



Douglas County Local Public Safety Coordinating Council (LPSCC)  
**Housing Subcommittee meeting minutes**

**Noon, Wednesday, May 9, 2018**

*Third-floor conference room, Roseburg City Hall*

**PRESENT:** Cheryl Carson, *DHS*; Paul Coffelt, *DHS*; Lance Colley, *City of Roseburg*; Marie Dixon, *NAMI*; Wayne Ellsworth, *Adapt*; Mike Fieldman, *UCAN*; Aric Fromdahl, *Juvenile Justice*; Allen Hobson, *City of Winston; Housing Authority*; Justin Mathison, *Cow Creek Tribe*; Melissa McRobbie-Toll, *LPSCC Coordinator*; Karan Reed, *NeighborWorks Umpqua*;

**ABSENT:** Lynn Antis, *Roseburg Rescue Mission*; Janeal Kohler, *Douglas County*; Sean Negherbon, *City of Myrtle Creek*; Arielle Reid, *Neighborworks Umpqua*;

**ON THE PHONE:** Connor McDonnell, Oregon Housing & Community Services

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Housing Subcommittee Chair Allen Hobson opened the meeting at 11:58 a.m.

**MINUTES APPROVAL:** *Karan Reed moved to approve the draft minutes from the April 11 meeting. Marie Dixon seconded. Motion passed.*

**PHONE GUEST: CONNOR MCDONNELL, OREGON HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES**

Connor McDonnell, housing integrator with Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS), joined the meeting by phone. He said a large part of his job is external, working with local and regional groups. Mr. McDonnell has worked in city government and has also been a social worker working in homeless services. That work included helping people get out of jail find housing. The discussion with Mr. McDonnell included the following topics:

- **Options for getting more transitional housing** - Lance Colley wondered if it would be more cost-effective for the Housing Subcommittee to look at housing that's already in place to convert to transitional housing rather than try to build new housing. However, he noted that there is already insufficient low-income housing to meet the needs of the general population, so converting an already scarce resource to transitional housing would further dilute the resource. He mentioned the possibility of finding existing buildings that are not low-income and renovating them to serve as multi-unit transitional housing. Colley said large-scale transitional housing facilities can draw backlash, so 4-5 units might be an appropriate capacity. That size would enable better supervision and case management. Justin Mathison wondered if the state has any properties that could be acquired locally and jointly funded for transitional housing. McDonnell said he is not aware of existing state property in the area that could be acquired locally. McDonnell outlined several options: 1) Acquire land and construct a new building (*most expensive option*) 2) Find an existing building and convert it, or 3) Enter into lease agreements with existing building owners, possibly master-leasing an entire building. Colley wondered if

there are resources available for those options. Mike Fieldman said the master-lease possibility has been considered by UCAN. He said the leasing entity would likely have to pay market rate for those rental units, but the rent paid by tenants would be much lower and there would be a need to subsidize the difference. UCAN has found this subsidy need to be a barrier. McDonnell said OHCS is interested in hearing about needs like this. Fieldman said OHA Addictions and Mental Health (AMH) funding is a possibility but that funding source has become more restrictive.

- **Partnerships** – Lance Colley said the Housing Subcommittee should look into what agencies offer re-entry case management and programming and might be able to operate a transitional home. Others pointed out that financial partnerships are a possibility for projects that align with multiple agencies' missions. Partnership possibilities could be explored with UCAN, the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, NeighborWorks and other entities.
- **Group home possibility** – Karan Reed said a group-home setting seems to work well for those in re-entry. However, that setup can make it more difficult to access funding like Local Innovation and Fast-Track (LIFT) dollars because the tenants live in bedrooms rather than individual units (if an entity offers per-unit funding, a 5-bedroom facility would qualify for less funding than a 5-unit facility). Reed would like to see changes that would allow group homes to access funding based on how many people they serve rather than how many units they contain. Lance Colley said a group-home setting could be the most cost-effective way to serve the population in re-entry. He asked whom the Subcommittee should approach about Reed's LIFT funding concern. McDonnell suggested starting with the Housing Stability Council. Mike Fieldman asked if McDonnell could connect Reed to an OHCS staff member about this issue. McDonnell said Julie Cody would be one of the contacts and he will make connections through the LPSCC coordinator. Marie Dixon noted that people in re-entry who have mental health issues do better in group homes than apartments. Aric Fromdahl said local juvenile transitional facilities are set up like group homes and that works well. He offered to take the Subcommittee on a tour of Fowler House.
- **Commercial property conversion** – Another idea is to convert existing commercial property into transitional housing. Justin Mathison asked Lance Colley if he has a list of vacant industrial properties. Colley said he does but that housing is not allowed in industrial areas in Roseburg. Housing is allowed in mixed-use areas. Colley said there might be more commercial property-conversion opportunities outside of city limits.
- **State funding possibilities** – McDonnell mentioned that work is being done on the state level to allow real estate acquisition with Emergency Housing Assistance (EHA) and State Homeless Assistance Program (SHAP) funding.
- **Other ideas** – McDonnell suggested taking out a loan and using existing funding as part of a down payment to purchase a property that could be used as a group home.

### **CONTINUED DISCUSSION**

The group discussion continued after the phone conversation with Connor McDonnell ended:

- **Units in Green** – Mike Fieldman mentioned two prefabricated homes in Green that cost about \$72,000 apiece and floated the idea of finding land and adding similar units for transitional housing.

- **DHS housing interest** – DHS is typically a referral agency and makes housing referrals to UCAN, but DHS representatives at the meeting said the agency anticipates having some money to put into housing and that the DHS director understands the importance of housing stability. Cheryl Carson said individuals struggling to find housing may pay a \$30 application fee for each unit they apply for, which adds up quickly. Some can't pass a background check or credit check, and the housing instability can exacerbate health issues and children's behavioral issues. Housing instability can snowball into a family crisis quickly.
- **Coordination** – Mike Fieldman noted that there are numerous pots of funding that have some overlap in their intent; he said it would be helpful if there were more coordination of those funding efforts. Justin Mathison said he sits on multiple committees focused on housing, and suggested finding a way for those groups to tackle housing issues in a coordinated fashion.
- **Landlord outreach** – Lance Colley suggested compiling a list of landlords who are willing to accept tenants with criminal records and poor credit if the rent were guaranteed for a period of time. Mike Fieldman said UCAN has a Second Chance renters' program, which consists of a 6- to 8-week course that teaches people how to be good renters. The program has an excellent track record. The state has created a pool of funding for people who have gone through those programs, allowing agencies like UCAN to guarantee rent and damage coverage. Outreach could be conducted to educate landlords on that program. Karan Reed said NeighborWorks held a fair housing training with rental owners, and there is likely an association of property owners we could invite to a meeting to discuss these issues. Mike Fieldman suggested contacting Neil Hummel. Marie Dixon used to do mediation work and noticed that tenants and landlords don't always talk to each other; she thinks there is an opportunity for greater communication and understanding between the two parties. Wayne Ellsworth said he has a list of landlords.
- **County property/Unincorporated areas** – Mike Fieldman noted that the county has some property available, but it needs significant renovation. The county also owns an old park in Green. Lance Colley said it is less expensive to develop in unincorporated areas, but there is also the question of how to connect people to services if they live outside of Roseburg. He noted that most manufacturing in Douglas County occurs in unincorporated areas. Allen Hobson agreed it would be more affordable to look outside of city limits. Marie Dixon said nearly all of the county's treatment and service providers are in Roseburg and transportation is an issue.
- **Modest assistance can make a difference** – Lance Colley said sometimes \$100/month in rental assistance can allow people to stay in their homes. He compared \$1,200 a year in rental assistance costs to the cost of having folks end up homeless and require additional services. He wondered how to identify people on the brink of being unable to pay their rent. Mike Fieldman said UCAN has limited funding for something like that.
- **City of Roseburg** – Roseburg is launching a housing needs study. Colley noted that a mixed-use area along Diamond Lake Boulevard could potentially be rezoned as residential.
- **Wetlands** – Karan Reed pointed out that the prevalence of wetlands in Douglas County make new construction difficult and costly. Colley noted there are wetland areas farther out on Diamond Lake Boulevard and mitigation requirements make redevelopment cost-prohibitive.

**Miscellaneous:**

- Chair Allen Hobson said the next steps are for the Subcommittee to identify goals and projects, explore funding sources and investigate opportunities for inter-agency collaboration, both strategically and financially.
- Mike Fieldman said UCAN is looking at some capital projects but they're still in the early development stage. UCAN has also been able to expand some of its outreach services. He also mentioned a loan program in which jurisdictions can obtain loans for the purchase of land but not make payments on the loan until a housing program is launched at the site. This gives jurisdictions the time to find funding to build the housing.
- Karan Reed wondered if the EHA funds might be available for folks getting out of jail. Mike said UCAN is doing some case management in the jail already.

*Meeting adjourned at 1:31 p.m.*

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**NEXT MEETING:** Noon, Wednesday, June 13, third-floor conference room, Roseburg City Hall