

# Community, Housing, & Human Services Board

**November 2, 2022**

Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order at **4:26 PM.**

## **Attendance/Introductions**

- **Board Members Present:** Kathryn Alexander (Co-Vice Chair), Bob Hutchinson (Co-Chair), Gordon Graves, Barb Lee, Adriane Leithauser (Interim Chair), Karen Ssebanakitta, Kathleen Torella, Betsy Wilkerson, Johnathan Bingle, Eric Robison
- **Staff Present:** Tessa Jilot, Kim Clifton, George Dahl, Jenn Cerecedes, RaMona Pinto, Daniel Ramos, Kelly Burnett, Devin Biviano, Laura O'Brien
- **Guests Present:** Nicolette Ocheltree, Elizabeth Van Den Berg, Cat Nichols (pending membership)

**\*\*The Attendance roster listed above may not capture all the individuals that attended virtually if they joined the meeting after it had started due to the limitations of the virtual meeting platform\*\***

## **Approval of the Agenda:**

**MOTION** by Kathryn, seconded by Betsy, to amend the agenda to remove the Action Item approving Eric Robison to the Affordable Housing Committee as that was already approved previously, and approve the amended agenda; **approved unanimously.**

**BOARD AGENDA APPROVED AS AMENDED**

## **Public Comment:**

None.

## **May, July, and August Minutes:**

**MOTION** by Karen, seconded by Kathryn to approve all minutes; **approved unanimously.**

## **Board Education:**

**TRAC Update and Mayor's Homelessness Plan:** Mayor Woodward provided an update on the recent transition of TRAC and Cannon being taken over by the Salvation Army. The City and Salvation Army plan to meet again in 60-90 days to evaluate operations and needs at Cannon and TRAC. Mayor clarified that Cannon and TRAC will remain low-barrier.

Question was asked regarding any religious requirements the Salvation Army may want at the shelters. Mayor stated there isn't much info about the religious aspect of their organization and how that will relate to the takeover at this time.

Mayor Woodward then gave a brief update on Camp Hope and how the City of Spokane, City of Spokane Valley, and Spokane County are joining together with the State to work on swiftly bringing as many people as possible inside for the winter. The desire is to utilize TRAC as it is a large space with many options for sheltering people. There is also a plan with Commerce to bring in pallet homes to the Salvation Army's Way Out Center and potentially to TRAC as well, to increase space and privacy. Pets and storage are still a concern.

Question was asked about if the camp is decommissioned how that could potentially ruin the background work of building trust and relationships with the people at the camp. Mayor answered that the hope and the goal is to not end those relationships but continue building them from a safer space indoors while working toward permanent housing. Comment made about allowing people to have tents inside TRAC for more privacy. Mayor stated there are a couple of issues with that, one of which being space, especially, with increasing the population by bringing more people in. Another being a safety issue of not being able to monitor what people are doing inside the tents.

Mayor Woodward went on to describe what she and her team learned from being in Houston and how they move people from encampments to housing. The goal is for TRAC to be used similarly to Houston's navigation center which allows people to be moved inside, assessed, connected to services, and sheltered until they can move into permanent housing. The expectation given to the homeless people in Houston is that the navigation center is the only guaranteed way to lead to permanent housing.

Question was asked if the navigation centers are 24/7 and if people are allowed privacy in those centers. Mayor said they have some spaces with about 4 people to a room and some larger spaces for flex capacity. Mayor went on to include that services are onsite so people can be connected immediately which is exactly what TRAC has.

Question asked about the overnight population at the navigation center in Houston. Mayor said there are about 120 navigation centers in Houston but she isn't sure what the average is.

Question asked about how a regional response is possible when the City of Spokane Valley is potentially looking to get its own entitlement and the City of Spokane broke away from the region about 15 years ago to handle the homelessness issues within the City limits only, additionally, if there would be a way to do this with a nonpartisan board to remove the politics from how the region handles homelessness. Mayor stated that this Regional Authority should essentially be that way with everyone coming together and that she would like to bring in some of the people who helped create the Regional Authority in Houston into the conversations in Spokane as consultants.

Question asked how many are being served in Houston and how many TRAC can help. Brian Coddington said that in 2011, Houston had about 8,500 homeless people and in 2020 that is now down to about 3,800. Of the 8,500 total, about 4,400 were unsheltered in 2011 and in 2020 that is down to just under 1,600. There was a small increase in 2017/2018 related to Hurricane Harvey. TRAC can hold more than 400 – it's not ideal for long term, but it is good for short-term and flexing space as needed.

Question asked about the trust and accountability between the Spokane, the operator, the services, and the community as there is a perspective that people aren't being given a choice and being forced to shelters. Mayor wants to give people options from TRAC but that there aren't that many providers running shelters. Mayor also added that the Quality Inn on Sunset will house 120 people in December and that will be used as transitional space between low-barrier and permanent housing which should free-up more space at TRAC.

Question asked about if there are services being provided at TRAC. Mayor confirmed services are being provided by Revive and that they have already been working with some people at Camp Hope.

Mayor Woodward concluded by offering to interview applicants sooner than January since more positions have opened up sooner than expected.

Question asked about the NHHS Director search. Mayor announced that Kim McCollim was selected and will start November 14<sup>th</sup> and provided some background on Kim.

Question asked about the permits being obtained and what they look like for infrastructure. There is an increase in multi-family home permits in residential neighborhoods, but some of the activity has paused as the economy has changed.

**Discussion and Action:**

Executive Committee Nominations: Jeri has stepped forward to be the Board Chair and Bob is going to continue to be Co-Vice Chair, but Kathryn will be stepping away from the board entirely and a new CA person will be sent to us. Karen is willing to be Co-Vice Chair but is also looking to be Chair of the RFP committee so it would be good if someone else would like to be Co-Vice of the Board. Actual approval for executive positions will be in December so people have until then to nominate or ask questions.

Affordable Housing Workshop: George gave a summary of the workshop. A lot of positive feedback was received from the workshop. Two individuals also reached out about joining the CHHS Board. Jenn and George are working with a realtor to see different properties that could potentially be used for housing.

Open Board Applications: There are three openings, one is already moving forward, leaving at least two spots. Correction: There are 4 spots, not three as Chelsea has also left. Some discussion followed regarding who the board would like to focus on for recruiting such as K-12 rep, POC, etc.

RFP Committee: **MOTION** by Kathryn, seconded by Jeri, to approve Karen as Chair of the RFP Committee; **approved unanimously** (with Karen abstaining).

**Director's Report:** Jenn spoke about some of the criticism from John Hall's exit memo:

1. Affordable housing RFP in August and some of those contracts are still in flux and basically how we are trying to make sure that we do what is needed as quickly as possible to get the contracts out. However, the contracts are not preventing the units from being built up.
2. CDBG Section 108 issues put the project on hold, but we are still looking for property for that. The requirements are very specific which makes it a more time intensive process.
3. We did fail the CDBG timeliness – two issues caused this; a staffing shortage and didn't have an RFP for the surprise additional \$1 million received from the City's loan program. We are taking action to remedy these issues. Hoping to get another RFP out this month to get spending initiated in January 2023. We will be able to get this addressed before the deadline and will not lose funds for our community.
4. HOME ARP dollars are not delayed. Up until today HUD did not have a deadline for submitting a plan. Now that deadline is March 31, 2023, and we have an employee who is already in place

to take that on. All of the background information is already gathered, we just need to get it put together to submit as a package to HUD.

Upcoming funding opportunities are coming, and we are developing priorities to get the RFP out. Host Homes RFP is out for the YHDP – which will go to the CoC after the first two years. Some discussion regarding the 5-year RFP followed.

**City Council Update:** Audit of funds and budget is coming up. There is no money currently available for homelessness and housing. Revenue is down and expenses are up, and ARPA money is already gone so in June we will no longer have funds as currently forecasted. Tenant protections will be coming up on Monday. Monday will also be the appointment of Kim McCollum and final vote on redistricting.

**Affordable Housing:** Eric has joined the affordable housing committee.

**Eval & RFP Committee:** Request to restore the involvement of the committee upfront with RFPs and NOFAs.

**CoC Update:** Adriane provided the update on Robert's behalf and just wanted to encourage the conversation regarding scope for both boards and connecting more.

**Announcement:** We will continue to be hybrid, but it is encouraged for more people to attend in person as often as possible.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO KATHRYN WHO WILL BE 80 NEXT WEEK!!!

**MOTION** by Kathryn, seconded by Jeri to adjourn; unanimously approved.

**Meeting Adjourned at 6:00 p.m.**

The next CHHS Board Meeting is scheduled for **December 7, 2022 from 4:00-6:00 p.m.** and will be held in the City Council Briefing Center and online.

Meeting video link: WILL UPDATE WHEN AVAILABLE