

# Community, Housing & Human Services Board

February 7, 2024  
Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order at **4:03 PM**.

## Attendance/Introductions

- **Board Members Present:** Leslie Hope, Jeri Rathbun, David Edwards, Casey Bowers, Adriane Leithauser, Barb Lee, George Dahl, Karen Ssebanakitta, Eric Robison
- **Staff Present:** Kimberly Babb, Tessa Jilot, Heather Page, Christy Jeffers, Amanda Martinez, Brian Walker, Richard Culton, Adam Schooley, Carlos Plascencia
- **Guests Present:** Nicolette Ocheltree, Wes Anderson, Cory Bonallo, Jennifer Wilcox, WSU Nursing Students

\*\*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 virtually meeting platform\*\*

## Approval of the Agenda:

Jeri Rathbun requested to amend the agenda so the director's report will be before Board Education on this and all following agendas.

**MOTION** by Leslie Hope, seconded by Eric Robison, **to approve the Agenda as amended; unanimously approved.**

## Approval of the Minutes:

Jeri Rathbun requested to add Jennifer Wilcox to the guest attendance as she was inadvertently missed, and Nicolette Ocheltree noted her name was misspelled.

**MOTION** by Adriane Leithauser, seconded by Eric Robison, **to approve the January 3, 2024, minutes as amended; unanimously approved.**

**Public Comments:** None.

**New Faces:** Jeri Rathbun took a moment to thank Council Member Dillon for joining and welcomed Dawn Kinder back as the Neighborhoods, Housing, and Human Services (NHHS) Director.

**Director's Report:** Dawn Kinder (NHHS Director) thanked the Board and especially the Request For Proposals (RFP) Committee for their time and effort with the Homeless, Housing, Operations, and Services (HHOS) RFP. Then she reviewed some of the issues and concerns raised regarding the HHOS RFP process and recommendations that were given from that process. Dawn shared a strong desire and consensus with Administration to move forward with a new RFP with similar questions for applicants to use so they can recycle answers that worked, but also uses a far less confusing process on the City's end. Especially given that it was discovered that the math behind the RFP was incorrect and the City would need to fix the numbers anyway and the only reasonable

way to do that at this point would also be to redo the RFP so it is a fair process. Discussion followed.

Dawn then explained that the Washington State Department of Commerce Right-Of-Way (ROW) Notice Of Funding Availability (NOFA) for Fiscal Years (FY) 2024 and 2025 application was rejected, but that Commerce is allowing the City to redo the application. The City will be resubmitting the NOFA at the end of February with updated, refined, and collaborative requests/responses. Currently, we are facing a \$5M cliff in FY 2025 and an \$8M cliff in FY 2026, but we are working with ROW providers and there are strong plans being made to address that. Discussion followed.

Finally, Dawn addressed the concern around Coordinated Entry (CE) no longer filling Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) units. The audit finding regarding HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) and Continuum of Care (CoC) funds by Commerce is being upheld by United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) who is their hired consultant. That means this coming funding round we will need to de-obligate any PSH funding out of the CoC because those units need to be filled by Spokane Housing Authority (SHA) first. Partners have known about this for a while and have just been waiting on direction. Discussion followed.

**Board Education:** None

**Discussion and Action Items:**

PUBLIC HEARING – HOME-American Rescue Plan Substantial Amendment: Heather Page reviewed the public comments received (attached) during the public comment period and provided the response from the City.

Nicolette Ocheltree cautioned that some of the information around comments from City Commissions and Boards in the amendment may have been incorrect and Heather acknowledged that since she wasn't here for the entire project (it started in 2022 before she took over this portfolio) she would be happy to work with Nicolette on those issues she spotted to make sure nothing is inadvertently misrepresented. The application overall will not be changed as far as funds and where we need them to go is concerned. It will only correct comments from Commissions and Boards.

**MOTION** by Leslie Hope, seconded by Eric Robison, **to approve the substantial amendment with the minor edits mentioned by Nicolette and allow it to be submitted to HUD; approved 7-1.**

PUBLIC HEARING – Citizen Participation Plan (CPP): Tessa Jilot presented the Citizen Participation Plan and reviewed the public comments (attached). Tessa did incorporate some of the changes from the comments and the CHHS Executive Committee and Kimi Clifton did send out the updated draft to the CHHS Board to review last week. (Main changes are on pages 4 and 7.)

**MOTION** by Leslie Hope, seconded by Eric Robison and David Edwards, **to accept the Citizen Participation Plan; unanimously approved.**

2024 Annual Action Plan (AAP): Kimberly Babb provided an overview of the AAP and showed how to view the AAP on the CHHS website.

**MOTION** by Eric Robison, seconded by Leslie Hope, **to open the Proposed 2024 Annual Action Plan Comment Period from February 7, 2024, to March 9, 2024, and hold a public hearing on March 6, 2024; approved unanimously.**

Updating Bylaws: Jeri Rathbun asked for volunteers to assist in reviewing and updating the CHHS Board Bylaws for 2024 as it is supposed to happen every two years and is due. An ad hoc committee for this would be ideal with information on updates presented at the retreat. Discussion followed.

Retreat: Jeri Rathbun gave an update on retreat planning and asked for any input or assistance others can provide. Jeri would like to invite both the RFP and Affordable Housing (AH) Committees to the retreat to review process review and facilitate more understanding between the committees. Adrienne expressed a desire to include Equity Training in the retreat and as education in the board meetings more regularly. (As well as possibly creating a more diverse board.) Jeri would also like to invite at least some of the applicants to the retreat. Feel free to email Jeri or Kimi with retreat ideas and lookout for a DoodlePoll from Kimi soon for a date.

City Council Updates: Council Member Dillon introduced himself more and then with Nicolette provided an update on Council President Wilkerson and the Mayor currently being in Olympia for Challenge Seattle and rent stabilization as well as the Smart Cities Award the City recently received from Governor Inslee Council President Wilkerson's Washingtonian of the Day award.

**Committee Updates:**

Affordable Housing: Heather Page mentioned the review of supportive services only application and how the process should go as soon as the amendment is accepted.

RFP: Karen Ssebanakitta said that the RFP committee has been brainstorming on how to improve the process to avoid the issues from 2023. The committee will also be preparing in anticipation of HUD accepting the HOME-ARP Amendment. Adriane also asked for people to join helping the RFP committee to help with getting the Amendment RFP completed quickly. Karen also is hoping to add more people to the permanent committee soon.

**Announcements:** None.

**Meeting Adjourned at 5:28 PM.**

The next CHHS Board Meeting is scheduled for **March 6, 2024 from 4:00-6:00 pm.**

**Public Comment:**

Subject: HOME ARP Substantial Amendment

I am in support of the shift in funds needed to fulfill the requests for supportive services funds. However, I also would like for the CHHS council to look into barriers that keep the housing developers from applying for the funds currently available for new affordable housing units.

We can all agree the need is great for more affordable housing development. Since it is known that the requirements for using HUD funds demand what essentially amounts to extra work, which ones are seen by developers as “not worth the hassle” and are there other things that the council can do/offer/present that makes it worth the hassle? Is there a prestige aspect that is within the council’s power to provide, say with using the developers name during public progress updates? If the money itself isn’t incentive enough to apply, what would make it attractive? Being put on a list of preferred builders distributed to the various city departments that use developers? Name recognition in the press for their good work? I have little knowledge of what avenues the CHHS council has access to, so you would be better qualified to make suggestions. If developers can have their pick of “easy money” projects and there is no lack of work, then there needs to be some benefit beyond the money that makes building affordable housing a value to them. If there is political aspects, such as real estate investors interests blocking affordable housing development, how can the council work to eliminate those obstacles?

The bottom line is there will still be a large pot of money available for development even after requested supportive services funds are shifted. Let’s get those dollars put to use in our community to alleviate the daily suffering of good people in bad economic situations. “We tried” doesn’t actually have a positive impact on the homelessness crisis. New affordable housing units does.

Earnestly,

Cory Bonallo