

Homeless Task Force Minutes

Local Board

Thursday, July 8, 2021, 11:00am-12:00pm

Chief Spalding called meeting to order: 11:02am

Introduction and New members: Susan Prettyman from Clatsop Community Action and Former City Counselor Jessamyn West.

Roster-Virtual Roll Call

Mayor's Welcome: Bruce Jones

Approval of Minutes: Mayor Jones made a **motion** to approve minutes from May 2021. Roger Rocka second **motion**. All in favor. **Motion** Carried.

Senator Wyden Roundtable-Amy Baker, Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare

Community members and stakeholders met with Senator Wyden in Clatsop County about mental health. Wyden read an article about Gearhart Chief Police about not responding to mental health calls. This was a call of attention and action to the Senator to set a meeting with Clatsop County stakeholders. Senator Wyden has his own personal experiences with mental health, which caused him to bring this to his attention. Both him and bipartisan want to sponsor the CAHOOTS Act Model, similar to Lane County. CAHOOTS and White Bird Clinic staff are consultants on the bill. The CAHOOTS model purpose is both to alleviate crisis situations on the streets and reducing the need for police intervention. 30% of the time law enforcement is involved. There was discussion whether Clatsop County could adopt this model too. Senator Wyden understood the model can be applied broadly and can be altered to the needs of the community. Amy's

perspective is mental health concerns can be intervened if Clatsop County had more staffing that does not involve law enforcement. If the county receives more funding the model can fund more mental health professionals with law enforcement. There was discussion about flexibility to the model for the community and the significant barrier of lack of housing. Mental health care professionals are only one part of the solution. Clatsop County needs more permanent housing programs and housing options. Mayor Bruce Jones stated the importance of creating the maintenance of funding both mental health professionals and law enforcement.

Monica Steele mentioned the meeting discussed the difference between urban and rural needs and issues. It is easier for smaller communities to come together on a regular basis to collaborate and make solutions. Chief Spalding agreed with Steele to the idea of Clatsop County community relationships are strong. He supports in additional resources to reduce the number of calls for law enforcement for mental health issues to allow more time to attend other issues. Another challenge of finding housing options is because Clatsop County is the face of a tourist destination. Housing options are second home choices and vacation rentals which takes away opportunity for local residents. Amy Baker questioned, "Is it possible to allow the city or county to discuss a solution to shift the number of housing bought by nonresidents of Clatsop County?"

Rick Newton stated there is a limit on how many beds and breakfast are in the county help with those issues. Amy Baker asked if the county could tax them? Mayor Jones stated it may be a challenge, but the city can have their own rules and will ask to propose a tax on those who purchase short term or vacation rentals.

Ongoing, 50% of the houses in Falcon Cove beach area are short term rentals, other tourist homes located are Highlands, Young River, and Lewis and Clark. The ability to transit and shift funds are being used more can go to law enforcement. Tourists create a burden on local law

enforcement. For example, public intoxication- Monica Steele. Amy Baker added, mental health calls increase by 30% during tourism season.

Jessamyn West mentioned Senator Johnson introduced to legislation regarding redirect lodging taxes into affordable housing. West questioned if there was any traction from that. Monica Steele responded, the county tries to take it up annually, but does not have any traction.

Countywide Liaison Position Update- Susan Prettyman, Clatsop Community Action

Clatsop Community Action (CCA) hired two Homeless Liaisons, Cheryl Paul and Jodi Anderson. Both individuals have experience working with the unsheltered community at the Astoria Warming Center. The Homeless Liaisons offer rapid around services, personal care products, information and referral, and efforts to promote and encourage the unsheltered population to attend vaccination events. The Homeless Liaisons offer direct services to the most vulnerable populations. They offer hope to clients who are in a hopeless situation. Jodi provided free haircuts at both the Astoria and Seaside Health and Wellness event.

Cheryl Paul shared success stories of providing water and food, a turnaround in clean, and offering referrals at 9th Street Park. A client who was experiencing domestic violence is now enrolled and housed in Clatsop Community Action's Continuum of Care Housing Program. They ensure clients have a smooth and warm transition from the streets to housing to promote long term housing sustainability. Cheryl and Jodi met with Seaside and Warrenton Police to discuss ways to solve challenges that may arise within the unsheltered community. The most recent was the homeless camps in Warrenton in the woods behind Warrenton Kia. There have been five clients successfully transitioned from unsheltered into housing.

In Seaside, the homeless liaisons were able to relocate or remove several RVs from 12th Street.

One client who was living in a RV was able to go into assisted living. There are 2 remaining RVs on the street. Rick Newton stated he has seen rent rates increasingly high at Kamper West. Amy Baker stated another reason why people are on the streets because of the increase of camping rent, as most individuals are living off a fixed income of Social Security. Most of their income is going towards rent alone, in this case a plot of land.

A barrier for individuals living in camp sites are they will not allow older mobile homes/ RVs.

The reason is because they are not insurable to register. This affects many clients who have older mobile homes/ RVs and are being kicked out.

Spalding asked Cheryl and Jodi if they ever felt uncomfortable in a situation while going out in the field. Jodi said no and when they were going to the homeless camps behind Kia, they were escorted by police officers. Both homeless liaisons have safety devices on them at all times.

Filling Empty Bellies/ Beacon Clubhouse-Osarch, Executive Director

Filling Empty Bellies is under reconstruction and will unite with Beacon Clubhouse, now Lifeboat under one building located at 1040 Commercial Street. Filling Empty Bellies was founded in 2014. Osarch was a regular member of Filling Empty Bellies in the past. He has his own personal experiences of being homeless. Osarch said he used to eat meals with Filling Empty Bellies. Osarch became Executive Director of Filling Empty Bellies in June of 2020. Beacon Clubhouse is a NAMI program opened by Erin Carlson in 2020. Beacon Clubhouse is a member only organization to promote a social enrichment environment and mental health. They have art classes, tie dye, culinary, and yoga classes for wellness. The club provides holiday

meals as well. There are 35 active members and 2 paid employees and volunteers. The building on commercial is 2 level building and each program will have their own entrance. Filling Empty Bellies will be called Lifeboat and will continue to provide meal and services while expanding. Overtime Osarch hopes to expand services to showers, charging stations, haircuts, and job fairs. The funded is secured by NAMI with a total of \$200,000 - \$250,000. The clubhouse has secured a whole year of rent for the building and will be moving in the first week of August and opening mid-August. A question asked as if this program will be open to everyone or is there a selection process. Osarch answered Filling Empty Bellies navigation center is open to everyone which will be located on the lower level. The navigation center will provide use of computers, meals, clothing closet, haircuts, and eventually install a place to shower. Later the center will be a mobile resource and provide their services out of a van. They will provide lunches and install a computer in their van.

Teresa from Astoria Warming Center asked when their shower and laundry services will start. The Astoria Warming Center provides similar services and does not want the services to be redundant. Osarch said he will keep the group posted. He will have a contractor come in and will continue to have a partnership with the mini mart for laundry services at the same time. Osarch will email statistics of their successes, number of clients served, and program guidelines for the drop-in center.

Opportunity Village Update- Monica Steele

Moncia participated in Opportunity Village Board. The board is continuing to work on a nonprofit status under the Astoria Warming Center. The Board is looking to find a location that will be a viable option as they want to build a pilot for the community to see.

Helping Hands- Mike Davis

Helping Hands is running at normal capacity and are no longer requiring COVID-19 screenings or requiring masks. The men's shelter is at capacity and there are openings at the Women's shelter.

2021 Legislative Session -Chief Geoff Spalding

Chief Spalding introduced and summarized HB 2006, HB 3115, HB 3124, HB 3261

HB 3115: State legislation cannot criminalize those experiencing homelessness to stay dry and cannot give them a citation for camps as it is defined as a "cruel and unusual punishment". The cities of Clatsop County have until July 2021 to modify their cities to this bill and create an environment for the unsheltered population to keep warm and dry.

HB 3124: State Legislation on the removal of homeless sites from a 24-hour notice to a 72- hour notice. Chief Spalding stated that does not have an affect on the county as law enforcement is citing 72-hour notices currently. The challenge is the property storage and the definition of valuable property. The bill proposes to store valuable property for the unsheltered population for a period of time. This bill will be discussed in future meetings and how this will impact the cities policies.

Teresa from Astoria Warming Center said HB 3115 is a big implication on City of Astoria. She had personally spoke with an attorney and if the city does not adapt to the homeless community they can pursue to sue the city. The Astoria Warming Center is looking for a larger building and expanding in Seaside. Teresa said this is an important issue to discuss together.

Former Mayor Arlene asked the mayor if there are zoning changes in Astoria. Mayor Bruce Jones stated he has no knowledge of activity and or vacant hotels. Monica Steele added there is a project taking place in Seaside involving a vacant hotel for shelter and or workforce housing. Teresa stated Astoria Warming Center is searching for a building to expand their services. There is one for \$990,000. Teresa said we can do better than Portland.

Member Roundtable

Guest Comments

Next Meeting: September 9th, 2021, 10:00am via Zoom

Chief Spalding adjourn meeting: 12:11am