

## Homeless Solutions Task Force (HOST) meeting

August 27, 2020

Zoom Online Meeting

### MINUTES

#### 1. Roll Call

#### 2. Introductions

#### 3. Mayor's Welcome (Bruce Jones)

Last met in January. Councilor Joan Herman has stepped down as official member; Councilor Roger Rocka now official member.

#### 4. Approve Minutes from January: David Reid / Jessamyn West / Unanimous

#### 5. Homelessness and Health Concerns. Lisa McClean & Dr. Ellen Heinitz, Clatsop County Public Health Dept.

Lisa McClean : County Health Dept open for appointment only; still seeing patients; have slowed down some but trying to ramp up. School immunizations on the horizon.

Increased rate of STDs in county as a whole. Trying to outreach to homeless community in particular. Talked with Beacon House and Filling Empty Bellies, offering services. Some have come in for testing. CCA and Beacon House have offered to make phone available for people to make an appt.

Flu clinics : Vaccine is trickling in. Looking at outreach to get everyone vaccinated. Where could we reach the majority? A couple years ago went to Warming Center but didn't have a very positive response. Will have publicity campaign ahead of any clinic to diffuse concerns, as we did with Hep-A last year. Can make after-hours arrangements. Assume will need to be inside. Email Jonah Dart-McLean (jdart@astoria.or.us) for possible park sites. Amy Baker will contact with assistance. Possibly tie to a related event -- free clothes, a meal, etc. Viviana preparing for Project Homeless Connect in January; multiple vaccines will be available there. Dr. Heinitz : Working on Covid. Ninety-five total cases in Clatsop; 4 active now. Continue to investigate and isolate new cases; actively monitor all cases daily. Total of 1,331 tests; 574 at drive-thru center; 399 at fish-packing facilities; 328 in Lincoln County when they had a big outbreak. Total tested 4,616 in Clatsop, for 2.06% positivity rate.

Quarantine program: OHA and CPCCO organizations, along with CCA, have provided funds to quarantine those who are unhoused or who cannot safely quarantine at home (eg, group

living situations, no separate bedroom). People who will qualify: positive Covid-19 test, or have been in close contact with positive, or deemed by medical professional that they are presumptive positive, or deemed by county health that they need quarantine. Health dept will ask for name, dob, contact phone number, CPCCO member, details about quarantine needs, disability reqs, pets, food allergies. Health Dept will contact CPCCO to advise one of their members needs help, then to CCA to provide wraparound services for the individual; then CCA contacts the individual and arranges for housing. Have hotel rooms and two RV's at the fairgrounds. CCA arranges transportation, food.

Have funding through either CCPCO or OHA. Difficulty is when someone isn't a CPCCO member. For OHA funding, person must be positive to reimburse for funds. Period when waiting for test results isn't covered, so looking for rapid testing options to keep people in their own housing if at all possible.

Symptoms in Clatsop County vary. Majority are asymptomatic. Otherwise, initially present with fever, cough, respiratory symptoms. See a lot of sinus congestion -- runny nose and sore throat -- people convinced it's allergy but turns out to be Covid. Then fever, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting -- looks like food poisoning. Some have all at the same time. 503-338-3642 direct office number.

6. Helping Hands (Elizabeth Kotaich). Stopped taking new referrals when Covid hit; taking them again now. Nearly full in Clatsop; two spots left on women's floor and two on men's floor, and room in emergency shelter. Added second case manager for Astoria. Intake protocols differ: All going through Trina to ensure all referring partners are up to date on Covid survey required to take someone in, to ensure person is asymptomatic. Ensuring safe space for people to go if tested and before returning to HH.

From Raven Russell's email re Bybee Lakes: HB4212 signed into law June 30, which changes State definition of emergency shelter, so those like HH with wraparound services are included; also eliminates shelters from land use decisions. Bybee property is in the Port of Portland, without public transportation, but TriMet will put in new stop within a block of facility and surplus transportation vehicles being donated. Portland Schools donating a tablet to every school age child. OHSU hoping to bring medical services on site by 2021. Demo is underway; building permit is in; last week took down fencing and razor wire so it doesn't look like a jail any more. Facility in Uniontown has been best practice model and helped much to make Bybee Lakes possible.

Tomorrow is annual fundraiser; typically is in May. Working with media company to put together online event streaming on events.give tomorrow at 6pm. Registration details on

website. Free to attend. Michael Allen Harrison, local musician, will attend; Jay Barber, Seaside mayor.

7. Countywide Liaison Position (Chief Spalding). Two sources will fund. CCA received state funds for an outreach position at \$40-\$50K plus benefits; County providing \$50K if position supports entire county and not just a portion. Viviana has 30 days to establish position. Will be hosted through CCA because funding through govt entity is significantly higher. Appropriate to have some form of guidance or oversight committee to provide input re goals and expectations for position. Great start to program. Is seed money; will need more than one position to cover the county.

Viviana : Must start within 30 days, before October 1. CCA will do admin piece; person will be employee of CCA with full benefits; hopefully enough funds to hire 1.5 people full time. Data driven; every person seen will be entered into data system. Liaison will help to secure housing. CCA working hard to find funding for rental assistance --- have funded \$600K over last 3 months. Some positives coming re housing: Warrenton's Chelsea Gardens and other affordable housing coming online within the next year or so.

Cindy : Is there possibility of increased funding for housing as next phase, rather than additional outreach and/or data personnel.

Amy : We won't get ahead of the problem if we don't address that, particularly for our most vulnerable citizens. Liaison will assist in gathering more data around what kind of housing we specifically need. Housing for people with serious mental illness is a key objective over the next year and a half. Will struggle to place those clients in adequate house as long as we're subject to the rental market.

Chief : "Defund the Police" is about providing add'l money to services so police aren't responding to non-police-related calls, and is a good step in the right direction.

Joan : Does it make sense to reach out to Gresham homeless liaison for input on hiring the right person. Not so much about academic credentials but about passion.

Chief : Yes, needs to be boots on the ground person. Kevin Dahlgren has met with several of the councilors and is willing to come out and assist. Our program will be similar but fit our specific needs.

Viviana : We are the experts in our community, so what do you see for this position? It will be a boots on the ground person, not sitting at desk. Would like to hear from this group before talking with Kevin. Hiring a peer person will be better than hiring someone from a master's program. The liaison will be boots on the ground, with an admin person to assist with data entry, etc.

Roger : Kevin Dahlgren threw down a challenge. He said a lot of communities say they can't really do what Gresham did because they don't have the ability to house everyone. He said

when he started there was no housing; it was through their efforts that housing was found. How did they do that?

8. Transitional Housing Update (Ron Maxted).

Subcommittee has formed and has been meeting monthly; coming up on fourth meeting. Have selected a name -- Astoria Opportunity Village -- suggested by Arline Lamear. Instead of forming non-profit we'll join hands with another. We've focused on Astoria Warming Center, who have established a good name. Viviana and Ron will make presentation at AWC October board meeting First step in establishing transitional housing could be to follow Tillamook's template -- start out with single transitional house, possibly set on a church parking lot. Details at next meeting.

9. Showers (Viviana).

CCA provided funding for April and May showers once a week at AWC; in June AWC took that over. Very positive experience. Two shower facilitators; AWC provided clothing and other necessities; about 20 people per week; social media marketing; portable bathrooms and handwashing stations in parking lot at CCA until mid-July.

Annie : Showers ongoing 12-4 Wednesdays every week. Two employees still running the showers. FEB has some good handwashing stations around town.. Regular folks are coming back from wherever, so we've seen a lot more people in last couple weeks. No one has been symptomatic.

10. Homeless Activity (Chief Spalding)

Recent uptick in lower-level crimes -- poop and pee, aggressiveness, cat-calling. Calls this year about 100 less than last year. Some of uptick related to mental illness concerns, some to substance abuse issues.

Homeless encampments. After reviewing information from CDC and Clatsop Public Health, we've been very cautious about addressing them. CDC recommends we generally don't deal with them as it moves people from a sort of quarantine back into the community, as well as for the health of public works and APD employees. Only active when calls from community re increased drug activity and human waste. Only had to do once or twice in the last couple months.

Amy : Mental health issues not doing well in this pandemic; CBH has provided increase in mobile crisis services since March. Multiple contacts often required to resolve the crisis. Sometimes it's trying to get people into crisis acute care, sometimes it's providing services for the first time. It's not unusual for CBH to be busier in the summer. This year, particularly in July and August (slated to be far higher than July), include some long-term clients who aren't faring well in this pandemic. Significant housing crisis and social isolation are taking a toll. It's challenging to be stuck in your head with voices talking to you and then not to have

social contact. Racial tension and discrimination are increasing here as well. Some employees feeling fearful about leaving their houses due to that. Also is economic impact due to lack of jobs. Mobile crisis team implemented about two years ago. CBH wholly underfunded to meet the needs of this community. Funding from state makes up only a quarter of what we probably need.

#### 11. *Blake v Grants Pass* (Chief Spalding)

*Martin v City of Boise* said you can't criminalize homelessness. Astoria doesn't. Our approach is to assist people to get where they need to go. APD has rarely issued a citation, and when we do, it's a violation, which means there's never a possibility of anyone going to jail. Part of the Clean Slate Program.

Last week *B v GP* expanded *M v CB* to say law enforcement can't prohibit sleeping. Must give grace period. Talking with attorney to see what the impact is on Astoria. Decision being appealed so may be moot. To be continued.

#### 12. Roundtable.

Barry Plotkin : Contrarian view on the homeless liaison idea. Active supporter early on. Services are being provided by a spectrum of organizations. The quilt of services needs a master coordinator to ensure all pieces fit together properly. CCA may be the experts, but it isn't true that the expertise to date has proven as effective as one might hope.

Joan : Recognizes Nell and Rick for their work in purchasing a 3-bedroom home on Bond, fixing it up, working with CCA to get people in the home. Fabulous start.

Rick : When Covid hit, AWC still had about a week in March before governor closed us down. Many workers were in protected classes -- senior citizens, etc. For next season, we decided to aggressively move forward by having exec dir, a paid full time employee. Job posting on website. Support from CCA and the CCO.

Viviana : CCA came up on this conversation a lot today, and that shows that CCA has been working very well with other organizations to provide services.

Mayor : Often hear that people see the same number of homeless around. Unfortunate that the many success stories aren't noticed so much as the additional people who come into the community. It isn't a headline when one person is assisted. No matter how successful everyone is, five years from now there will still be homeless people on our streets. Can't just plug a hole and it's fixed.

Chief: One of the criticisms is that HOST isn't making much progress. But where would we be if this group hadn't gotten together?

Think about topics for next meeting. Zoom is viable alternative.

Adjourn 11:30am

###END

Respectfully submitted,  
Cindy Price

Attending 8/27/2020 :

Task Force members:

Amy Baker  
Jonah Dart-McLean  
Kenny Hansen  
Sarah Lu Heath  
Jennifer Holen  
Jarrod Karnofski  
Elizabeth Kotaich  
Annie Martin  
Vivianna Matthews  
Lisa McClean  
Cindy Price  
David Reid  
Roger Rocka  
Geoff Spalding  
Terri Steenbergen  
Jessamyn West

Attendees :

Rick Bowers  
Joan Herman  
Ron Maxted  
Nelle Moffat  
Barry Plotkin  
Lauren Wilson