



# Sonoma County Homeless Coalition Board

## Sonoma County Homeless Coalition Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 15, 2023

1:00 – 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time – Meeting held by Zoom

Zoom Recording:

<https://sonomacounty.zoom.us/rec/share/kxMaYUet6DC1GWJHBFqZj-xAtA8kMb1eZaZJwX02UiFynf3FJlwzTRuD441j1aPR.2ORmb6KjqOwaNLDh>

Passcode: U08L6kS#

### Welcome and Roll Call (00:06:29– 00:09:56)

Dennis Pocekay called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm and went over the Zoom rules around public comment and Brown Act guidelines.

### Present:

Dennis Pocekay, City of Petaluma | Jennielynn Holmes, Catholic Charities | Kelli Kuykendall, proxy for Natalie Rogers, City of Santa Rosa | Benjamin Leroy, Santa Rosa Community Health Center | Sean Hamlin, proxy for Chris Coursey, BOS County of Sonoma | Margaret Sluyk, Reach For Home | Kathleen Pozzi, Community Member | Martha Cheever, Community Development Commission | Chessy Etheridge, Community Member / LEAP | Una Glass, City of Sebastopol | Don Schwartz, City of Rohnert Park | Ron Wellander, City of Sonoma | Dannielle Danforth, West County Community Services

### Absent:

Chris Keys, Redwood Gospel Mission | Cheyenne McConnell, TAY Representative | Jackie Elward, City of Rohnert Park | Mark Krug, Burbank Housing

*A quorum was present.*

### 1.- 4. Approval of Consent Calendar (00:10:00 – 00:18:38)

Dennis Pocekay, Sonoma County Homeless Coalition Board Chair, presented the consent calendar

items: 11/15/23 meeting agenda

- 10/25/23 meeting minutes
- Summary of Follow-ups from the Previous Meeting(s)
- Reports for Standing Committee Updates

Questions were presented on item #3 by Jennielynn Holmes. Don Schwartz posed questions on items #3 and #4.

**Motion:** Una Glass moves to approve the consent calendar; Sean Hamlin seconds.

**Public Comment:** None

**Objections or Abstentions:** None

**Motion approved.**

## **5. Reports from Lead Agency Staff (00:18:40 – 00:35:24)**

- **Communications Update**

Andrew Akufo reported that the Communications Team met with the Regional Public Information Group on October 29, 2023, and shared a brief presentation describing the communications plan, social media campaign and calendar.

The Communications Team also received a preliminary estimate from ISD of \$5,775 to design and maintain a new, more user-friendly, website layout.

Recent social media posts have included promos for public meetings and a re-share of the 1-year anniversary of Labath Landing in Rohnert Park. Staff is also working to create a video about Coordinated Entry.

The next edition of the monthly webinar series on homelessness will be a public forum on November 29, 2023, 5:30-6:30 pm, featuring members of the Lived Experience Advisory & Planning Board (LEAP) who will be sharing aspects of their experiences with homelessness. The previous forum (October 2023) drew 50-60 attendees.

- **Sonoma County Homeless Coalition Branding**

Alea Tantarelli announced that the new name chosen by and for Continuum of Care (CoC) Board at their October 25, 2023, meeting will be *Sonoma County Homeless Coalition*. Efforts have begun to develop a logo and related branding, with the timing planned to mesh with the implementation of the new website design. Suggestions for the new logo were presented and favorably received. Feedback about various options will be elicited from the Board as the selection process proceeds.

- **Board Elections Update**

Araceli Rivera reported that there are four seats to be filled on the Sonoma County Homeless Coalition Board, consisting of one at-large seat, 1 homeless service provider seat, 1 licensed health care organization seat, and 1 tribal seat. The tribal seat election will occur at a later date and voters will consist of tribal members only. November 8<sup>th</sup> was the deadline for submitting applications to vote in this year's election. Nominations are open from November 1<sup>st</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup>. Names of the voting members and their associated organizations will be posted on the CoC website after December 6<sup>th</sup>. Board member nominations and applications will be posted by December 8<sup>th</sup>, with the Sonoma County Homeless Coalition Board election (virtual) scheduled for December 13<sup>th</sup>, from 1-3:30 pm.

- **Public Comment on Lead Agency Staff Reports:** Michael Hilber

**6. Service Provider Roundtable (SPR) Update (with presentation from The Living Room)  
(00:35:27 – 00:57:34)**

- Margaret Sluyk introduced Alethea Larson, Interim Executive Director of The Living Room, who delivered an informative PowerPoint presentation describing the mission of the organization and illustrating the extensive array of services provided by The Living Room in support of women and children who are experiencing, or are at risk of, homelessness in Sonoma County. Families are also served on a case-by-case basis. The Living Room has been in operation in Santa Rosa for 30 years.

Margaret Sluyk initiated comment regarding recent developments with service provider payments. Ensuing discussion included exploring suggestions for developing enhanced communications moving forward, with follow-up to occur next month.

**Public Comment:** Gregory Fearon, Shirley Cheal, Victoria Yanez

**7. Homeless Housing Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) 5: Overview & Public Input Session #1  
(00:57:36 – 01:10:20)**

- Michael Gause shared slides to inform board members about the fifth round of the Homelessness Housing Assistance and Prevention (HHAP-5) program, which was released on September 30, 2023. The application deadline is March 27, 2024. Allocations are not yet known but could be decreased this year due to a lower homeless count. The County and CoC may apply together or separately, but new this year is the State requirement for a Regional Action Plan (RAP), including a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by the CoC and the County of Sonoma. Specific Performance Measures (SPM) from 2022 will be used to inform the plan, with funding sources identified for each measure. Each SPM must also indicate specifically how racial and gender inequities will be addressed. Each applicant (CoC and County) can submit their own funding plan. The presentation also outlined key elements and coordination details required by the Regional Action Plan.

Next Steps: Three public discussion sessions are required for each application. Today's meeting counts as Session #1. A second input session is planned for the December 2023 CoC membership meeting, with additional presentations anticipated for the Lived Experience Advisory Planning (LEAP) Board and Racial Equity Committee in December. City and County stakeholders will also be convened for input by January 2024. The final review will be by the Sonoma County Homeless Coalition Board in February 2024, ahead of the submission deadline of March 27, 2024.

As a result of Sonoma County Homeless Coalition Board questions and discussion, a plan was developed to convene a group, consisting of Board members, city managers and other city representatives, to attend a presentation of the draft HHAP-5 document as an agenda item at an upcoming City Managers' Meeting (either December or January).

Participants would receive the draft materials for review a week prior to the meeting date, to facilitate their ability to offer input during the prospective meeting.

**Public Comment:** None

**8. Word from the Street: (01:10:22 –1:18:18)**

- Chessy Etheridge described concerns surrounding unhoused transitional-aged youth in the county. Fentanyl overdoses are increasing, and Narcan has not been sufficiently available. When Narcan is utilized, teens often lack knowledge of its correct administration and may also fail to subsequently summon emergency responders to prevent a reoccurrence of the cardiac arrest. Additionally, the lack of detox facilities is an impediment to accessing treatment once that window of opportunity arises.

Hunger is also a growing concern. Use of EBT cards among the local youth population is at an all-time high, but frequenting food banks is difficult if they don't drive or have transportation, there is some worry that the holidays may further limit food availability

Unhoused teens and youths move frequently and may be living in broken-down cars or couch-surfing, rather than staying in encampments, so are difficult for outreach to locate and engage to provide consistent services. They may also be reluctant to connect with agencies for support, for fear that doing so may result in being sent to foster care or not being able to continue in college.

One of the solutions for initiating communication and outreach is the "SAY Dream Center for Youths." Established by a nonprofit organization, Social Advocates for Youth (SAY), the Dream Center offers shelter, warm meals, supplies, and an appealing, safe spot for teens to engage with staff and become informed about Coordinated Entry (CE) for housing services. Once they do join CE, individuals can be discharged from the system after a three-month lapse in contact. Even a basic amenity such as maintaining a cellphone and keeping it charged may be difficult for youths to access when moving frequently, which can be a barrier to consistent contact. The Dream Center accommodates such necessities and serves as an avenue for communication, follow-up, and continuation of services with social systems in a space that is very well-liked and well-received by unhoused youth.

**Public Comment:** Victoria Yanez

**9. 7-minute break: 2:13 - 2:20 pm (1:18:19 – 1:26:56)**

**10. 2024/25 Sonoma County Homeless Coalition Local Homeless Services Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) (1:26:57 – 2:56:59)**

- Michael Gause delivered the overview of the FY 24-25 Homelessness Services NOFA, as provided in the packet of meeting materials, and recounted feedback received from his

recent presentation to the Funding & Evaluation (F&E) Committee that will be incorporated into a coming revision. F&E Committee members held three meetings to evaluate the scoring tools, resulting in extensive edits. An additional meeting will be convened in a few weeks for a final review of the scoring tools along with the final NOFA edits. Each project will be scored by project type. The proposed NOFA schedule was presented and available in full meeting packet.

Board discussion included Funding Support for Homekey Sites, Street Outreach and Homeless Prevention, NOFA Scoring, Case management ratios, Increased income and Emergency shelter scoring

- **Motion:** Ben Leroi moves to delegate the approval of the NOFA to the F&E Committee, with the direction that the Board has endorsed the subregional approach to outreach to avoid duplication of services. Una Glass seconds.

**Public Comment:** Gregory Fearon, Teddie Pierce, Michael Hilber

**Objections or Abstentions:** None

**Motion approved.**

#### **11. Review Agenda for December 20<sup>th</sup> Coalition Board Meeting (02:57:00 – 3:02:28)**

Comment was made to request that Board members email Alea Tantarelli to advise if they will be attending the December 20<sup>th</sup> meeting, or if they will be sending a proxy.

Screen was shared for review of the upcoming meeting agenda review – no suggestions.

**Public Comment:** Teddie Pierce, Gregory Fearon

#### **12. Board Member Questions & Comments (3:02:34 – 3:04:15)**

Don Schwartz announces that he is planned to become the new City Manager of Sebastopol as of January 2024. The Board offers their congratulations to Don and wishes him luck!

**Public Comment:** Teddie Pierce

#### **13. Public Comment on Items not on the Agenda (03:04:16 – 3:04:28):** None at this time.

**3:59 PM: Meeting Adjourned.**