

Meeting minutes

Meeting: Supportive Housing Services Oversight Committee
Date/time: Monday, October 24, 2022, 9:30 AM – 12:30 PM
Place: Zoom (Virtual)
Purpose: Reviewing committee ground agreements and decision-making process; discussion about displacement of SHS funds from Metro Office of Metro Attorney; vote on public comment about regional long-term rent assistance; reviewing annual report process; and Metro tax collection and disbursement update.

Member attendees

Co-chair Susan Emmons, Dan Fowler, Armando Jimenez, Ellen Johnson, Jenny Lee, Seth Lyon, Carter MacNichol, Felicita Montebanco, Jeremiah Rigsby, Roserria Roberts, Dr. Mandrill Taylor, Co-chair Kathy Wai

Absent members

Gabby Bates, Heather Brown, Ellen Johnson, Jahed Sukhun

Elected delegates

Clackamas County Commissioner Sonya Fischer, Washington County Chair Kathryn Harrington, Multnomah County Commissioner Susheela Jayapal, Metro Councilor Christine Lewis

Absent elected delegates

City of Portland Commissioner Dan Ryan

Metro

Shane Abma, Nui Bezaire, Ash Elverfeld, Breanna Hudson, Rachael Lembo, Patricia Rojas

Facilitator

Ben Duncan, Kearns & West

Details for this meeting can also be found in the final meeting record due to the reliance on slide decks that are included in the record. Minutes may include portions of the slide deck material but focus primarily on discussion and questions not found in the slide deck. A summary of County and Metro staff responses to member questions are italicized.

Welcome and introductions

Co-chair Susan Emmons (she/her) welcomed the committee to the meeting and shared a story of a community member receiving long-term rent assistance.

Ben Duncan (he/him), Facilitator from Kearns and West, facilitated a round of introductions of staff and committee members. He also provided details on how the Zoom meeting works and the day's agenda.

Co-chair Kathy Wai (she/her) led the group through a vote to approve the September meeting minutes. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Conflict of interest declaration

Jenny Lee (she/her) works at the Coalition of Communities of Color and they are working on contract and partnership with Housing Authority of Clackamas County that could inform implementation in the future.

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Carter MacNichol (he/him) is a board member at Transition Projects and they're a contractor with the Joint Office of Homeless Services. Carter doesn't receive financial compensation as a board member.

Dan Fowler (he/him) is Chair of the Homeless Solutions Coalition of Clackamas County and they do not receive SHS funding. There is no financial compensation for him.

Public Comment

No verbal public comment was made during the meeting.

Reviewing ground agreements

Co-chair Wai introduced the agenda item to revisit group agreements and guidelines. The group agreements and guidelines were shared in a PowerPoint.

Ben asked if there were any suggestions for changes.

Roserria Roberts (she/her) proposed a change from "BIPOC folks or folks with targeted identities often didn't have the privilege to assume best intentions in a white dominant space" to "BIPOC folks or folks with targeted identities often didn't/don't have the privilege to assume best intentions in a white dominant space."

There was a discussion regarding whether the role of ex-officio members and participation expectations in meetings needed to be updated or clarified with the group agreements. Ex-officio members in the room and voting members of the committee made comments.

In conclusion, no change to group agreements was made regarding ex-officio member participation. Instead the group decided to continue in the same spirit of welcoming participation when relevant to the discussion and is expected.

There was a thumbs up agreement to only change the language Roserria proposed previously.

Committee consensus methods

Ben stated that this agenda item is meant to reaffirm the previous choice to have a more organic and casual style of decision making.

He recommended a modified consensus method with thumb votes. Thumbs up equals yes, I'm comfortable with this; sideways thumb means you're willing to move forward but not all the way there and would like to discuss further; thumbs down means you're not willing to move forward.

The goal would be to get everyone to a space where they feel good enough to move forward.

The decision was made to continue to practice modified consensus using the thumb method and to continue following meeting protocols for committee recommendations.

Ben stated that a redesign of the method could occur in time as needed.

Discussion: Clarifying displacement / supplanting of SHS funds

Shane Abma (he/him), Attorney, Metro, joined the meeting to provide information on the anti-displacement section of the SHS measure. He notes that the term 'supplant' isn't used in the intergovernmental agreement (IGA) or the measure, even though he's heard people use that term. He continued to say that the anti-displacement language was meant to be additive and the intention of it was so that counties couldn't reduce their supportive housing funding from county general funds (relative to fiscal year 2019-2020) and replace it with Metro SHS measure funds. During the IGA process negotiations they all agreed that as long as the county general funds weren't reduced,

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they'd be in compliance with the anti-displacement requirement. He cautioned the use of 'supplant' and reminded the committee that it's not in the measure, IGAs or Metro code.

Shane added that there is another provision saying that Metro SHS dollars can't be used outside of the Metro region and therefore Clackamas and Washington County couldn't take the Metro dollars and use them outside of the Metro boundary. He said that generally tax dollars can't be spent outside of the taxing jurisdiction.

Carter asked why fiscal year 2019-2020 was used as the base year?

Shane responded that when the measure passed that time frame wasn't used, but dollars were rushing in from the federal government simultaneously early in the pandemic and was inflating county budgets. During the IGA negotiation process, the parties all agreed to look only at the county general fund dollars because they don't control what the federal and state give them in future years. However, they did agree that if they do receive opportunities for state or federal funds in future years, they should continue to make a reasonable, good faith effort to continue to seek those other funds.

Adam Brown (he/him), Housing Authority of Clackamas County, said that there's a section in the annual report where each jurisdiction will outline their resources allocated to homeless services and other areas, and it will be clear and transparent for everyone to see.

Vote on public comment about regional long-term rent assistance

Ben opened this portion of the agenda and reminded the committee of the process that was followed with Tom Cusack's public comments on the Regional Long-term Rent Assistance (RLRA) program. They were shared with the committee, Metro responded, and discussion occurred in the committee as to how to move forward with a response as a committee to the comments. He also shared with them that since then, Tom sent public comment to the Tri-County Planning Body (TCPB). Ben said that the TCPB has received his public comment regarding RLRA and will be taking on RLRA as a group topic. He asked if there was further action needed from this committee.

Co-chair Emmons said they should feel reassured the comment and RLRA policy is being taken on by the TCPB and asked staff to let Ellen Johnson know of the updates since she wasn't present for this meeting.

Break occurred

Annual report process

Patricia Rojas (she/her), Regional Director, Metro, shared excitement that the committee gets to dive into the meat of their oversight role with the annual review process. She used a slide deck to illustrate the annual report process. It included the committee's role for annual reporting and a timeline for the annual review and production process between this meeting and March 2023.

Steve Rudman (he/him), co-chair of the Affordable Housing Bond Oversight Committee and member of the TCPB, shared his experience with the Bond Oversight Committee annual review process. Their committee drafted a letter to Metro Council along with the annual report that included recommendations for the Council to consider implementing in the future for the program. So far the Council has accepted and agreed with their recommendations.

Jenny, who is also a member of the Affordable Housing Bond Oversight Committee, also spoke to her positive experience of collaboration with Metro staff in providing the information the committee asked for in order to do proper oversight.

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Nui Bezaire (she/her), SHS Manager, Metro, reviewed the main areas of the annual report and provided a review of the activity Ben would be asking members to participate in on a Jamboard.

Roserria referenced page 4 of the report outline and was concerned about culturally-specific organizations not being disaggregated by which culture they are serving.

Patricia said that's something Metro should be able to provide. She clarified that disaggregation by race is used to help us understand who is being served by race and ethnicity. And that counties could share information about culturally-specific system capacity by communities they represent and serve.

Dan asked if the counties or Metro would be sharing data on inflow, the number of people entering the homeless services system?

Patricia said that the counties will likely speak to at some level through the Built for Zero work in the regional coordination area of their annual reports and include Point In Time numbers.

Dan wants to show the public the full picture of what's going on in the region with homelessness and said that inflow is part of that story.

Patricia affirmed that there's a story to tell about what we're seeing in the community and why and added that some of that is done through raw numbers and some is letting people know what the dynamics of inflow and outflow are - which can happen in the reports. Inflow is likely going to come up in the TCPB, as it's more of a systems level policy question, but the story can be incorporated into the annual reports.

Seth Lyons (he/him) said that technology is better than it's ever been in order to count folks experiencing homelessness. He said that we can say for example, we housed 300 people; but wouldn't it be better to say we housed 20% of folks experiencing homelessness? He sees a gap in sharing with the public the full picture total of people experiencing homelessness and SHS fund impact.

Patricia replied that she thinks all the jurisdictions agree that it's important to tell that story and we need to work towards improving and sharing that context out.

Washington County Chair Kathryn Harrington stated that the dollars were not approved by voters to solve all of homelessness and it requires participation beyond government.

Patricia said that the SHS measure will not solve the systemic root causes of homelessness.

Seth added that while it's true it won't solve them, we can say that it solves for some category of the big picture and here are the problems it's solving for. He said we should be able to articulate which population and percentage of the population it's serving, for example, the 5,000 households number.

Members then participated in a prioritization activity on a Jamboard (virtual whiteboard) to determine which annual report areas they'd like the counties to prioritize in their presentations to the committee in December.

The prioritized in this order: investment areas and impact/outcomes; evaluation/quality improvement; provider capacity and expansion; equity analysis; SHS/Affordable Housing Bond alignment updates and data reporting; financial report; regional coordination of access to services between partner jurisdictions.

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Jeremiah Rigsby (he/him) asked about the impact of the committee and whether the job is just to hear reports out or if the committee can make an impact and influence change.

Patricia replied with a yes. She gave the example from the Affordable Housing Bond Committee: they thought that cooling units needed to be included in the Bond buildings in response to the numerous heatwave deaths. They also asked for integration and alignment with SHS and PSH. The Council agreed with them and that changed Affordable Housing Bond funding and programing.

Jeremiah also wondered how to respond to political issues and how the committee can stay informed and if Metro has a role to play with that.

Dan appreciated that everyone had a chance to speak in the meeting. He also hopes to see mental health system tied more into SHS.

Patricia said that the TCPB will be working on systems-alignment.

Co-chair Emmons said that between the counties and Metro, there are multiple communications teams. She asked what role they're playing around creating a counternarrative to the false understandings in the public of homelessness and the work of the SHS funds. She said there is a need for better communication.

Co-chair Wai said that members may be champions for the work as well and wondered what that could look like. Besides the co-chairs doing presentation rollout to the Metro Council and county boards, could members of the committee do their own outreach to community at town halls, etc?

Jeremiah supports the town hall idea from Co-chair Wai but wants to be sure first that the SHS work is actually being done right and wonders if the oversight committee can be real about that.

Metro financial update

Rachael Lembo (she/her), Finance Manager for Metro's housing programs, joined the meeting to provide a financial update. Highlights were that the SHS program had a budget amendment go to Metro Council to add three new positions to support the high-level data framework and sharing agreement, and also the work of the TCPB.

Metro collected \$50M and disbursed \$45M in Q1 of FY23. She compared this fiscal year to last fiscal year and explained that September collections were higher than July/August because it's an estimated payment due date month. She sees that the collection is on a more steady pace.

Next steps

Nui shared that staff will share member feedback with the counties to guide their annual report presentations based on the Jamboard activity.

Additionally, she updated that Metro has started drafting its own annual summary of its own work and that it will be added to the Executive Summary that staff will draft for the committee over the next two months.

Lastly, she updated the committee that they will not have Year 2 Q1 presentations or a summary slide due to the intense focus on the annual reports right now. The committee will still get the Q1 reports.

Co-chairs Wai and Emmons thanked Ben for his facilitation and said they appreciated hearing everyone's voices today.

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Adjourn

Adjourned at 12:17 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ash Elverfeld, Housing Program Assistant