

HOMELESS SERVICES OVERSIGHT COUNCIL

HSOC Meeting

March 18, 2020 1:00 p.m.

Physical Location: Veterans Hall, 801 Grand Ave, San Luis Obispo, CA

Members and the public were also able to participate by phone.

Call In Number: (717) 275-8940

PIN #: 798 2958

MEMBERS PRESENT	MEMBERS ABSENT	STAFF & GUESTS	
Amelia Grover Anne Robin Bettina Swigger Brandy Graham Carlyn Christianson Caroline Hall Deanna Cantrell Grace McIntosh Janna Nichols Jessica Thomas Joe Thompson Kristen Barneich Mariam Shah Marlys McPherson Nicole Bennett (alt. Theresa Scott) Scott Smith Steve Gregory (alt. Steve Martin) Susan Funk	Adam Hill Devin Drake Marcia Guthrie Marianne Kennedy Mark Lamore Paul Worsham Shay Stewart Tim Waag	Airlin Singewald Anne Wyatt George Solis Jeff Al-Mashat Jessica Lorange Laurel Weir Russ Francis Tony Navarro Wendy Lewis	
AGENDA ITEM		CONCLUSIONS/ACTIONS	FOLLOW UP
1. Call to Order and Introductions	Mariam Shah called the meeting to order at 1pm. Introductions were made.		

2. Public Comment	N/A		
3. Consent: Approval of Minutes	Carlyn made a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting, seconded by Kristen. All were in favor.		
ACTION/INFORMATION/DISCUSSION			
4.1 Discussion Item: Proposed HSOC Bylaw changes related to Election of Members	<p>Laurel provided some background to the changes proposed. At the last full HSOC meeting, the Council voted to amend the bylaws. This item is for discussion only; a vote will take place at the next full HSOC meeting. Laurel discussed the changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff to convene ad hoc nominating committees, rather than the HSOC Executive Committee appointing these. This change is necessary because members are often unavailable, and this will enable HSOC to respond to nominations more quickly. • Changing the word 'amendment' to 'comment' regarding the Executive Committee's review of the annual proposed Membership Roster, as this is more appropriate. • Changing 'in November' to 'by the last meeting of each year' regarding the Executive 		

	<p>Committee's submitting the proposed Membership Roster, as due to the timing of grant actions, meetings sometimes take place in December.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adding 'along with any comment...' to the section regarding the Executive Committee's submitting the proposed Membership Roster, allowing the Executive Committee to pass comment on recommendations. • Adding 'as possible' to the end of a sentence – this is to correct a grammatical error in the original and does not change the meaning in any way. <p>Laurel confirmed that the proposed changes were the same as those in the agenda packet. There were no further questions. These changes will be voted on at the next meeting.</p>		
4.2 Discussion Item: State Homeless Assistance Grant Updates	<p>Updates were shared on the grants that the County currently receives.</p> <p>Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5Cities Homeless Coalition (5CHC): Janna gave an update about the funding 5CHC are 		

	<p>receiving for the acquisition and retrofitting of a building in Grover Beach, and for a homeless youth assistance program. Regarding the building, they have found more severe issues than anticipated. Emergency work has taken place to mitigate leaks, but there are still drainage issues. 5CHC are currently working with an architect on plans to modify an entrance/exit on the 2nd floor. The building will allow 5CHC to have eight private client meeting spaces as well as staff offices, hopefully in the next six months. Regarding the youth project, 5CHC are working with schools, particularly Lopez High School, in order to meet with youth, connect them with benefits, job searches and after school opportunities. They are also looking to rent a facility for youth who are able to live independently.</p> <p>The emergency building repairs were not anticipated, and so some additional funds will be needed, although the greater</p>		
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	<p>need is that 5CHC are short on funds for prevention and rapid rehousing. 5CHC has submitted a proposal to the County to increase allocations needed for direct financial assistance for these ends.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • El Camino Homeless Organization (ECHO): Jeff gave updates on ECHO's HEAP-funded projects in North County. Construction is about to begin on the Atascadero shelter expansion. This will expand from 50 to 60 beds, though there is some uncertainty due to COVID-19. The Atascadero building is moving towards being a 24 hour shelter. <p>Tony Navarro (County Planning & Building Department) shared that the only issue that needs to be addressed with the shelter is the testing of suspect building materials, as the building is from the late 1950s and so could contain asbestos or lead based paint.</p> <p>Jeff also provided information on ECHO's new building in Paso Robles. The plan for this center</p>		
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	<p>is to provide meals and a place for people to shower and sleep. The center will be open during the day for partner nonprofits to provide services, but ECHO will only provide overnight services for six months. This center will be open continuously regardless of weather.</p> <p>Steve Gregory (Paso Robles City Council) shared that the cost of this new building has been approved. A Memorandum of Understanding has been drawn up between ECHO and Paso Robles to operate this facility. Caltrans (Department of Transportation) have raised some concerns about access to the site, including pedestrian access. Some of these issues have been resolved.</p> <p>Wendy Lewis shared that ECHO has an employee in a new position, allowing them to provide more daytime hours which has proven critical. This has also given ECHO an extra layer of resources, so they have been able to add a job skills training program to work</p>		
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	<p>directly with individuals seeking employment. There have been several success stories from this program in just a few months.</p> <p>Homeless Housing, Assistance, and Prevention Program (HHAP): Laurel clarified that this is a one time grant from the state that HSOC has applied for. HSOC voted for priorities for this funding in January. Since then, the state has released more information on how this grant differs from the HEAP funding. The HHAP funding cannot be used to just fund shelter – the focus has to be on getting people out of shelter and into housing. Therefore, any proposal for shelter or emergency housing needs to include a plan for moving people into housing. This may have implications for some projects, particularly on the North coast. Supervisor Gibson will be convening meetings to begin discussions with the community on what kinds of projects may be needed on the North coast that would meet the new HHAP requirements. HSOC will also need to report on outcomes, not outputs (so we will need to say e.g. ‘we will</p>		
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	<p>decrease unsheltered homelessness by X% over Y years'). This will be discussed by the Finance & Data committee then recommendations brought to the full HSOC. The state expects HSOC and the County to work together on this, and that HSOC will periodically monitor its own outcomes, so a schedule will need to be set up for this. The state will also have to approve outcomes before HSOC can proceed with this fund. The County is still waiting to hear back from the state about this funding, and had expected to hear back in April, but this may be moved back due to COVID-19. There is therefore no indication at present for when the Request for Proposals (RFP) will go out. Following this, the Board will select grantees, and the funding will then be released fairly quickly by the state.</p> <p>California Emergency Solutions and Housing Grant (CESH): Laurel explained that the County receives two grants under the CESH program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first grant is the 2018 funding which has been awarded. This has mostly 		
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	<p>funded outreach – 5CHC, ECHO and CAPSLO (Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo) are coordinating under this project and have outreach workers doing coordinated entry in the field.</p> <p>Grace shared that all providers have been talking about using a shared intake document to ensure they capture the same information.</p> <p>Janna and Wendy discussed the challenge of knowing what kind of outreach they should or should not be doing, particularly given COVID-19. Laurel covered this in the next section (4.3).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The second grant is the 2019 funding of an additional \$392k, which has not yet been committed. The intent was to include this in local proposals for HHAP funding. Laurel suggested that HSOC may now want to allocate these funds towards a COVID-19 response, though the County is still waiting on a response from the state on whether this would be considered eligible activities. 		
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	<p>Laurel also proposed that as CESH funds can be spent over several years, HSOC may want to allocate some funding for future years, as if there is an economic crash due to COVID-19, it will be harder for government to provide funding for nonprofits. HSOC will need to look at all options and have a fuller discussion once the state has issued clarification on how the CESH funding can be used.</p> <p>California Emergency Solutions Grant (CA ESG): The County has just over \$100k to give out under this annual grant, which comes through the state but is federal in origin. This funding can be used only for very specific activities, although the federal government has put out guidelines for how this can be used for certain COVID-19 related activities. The funds won't be available for the County until July 2021. The County has issued RFPs, and applications are due from local providers soon, which will then be brought to the full HSOC meeting in May. Due to the timing of other meetings, HSOC will need to meet</p>		
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	<p>earlier than the intended date of May 20th. In order for the County to approve the grant on time, the full HSOC meeting must take place on May 6th instead. However, the County is still waiting to hear if the state is going to maintain or extend the current application deadline.</p> <p>Permanent Local Housing Allocation (PLHA): Airlin (Department of Planning & Building) updated the Council on this state grant. The state released a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) two weeks ago. The County's application is due to the state on July 27th, though deadlines may be adjusted in response to COVID. The tentative plan is for PLHA funds to be used for a wide variety of homeless and housing activities. The application needs to show how the County's funding requests will meet the unmet housing needs of the County, based on a regional housing needs allocation. The estimated value of this fund was \$680k initially, but this has increased to \$872k for the first year (this is an ongoing funding stream, annually renewed, though the amount of funding will fluctuate).</p>		
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	<p>The County's current plan is to start the application by developing draft funding recommendations based on input received from stakeholders including HSOC, nonprofit housing developers and homeless service providers. Based on this input, the County will draft the application, make this available for public review for 30 days, then take this to the Board of Supervisors for consideration for July 14th, in order to meet the state's July 27th deadline.</p>		
4.3 Discussion Item: Coronavirus and Homelessness	<p>The Council shared updates, including the Executive Order signed by Governor Newsom preventing evictions. Cities have been urged to adopt this order. While the order prohibits evictions, it does not exempt tenants from having to pay rent and so 5CHC are expecting people to be approaching them seeking assistance. Payment can be deferred for six months under this order, but the eviction limitation only relates to those who have seen a reduction in pay as a result of COVID-19.</p> <p>Laurel provided an update from the County. The County has declared a state of emergency, and activated an</p>		

	<p>emergency center, coordinating between different county agencies. Laurel has conferred with service providers and they are all taking steps to mitigate the issue, such as taking people's temperatures and creating isolation rooms. Laurel noted that this is a significant challenge for providers, especially shelters. All agencies have expressed concerns about ensuring they have personal protective equipment for staff, volunteers and clients. There are also concerns about the number of volunteers declining. The County has requested additional masks, gloves and hand sanitizer from the State but have not been able to procure any yet. The limited supplies that the County has at present are being prioritized for hospitals and first responders.</p> <p>Grace shared that no one has tested positive at 40 Prado, where they have begun taking people's temperatures at the door. Anyone who has a temperature over 100.4 is required to see onsite medical personnel. The biggest concern is losing staff, as the shelter cannot run without staff. The decision has been taken to close the doors if there are only two staff</p>		
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	<p>remaining. They are reaching out to old providers of overflow shelters, but there are concerns that these shelters (e.g. churches) need to understand the population and the situation and be properly equipped.</p> <p>Wendy gave an update on ECHO. They are following the CDC's recommendations, but in need of cleaning supplies and gloves. A major concern is losing volunteers, as they need volunteer chaperones for overnight shelters, but many of their current volunteers belong to at risk groups. They have had to postpone their Empty Bowls event in April, and are very concerned about funding. They have managed to secure three handwashing stations, and are taking temperatures as overnight guests come in. They are working with the County to secure one or two FEMA trailers, and have secured emergency food from the Food Bank.</p> <p>Janna gave an update on 5CHC. With regard to regular services, the office is closed but they are dealing with clients remotely. They had been operating a warming center, but there are a number of challenges with</p>		
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	<p>continuing to do this, as there is no isolation room and no showers. They are working to identify other options, such as creating shelter in place locations, to stop people moving around and provide services where they are. They have acquired 30 sleeping bags and tarps.</p> <p>Jeff commented that the biggest issue ECHO has encountered in Paso Robles is getting clients to take the situation seriously. They are trying to keep the meal program going, but are evaluating the situation day by day. The biggest concern here is that people do not have a place they can shelter.</p> <p>The Council discussed the guidance from the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), to send people to hospital if they are showing the main symptoms, and how this differs from the Public Health protocol which is to not inundate local emergency rooms with people not in medical crisis. Public Health has stated that people's first option should be to go to their primary care physician, but many people experiencing homelessness (both</p>		
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	<p>sheltered and unsheltered) do not have these. This is also more challenging currently as physicians are also trying to reduce the number of people coming into their offices.</p> <p>Susan provided an update on the Atascadero warming center. This was slated to close for the season on Sunday, but has received funding from the County to remain open continuously through March 31st until further notice. They are offering lunch bags and breakfast, but not congregate meals. Susan thanked the County for this additional funding.</p> <p>Laurel reported that she spoke with the County's two DV (Domestic Violence) shelters recently, and they are working to try to create rooms to set aside for isolating people with symptoms. TMHA have seven vacancies through their Permanent Supported Housing program which they are reserving as isolation units for their clients if they become symptomatic. Laurel thanked all staff in all agencies who are working so hard in this very difficult time.</p> <p>Bettina informed the Council that she</p>		
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	<p>has been working with the businesses, restaurants and bars that have had to close downtown, and encouraging them to donate any goods that would otherwise spoil. If any providers are looking for food or other goods that could be donated, please reach out to Bettina by email: bettina@downtownslo.com</p> <p>This meeting took place just prior to the County's edict on sheltering in place. The Council discussed the need for guidance around unsheltered people. Laurel confirmed that shelter workers are considered essential and so should continue to go to work. It was not clear if this also applied to volunteers, so Laurel will follow up with the EOC (Emergency Operations Center).</p> <p>Laurel shared the recent announcement that Governor Newsom is trying to make hotels and motels available to shelter homeless people. The State is compiling lists of hotels and motels in different jurisdictions and will provide this to counties. It is not yet clear if there will be funding associated with this.</p>		
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<p>4.3.1 Discussion Item: Prevention and Mitigation Needs</p>	<p>Laurel shared that the County is currently working on getting a standardized screening tool out to shelters. Personal protective equipment is currently in short supply. Shelters are working on ways to safely isolate people by setting aside space and using trailers. The County is continuing to explore all options, including motels. Going forward, HSOC will need to create a working group to look at options and resources. Given the impact on staff both at the County and among providers, fewer HSOC committee meetings may take place, though the Full and Executive meetings will continue as planned.</p>		
<p>4.3.2 Action Item: Vote to authorize the HSOC Executive Committee to vote on grant recommendations, Continuum of Care policies, or urgent matters when action is needed before the next scheduled meeting of the full HSOC</p>	<p>Laurel clarified that this action is to authorize the Executive Committee to make decisions only when the full HSOC cannot be convened, i.e. a quorum cannot be gathered in time. Carlyn asked for this to be clearer in the authorization, and for this to be a standing agenda item so that each quorate meeting of the full HSOC can decide whether or not to reauthorize the Executive Committee.</p>	<p>Carlyn made a motion to authorize the HSOC Executive Committee to vote on urgent matters before the next scheduled meeting of the full HSOC, where a quorum cannot be gathered in time, and that this must be on the agenda for reauthorization by each quorate meeting of the full HSOC. All were in favor.</p>	

5. Committee Reports	The Encampments Committee met, and had planned for the next meeting to focus on trash issues, but the focus will now be on encampments and COVID-19. Future meetings will be held by phone until further notice.		
6. Future Discussion/Report Items			
7. Next Meeting Date	May 6, 2020 at 1pm. This meeting will be held by phone, but there will also be a physical location for those unable to call in: Veterans Hall, 801 Grand Ave, San Luis Obispo		
7. Adjournment	Mariam adjourned the meeting at 3pm.		