

**MASON COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
HOUSING AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH BOARD**

415 N 6th STREET, SHELTON, WA 98584

Zoom Meeting held

**Regular Meeting Minutes
July 26th, 2023**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 9:00 am by Commissioner Shutty

2. ROLL CALL:

Board Members:

- Kevin Shutty, BOCC
- Amanda Gonzales, Citizen
- Peggy VanBuskirk, MC Board of Health
- Eric Onisko, Mayor City of Shelton

Staff Members:

- Todd Parker, MC Public Health
- Melissa Casey, MC Public Health
- Haley Foelsch, MC Public Health
- Cheryl Craig, MC Public Health
- Jamie Ellertsen, MC Public Health

Guests/Public:

- Colleen Carmichael

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

Approval of the agenda was motioned by Peggy and seconded by Eric. Motion approved, unanimously.

5. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

Motion was made by Peggy Vanbuskirk to approve the minutes from March, April, and June 2023. Motion carried, unanimously. Peggy mentioned that May minutes were never sent out and would require follow-up.

6. Meeting Topics:

a. Recap Commerce Homeless Assistance Unit Conference:

Melissa discussed a department of commerce conference that her, Todd, and Haley were able to attend last month. It put a lot of context to the consolidated homeless grant, one session in particular reminded me that maybe we need to bring this to the board. Melissa shared her screen displaying a slideshow of information to the group. There was a session on the Growth Management Act she wanted to go over, there was

conversations around how city and county entities work together, interlocal agreements, identifying land for housing projects, etc. These slides will go out with the minutes. Melissa asked the group if they feel it would be a good idea to get Kell Rowen from the building & planning department involved with HBHAB, and to start working on what the next step is for proposed development. She also discussed language on house bill 1406 and what is needed for affordable housing, and asked if Kevin knew who was on the planning committee. Kevin said, I think we talked about a joint meeting with the commission in the past, when we get to the point of content development we can talk about a meeting, I think it would be good to have Kell and Jay Hill from the city to meet with us in this group prior to that so they can help walk us through what would be helpful to keep in mind, and all associated things that may come up. I think Colleen's project is a great example, the likelihood of the projects in this county to be in the city, or Belfair UGA, it would be good to have Jay involved in this conversation. Kevin agreed with Melissa to talk to Kell about attending the next HBHAB meeting. The group had no additional questions.

b. Inflationary Relief Program Funds RFQ:

Melissa showed a document to the group. While we were working on funding recommendations previously, we mentioned some emergency and inflationary funds coming up. We are calling inflationary, the inflation relief funds because it's only for one fiscal year, just for year 24, and it has some specific purposes. When the state announced these funds would be coming, I felt there were some conflicting definitions on how they wanted it to be used. It is going to be added on to the consolidated home grant, and I misspoke earlier, it is actually 2 years, \$175k per year for the next 2 years, ultimately I think there were some ideas on how it can be used – to training and retention for the existing work force, we would have to put it out as an RFQ, that would be for the board to decide.

Todd spoke and walked through the allowables on the document. Legislatively, the primary intent was for rental assistance programs, but commerce has added in that we prioritize homeless service providers. Many circles talked about worker comparison pays, that's one piece of it, that rental piece. One thing we looked at is changes in rent from this year to last year, and what we consider to be 150% fair market rent, rent has increased \$348 in the last 2 years, so we need to look at if we can look at this like projecting what's ahead, one idea for homeless service providers is a reverse increase, so if someone is making minimum wage or under 30% AMI, it would be a 20% increase, and the more they make, it would trickle down to say, 19%, 18%, etc. Volunteer incentives, stipends or pay by activity, whatever that may look like, and some of the training opportunities too, if they have more asks than what we have money for then we'll have to make some decisions and prioritize. Any thoughts? Peggy asked if the group could be sent a copy of the document being reviewed to which Todd obliged. He explained that right now it's just a proposal, the other part of the step too is to plan to meet with the providers and walk through this with them as well so they have more than a written request for quote. In person we could bounce some ideas off one another and identify anything we may have missed, we can accrue how far out do we cast out the net for homeless service providers, our full intention at minimum would be to partner with all 6 agencies we contract with, but do we make it broader and reach

out to other entities who do some of this work, like outreach, etc? It is a good question to run by the board.

Kevin asked, what percentage of the 6 would be eligible? Do we know their workforce? Even if we had 50 workers, said Todd, that'd be enough to give increases toward. I don't have anything more specific; I know there's been turnover and other things, that's why we would like a meeting with them to see how much staff we do have right now. Kevin said he likes the idea of not just limiting to the 3 who get funding out of the consolidated grant, and he would be interested in looking at the 6 organizations first. If we have additional funding after, then maybe we can take it further and take a 2nd bite of the apple so to say and branch out to others. The group agreed with this approach. Todd asked the group if they feel the tiered, reversed increase approach was suitable. Peggy liked the idea of leveling the playing field and the group agreed.

c. Emergency Shelter/Encampment Meeting:

Melissa gave a quick update on this topic. She said this started as a small meeting request and grew into something bigger. The intent and purpose is that Community Lifeline reached out to the City of Shelton and the County, as they're struggling right now. They're experiencing a transition of leadership, a growing encampment outside of their facility at Brewer Park. The question posed was, what are ways to mitigate this? We met with them 2 weeks ago and some important representatives were missing from the conversation, particularly Mason Health. SPD and MCSO were in attendance, and we also really want to engage EMS, so we've coordinated a group from all of these entities and all other providers, housing providers will be attending as well – many have offered their services and help to CLL through this transition. What do we do with Brewer Park, and how do we ensure that people there have access to services and resources that they need, but something does need to be done and that is the purpose of the meeting that the city is facilitating today.

Once CLL determines their plan, Kevin and I talked about them joining the next HBHAB meeting to discuss said plan. Anything from the city side that I may be missing, mayor Onisko? Eric said, they also want Brewer Park cleaned up, and they talked about not providing services to anyone outside of the shelter. There's been a lot of ideas bounced around for them to stop services at Brewer Park. Any questions? Kevin asked, do you know what the staffing situation is at CLL? Our contract, the 2163, we've dedicated \$125k to funding their overnight shelter, so that's 2 staff overnight for 35 beds, as well as bookkeeping time, not really clear on what staff are there during the day, said Melissa. Kevin said he is interested in their current FTE count. Todd said we can't provide an exact number right now, but I know Jonathan, Aaron, Kevin, some changeover in case managers, but they do have additional grants, not only for recovery café but HCA which is almost \$200k a year, and a balance of state which is almost \$600k over 3 years, I'm curious about this reduction in services. Our homeless response system, there's a national emphasis not only on racial equity, but involving those with lived experience to be involved in the conversation, "nothing about us without us", engaging people with lived experience in the conversation to add some decisions or ruling out things, I'd like to see how we can incorporate that in the decision-making process.

Kevin said, I think we need to have a level of honesty from CLL about where they are staffing-wise, and why they're not able to meet requirements on the grant money from us and other entities. I always get the sense that we are involved in some type of weird shell game with them in terms of who is there and who isn't, who is providing services and who isn't, and why they aren't meeting these requirements. It's a frustrating loop to be caught in, I would like a meeting where we could ask those questions and get a sense of where they stand as an organization, we recommend these fundings to commission and it's important for this board to be aware of these issues and details going along with an entity receiving funding. Melissa said that CLL was at the contract orientation yesterday and I'm happy to follow up on that and send it out to the board. Todd said in the chat of the meeting that 9 staff for CLL were on the last timesheets for invoice.

d. Transportation Pilot Evaluation:

Melissa updated on the transportation program. It has ended, and is at a stage right now of data evaluation, so heads up to the board that we just finished the RFP cycle for the housing contract, the next RFP will be for a more permanent transportation program, it should be more simple than the housing process, it would come out of the treatment sales tax, and we are looking to partner with perhaps Mason Health or other agencies who may have a stake of needing similar services, this is the upcoming cycle of RFP's we will be doing in the next few months.

- 7. GOOD OF THE ORDER:** For good of the order, Melissa wanted to discuss letters for closing out contracts or compliance if there are any outstanding items. She shared her screen with the group, sharing 2 letter templates that are intended for closing out contracts. Closing out contracts and going into new ones is a practice we use, a contract closeout procedure, and these templates can be attached to the meeting minutes as well. If the board approves, would we like to send this out to agencies when we close out contracts? For the agencies that have outstanding items, this letter template will need more conversations, this is to be used in cases where deliverables are not fully accomplished, met, or submitted in a timely manner, the letter would be signed by our director Dave Windom. This letter informs them of the outstanding items that they need fulfilled to close out the contract, and it explains what happens if the items are not fulfilled. If not fulfilled, it suggests the agency being more closely monitored if they were to contract again after not fulfilling the contract items. When an agency is not in compliance, would it be nice to have a standing agenda item in these meetings to discuss agencies and what are at risk of being in non-compliance before we bring it to BOCC? For the closeout procedure, what is the boards thoughts on something like this, are we supportive of sending something like this out? This would be sent out by MCPH leadership before any escalation. If an agency were at risk of probation or corrective action, would you like an update for this board before it is pushed to BOCC? Peggy said she likes the letters, but she doesn't know about whether we have to have it first before it goes out, in general, Melissa said, I think the template sounds like, if you're OK with that, we can just do these as needed and a follow up question would be, when does the board want to be notified of something? Eric said, know about the next contract is important but this is something for you guys to take care of I think, and Peggy agreed with that. It sounds like we are squared away on that said Kevin. Amanda agreed with Eric as well, that it's good to know if they're non-compliant when making funding decisions, but I think the letter gives us a

good opportunity for a paper trail of notification of non-compliance or any issues arising with these entities.

Eric had a question for good of the order. Eric wanted clarification on if procedures at CLL are allowed how they are going, versus how they were requested in RFP. Night by night, people leave the building and come back daily, and a continuous stay bed doesn't mean they live there, but a bed is reserved. That's the concept and intention of bed design because we found out through the PIT count when we asked why they weren't staying in a shelter, and many expressed being afraid of stuff being stolen, no bed to come back to, etc. We asked, if they had a place reserved, would you be more likely to stay? Many said yes, Eric asked about funding for permanent stay versus emergency stay. Todd explained, at CLL, the sleeping area became the living area though that was not the intent. In the contract, it designates how many continuous stay beds versus night-by-night beds, said Melissa. That is something in the compliance piece we'd want to look at to make sure the ratio is being kept appropriately. Toss said, the new contract RFP this board reviewed and evaluated, CLL said they operate a 35 night by night 24/7 shelter, so here they are doing something, and, in the RFP, they are describing it a whole different way. If we need to re-evaluate, we will need to talk about that down the road. They describe it differently than how they plan on operating it, Eric wanted to make sure it was allowable with the funds we have given them from commerce. Todd said, continuous stay is okay aside from the grant administrator side, but not living.

8. CLOSURE- Meeting adjourned at 09:49 am.

9. NEXT MEETING— August 23rd, 2023.