



Sonoma County Homeless Coalition Board

Homeless Coalition Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 23, 2025

1:00 – 4:30 PM, Pacific Time – Meeting held via Zoom

Zoom Recording:

https://sonomacounty.zoom.us/rec/share/B-DLQALDVfEmzfs0HyUEyMXAp3dJSWhM-4ExbncOGrhlcxeWllNaUqlu5pHie8tB.bnuF2hPGkll_mPRI

Passcode: QAC?Dw6c

Welcome and Roll Call Introductions (00:03:56–00:12:00)

Jennielynn Holmes called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm, and welcomed the new Department of Health Services (DHS) Director, Nolan Sullivan.

Chair Holmes then explained the Brown Act guidelines and Zoom rules regarding public comment. Araceli Rivera facilitated introductions to Homeless Coalition (HC) Board members and their titles, via roll call, for the benefit of the new DHS Director.

Present: Jennielynn Holmes, Catholic Charities | Caroline Bañuelos, City of Santa Rosa | Kevin McDonnell, City of Petaluma | Chris Coursey, Sonoma County Board of Supervisors | Martha Cheever, Community Development Commission | Stephen Zollman, City of Sebastopol | Jackie Elward, City of Rohnert Park | Dannielle Danforth, West County Community Services | Margaret Sluyk, Reach For Home | Chessy Etheridge, Adult Lived Experience Seat | Chris Cabral, Committee on the Shelterless (COTS) | Angelica Smith, Tribal Seat | Jeremy Hinojos, TAY Representative | Sarah Vetter, Licensed Healthcare Organization Seat | Maria Rico, BIPOC Led/Serving Organization Seat | Rebecca Sammet, LEAP Board

Absent: Kristi Lozinto, Member At-Large | Ron Wellander, City of Sonoma

A quorum was present.

1 - 4. Approval of Consent Calendar (00:12:03 – 00:20:51)

- Jennielynn Holmes, CoC Board Chair, presented the consent calendar items:
 1. 4/23/25 meeting agenda
 2. 3/26/25 meeting minutes
 3. Summary of Follow-ups from Previous Meeting(s)
 4. Reports for Standing Committee Updates

- **Public Comment:** Gregory Fearon

Motion: Chris Cabral moves to approve the Consent Calendar, with the caveat that the order of today's agenda be amended to place Item #6, "Local Homelessness Services Notice of Funding (NOFA) Availability Recommendations," to occur directly after Item #7, "Service Provider Roundtable," at the request of Margaret Sluyk.

Additionally, the 3/26/25 minutes will be updated to indicate that the motion to approve the consent calendar at that meeting was made by Mayor Stephen Zollman.

Second: Kevin McDonnell seconds the motion.

Abstentions: None.

Objections: None.

Motion passes. The consent calendar is approved.

5. Reports from Lead Agency Staff (00:20:53 – 01:22:50)

- Annual Standing Committee Application Updates:

Karissa White reported that the new Selection Membership Ad Hoc Committee met on April 4, 2025 to review applications to fill committee vacancies. The Ad Hoc Committee members are Stephen Zollman, Kevin McDonald and Margaret Sluyk. There are four (4) vacancies: two (2) on the Health Management Information Systems (HMIS) Data Committee, and two (2) on the Coordinated Entry Advisory (CEA) Committee. Eleven (11) applications were received. The application period closed on March 28, 2025.

The Selection Membership Ad Hoc Committee recommend the following to fill the vacant committee positions:

CEA Committee -

- Christina Hulse, Lived Experience/Community Member
- Robin Winder, Lived Experience/Community Member

HMIS Committee –

- Sandford (Sandy) Robinson, Committee on the Shelterless (COTS)
- Dannielle Danforth, West County Community Services (WCCS)

Public Comment: James Whittaker

Motion: Supervisor Coursey moves to accept the recommendations from the Selection Membership Ad Hoc Committee.

Second: Mayor Keven McDonnell seconds the motion.

Abstentions / Objections: None

Motion passes.

- **Licensed Healthcare Organization Board Seat:**

Sarah Vetter, Santa Rosa Community Health, currently fills this partial-term seat, which expires in December 2025. Sarah has accepted a new position as Cal-AIM Director with Nation's Finest, which is not a licensed healthcare organization, but is related to the field of healthcare services. Karissa White explained that the charter allows the seat to follow the elected member, as long as the member is still working in the healthcare field, and receives approval from the HC Board.

Karissa White requests direction from the HC Board regarding the available options:

1. Approve Sarah Vetter to retain the seat for the remaining eight (8) months of the term, with elections to open in December 2025 for a new two (2) year term, or
2. Confirm that Sarah Vetter is no longer eligible to serve the remainder of the term and direct staff to facilitate a new HC Board appointment to fill the seat for the remaining eight (8) months, or
3. Confirm that Sarah Vetter is no longer eligible to serve the remainder of the term and direct staff to open a new election period.

Public Comment: James Whittaker

Motion: Supervisor Coursey moves to retain Sarah Vetter in the Licensed Healthcare Organization Seat until the HC Board either makes a new appointment or arranges for an election for a replacement.

Second: Angelica Smith seconds.

Abstentions / Objections: Sarah Vetter abstains.

Motion passes.

Options for appointing or electing a new person to the seat will be explored via an agenda item at the May 28, 2025 HC Board meeting.

- **HUD Continuation of Care Program - Domestic Violence Rapid Rehousing Transfer Approval:**

Recusals for this item: Jennielynn Holmes, Martha Cheever, Danielle Danforth, Chris Cabral, and Angelica Smith. Mayor McDonnell assumed the role of Chair to preside over the item.

Karissa White explained that the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) currently holds the Rapid Rehousing (RRH) program grant for vulnerable survivors of domestic violence. Their Housing & Urban Development (HUD) contract will expire at the end of July 2025, and the Lead Agency recently became aware that there may be an opportunity

to transfer the remaining funding to another agency. The grant total is approximately \$271,000, and the life of the grant can be extended at six (6) month intervals. Grant transfers can take six (6) months or more to implement.

To transfer, the receiving entity must already be registered with HUD, receiving Continuum of Care (CoC) program funding, and currently have Rapid Rehousing in place, including policies and procedures. Current providers who meet those criteria and have expressed interest in the grant were encouraged to submit a letter of interest to the HC Board. Three (3) letters of interest were received, from the following agencies: West County Community Services, Catholic Charities, and COTS. These letters and additional information can be reviewed in the Staff Report, Item # 5 in the packet of meeting materials.

The recommendation today is for the HC Board to approve one of the three (3) agencies to go forward in the process, should it prove possible to transfer the grant. Time is of the essence to proceed in attempting to prevent this grant from expiring.

- **Public Comment:** Anonymous (via email), Colleen Halbohm, Gail Simons, LaSette Wellen, Sanford Robinson

Motion: Sarah Vetter moves to pause the decision until supportive data is available from staff to enable the HC Board to evaluate the effectiveness of programs currently administered by the agencies under consideration.

Specific data points that staff are requested to provide for each agency, ideally in advance of the May 2025 meeting, are the numbers of clients served, geographical reaches, and capacity for mental health support for the population (survivors of domestic violence) served by the grant.

Second: Stephen Zollman seconds the motion.

A “yes” vote indicates the desire to wait until data is available to proceed with a decision. A “no” vote indicates the desire to proceed with approval of an agency at today’s meeting.

Roll Call Vote - Yes: 2 No: 8 **Motion does not pass.**

In accordance with the voting results, the HC Board proceeds with selecting an agency to be the recipient of the transferred grant, if that possibility comes to fruition with HUD.

Motion: Supervisor Coursey moves that the grant be awarded to Catholic Charities.

Second: Maria Rico

Roll Call Vote – Yes: 6 | No: 3 | No response: 1

Motion passes. Catholic Charities is selected as the recipient of the grant, if transferred.

Recused staff were readmitted to the meeting. Jennielynn Holmes resumed her role as Chair.

Note: The order of the agenda is amended to place #7 (Service Provider Roundtable) to occur in advance of Item #6 (NOFA), at the request of Margaret Sluyk.

7. Service Provider Roundtable (SPR) Update (01:22:52 – 1:32:05)

- Margaret Sluyk reported that the Service Providers have concerns about 501c3 non-profits with regard to the status of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) efforts in applications, and required reporting for the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) process.

In response, Michael Gause offered that he has received information and resources regarding this topic from the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH), which he will forward on to providers.

- The SPR requests information be presented at the May 28, 2025 meeting of the HC Board providing details regarding the operation of county shelters and the work of the county's Homeless Encampment Access & Resource Team (HEART).
- The providers also would like to have input into which of their programs could best accommodate funding cuts, when necessary.

Public Comment: None

Informational item only; no action taken.

Note: Item #8, "10-minute break" will be taken out of agenda order, in advance of item #6.

8. Ten- Minute Break: 2:30 – 2:40 PM (01:32:35 – 1:43:56)

6. Local Homelessness Services Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) Recommendations (01:44:17 – 02:23:51)

- Araceli Rivera described the recusal process in accordance with the charter and facilitated recusals for this item. Chris Coursey volunteered, with second from Stephen Zollman, to facilitate the discussion for this item, as Chair Jennielynn Holmes was recused.

Jennielynn Holmes, Caroline Bañuelos, Kevin McDonnell, Martha Cheever, Dannielle Danforth, Margaret Sluyk, Chessy Etheridge, Chris Cabral, and Angelica Smith were recused, with cameras off and microphones muted.

A quorum of seven (7) remained in the meeting room, with six (6) members having voting status. A majority of four (4) votes will be needed to approve any motion.

Michael Gause provided a PowerPoint presentation detailing the various grant funding sources and process for the NOFA awards and offering an historical perspective on funding levels throughout recent years. The awards approved today will be presented to the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors on June 3, 2025, for contract ratification.

Michael Gause presented a spreadsheet depicting two (2) 2025-2026 Homelessness Services Funding Scenarios, as determined by staff and an Evaluation Panel, which represent cuts of \$1.7 million as compared to last year's funding.

1. Scenario 1 would fund all but two (2) existing projects and one (1) new project at a 19.565 % reduction. Two (2) renewing projects would be funded at a lower rate.

Staff and the Evaluation Panel do not recommend this scenario as it causes a greater reduction in funds for all renewing projects.

2. Scenario 2 would fund existing projects at a 17.44222% reduction.

Staff and the Evaluation Panel were unanimous in recommending this as the option going forward, as it keeps funding levels as close to FY 24-25 levels as possible.

Additional information can be found in the Staff Report, Item #6 in the packet of meeting materials.

Public Comment: Gregory Fearon, Gail Simons, Zachary Rosemoore, Matthew Verscheure

Motion: Stephen Zollman moves to approve the staff recommendation of Scenario 2.

Second: Jackie Elward seconds the motion.

Roll Call Vote – Yes: 6

Motion passes unanimously.

Recused HC Board members were returned to the meeting, and Jennielynn Holmes resumed presiding over the meeting.

9. Word from the LEAP Board (02:23:55–02:31:10)

- Rebecca Sammet represented the lived Experience Advisory & Planning (LEAP) Board and inquired about the implementation of the Grant's Pass ordinance with regard to enforcement in Sonoma County, whether data may be available for tracking the impact

of the ordinance on the homeless population, and if any direction had been provided to agencies for navigating the effects of the ordinance.

DHS Director Nolan Sullivan and Supervisor Chris Coursey responded to provide some insight into the complexities of the topic, suggesting next steps of possibly approaching the CoC at some point regarding exploring the subject with cities, and perhaps inquiring of the District Attorney's office about availability of case data.

Public Comment: Gregory Fearon

Informational item only; no action taken.

10. Homeless Coalition Governance Charter Ad Hoc Committee (02:31:13 – 02:38:08)

- Karissa White reported on the progress of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Collaborative Applicant/Lead Agency Evaluation and outlined efforts by the committee to obtain evaluation examples and tools from other entities.

Over the past few months, the Ad Hoc Committee conducted research and developed an evaluation checklist, utilizing a previously published HUD resource, to guide assessments of the Collaborative Applicant's strengths and weaknesses for evaluation.

The recommended evaluation process is for a frequency of two years, to be conducted by an Ad hoc committee of the HC Board, which will also be responsible for developing any necessary action plans. The HC Board would retain final approval on the evaluation findings and any recommended actions.

The staff recommendation is to approve the use of the "Collaborative Applicant Identification: Key Indicators with Intended Outcomes and Checklist" evaluation tool and the evaluation process as outlined by the Governance Charter Ad Hoc Committee. The checklist and additional information can be found in the Staff Report, item #10 in your packet of meeting materials.

The Ad Hoc Committee also recommended some language simple changes to the charter, as outlined in the Staff Report, Item #10 in your packet of meeting materials.

- **Public Comment:** None.

Motion: Jackie Elward moves to approve the Collaborative Applicant identification and approve the governance charter terminology updates.

Second: Dannielle Danforth seconds the motion.

Abstentions / Objections: None.

Motions passes unanimously.

11. Fair Housing and Families Permanent Support Housing (PSH) (02:38:12–02:57:38)

- Thai Hilton presented information about PSH Eligibility Limits & Fair Housing Impacts. Currently, most PSH providers exclude households with minors, due to concerns about exposure to both substance use and mental health issues. DHS County Counsel has determined that this is a violation of the Fair Housing Act. Also, the practice of some PSH projects of limiting the eligibility to one individual per room may be legally risky, without context.

Staff recommends that housing providers consult with their legal counsel for guidance to review the issue. If updating eligibility criteria is desired, housing providers may do so by notifying the lead agency.

Additional information can be found in the Staff Report, Item #11, in the packet of meeting materials.

Public Comment: Kaitlin Johnson-Carney

Informational item only; no action taken.

12. Review Agenda for May Coalition Board Meeting (02:57:41 – 03:04:43)

- James Alexander presented the agenda for the May 28, 2025, HC Board meeting and queried the HC Board for any needed changes or additions.

Supervisor Coursey noted that information had previously been requested about the HEART team and shelter programs – to include what they are, where they operate, how they're funded. Araceli Rivera indicated that staff is currently collecting shelter information and data for an anticipated May agenda item, and that the HEART conversation will be added to the May agenda, as well.

The May 28, 2025 HC Board agenda is shown as "Attachment A," in today's packet of meeting materials.

Public Comment: Gregory Fearon

13. Board Member Questions and Comments (03:04:45– 03:08:12)

- Maria Rico – is on a cultural responsiveness committee with Sonoma County Behavioral Health, which will be meeting once a month.

Public Comment: Celeste Austin

14. Public Comment on Items not on the Agenda (03:08:18– 03:08:33)

- None

Adjournment: 4:07 PM (03:08:35 – 03:10:55)