six items have been completed, eight are on track, and Housing Multnomah Now is at risk and is being closely tracked. She shared that the Director is in place and working on increasing contracts with provider organizations. She stated that the first location of Housing Multnomah Now is under the Steel Bridge with 170 participants enrolled, and that last week, engagement and enrollment began for the second Housing Multnomah Now site. She noted that Multnomah County is working on identifying additional site locations and that the Housing Now Initiative is using Survey 123 to support program enrollment and track the inflow of those living unsheltered.

Co-chair Emmons asked for an update on capacity building and if agencies will receive grants in December.

Daniel shared that United Way will receive funds in December and will begin distributing grants to provider organizations in January.

Co-chair Emmons asked if there would be an opportunity to understand how capacity building is defined.

Daniel shared that they're trying to make this a light-touch initiative to bolster organizational and workforce health. He noted that the funds will not be available for new buildings or mobile vans, but providers can invest in new or different benefits, compensation, and programs. He shared that each organization will decide what works best for their workforce and will be held

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accountable for reporting on metrics, including documenting that they've reduced turnover and increased retention. He stated that the County will report back on progress in 2024.

Carter asked how providers will be able to change workforce and benefits packages with one-time grants.

Daniel shared that there isn't an easy answer and that this was an urgent way to get some dollars out the door this fiscal year while the County develops longer-term solutions.

Carter responded that organizations aren't going to commit to a long-term benefits package with a one-time grant and challenged the County to think about more multiyear commitments.

Daniel responded that the County completed a cost-of-living adjustment and is working on multiple fronts to improve organizational health.

Dan recommended implementing an automatic renewal mechanism and stated that this is a critical piece that allows nonprofits to make hiring decisions.

Mike shared that if the United Way is spending money upfront, it seems like the County's fiscal year is less important.

Ben shared that Felicita Montebianco had asked a question about the 2% Cost of Living Adjustment requirement for providers.

Kanoe responded that it was high level and a couple of providers opted out.

Washington County Chair Harrington shared interest in seeing how media reporters make use of the table and if they would see "yellow" as positive momentum. She shared concern about the speed at which media outlets tend to review information and jump to conclusions that are incorrect based on their limited time to read the reports.

Metro Tax Collections and Disbursement Update

Rachael Lembo, Planning and Development Finance Manager, Metro, shared that this report is standard and did not share an update. Committee members did not have any questions.

Presentation: Metro Five-Year Forecast

Josh Harwood, Fiscal and Tax Policy Director, Metro presented Metro's Five-year Forecast.

Carter asked if the 2023 actuals were inflated at 4%, how conservative the estimates are, and if the counties use the data to complete five-year planning.

Josh responded that the forecast is more dynamic and is a model based on inputs from a national vendor. Josh shared that from 2019 to 2022 incomes rose dramatically and were incorporated into the forecast. He replied that the estimates are not as conservative as they were in the past and that the tax base is larger than originally anticipated.

Rachael responded that the counties are completing this type of planning.

Dan questioned if the Committee needs to be more conservative in suggesting a contingency fund. He reflected that they are dealing with a lot of issues but don't want to be criticized for not spending money.

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Rachel shared that this will be covered in the presentation.

Rachael shared a high-level forecast and broad spending path for the program. She noted that the goal is to share where they are going and how they will get there. She shared that this will be an annual exercise.

Patricia shared that after learning about the costs, shifting dynamics, and incorporating the actuals, it will be more expensive than they thought. She added that the Committee will discuss living wages in 2024 with considerations about whether to make a recommendation now or in the future.

Carter asked how much of the expenditures are vouchers, noting that these are ongoing commitments.

Rachael shared that, at a high level, the forecast did not break it down and that the counties will be looked at as they complete their budgets.

Next Steps

Co-chairs Emmons and Taylor provided closing remarks.

Ben shared that the next steps include:

- Committee members to RSVP for the January meeting. The meeting will be in a hybrid format at the Metro Office.
- The Committee to continue to have conversations around the CAP and the Regional Comprehensive Report.
 - The Committee to consider behavioral health initiatives as part of the Report.

Adjourn

Adjourned at 12:00 pm.