



**JOINT MEETING BETWEEN LANE WORKFORCE EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING AND  
POVERTY AND HOMELESSNESS BOARD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**Ford Alumni Center, Ballroom  
1720 East 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Eugene**

**Thursday, October 19, 2017: 12:30pm – 2:00pm**

**MINUTES**

---

**Present:** Jennifer Adams, Dan Bryant, Mike Clark, Jesse Dolin, Alex Dreher, Pat Farr, Erin Fifield, Stephanie Jennings, Christine Lundberg, Kris McAlister, Steve Manela, Celeste Marshall, Kristina Payne, Angela Peacor, Cindy Perry, Stan Pickett, Sean VanGordon, Lucy Vinis, Pat Walsh

**Others:** Tiffany Cink, Anne Nestell, Sue Thompson, Adrienne D'Addabbo, Karen Saxe, Emily Reiman, Richard Guske, Carrie Rawson, Thomas Price

---

***Call to Order***

Angela Peacor called the meeting to order.

***Public Comment***

Emily Reiman, Executive Director of NEDCO. As the Executive Director of NEDCO, Ms. Reiman is very excited about the conversation taking place today because it really recognizes the need for affordable housing and the impact that the lack of affordable housing is having throughout the community. Ms. Reiman is also here as a member of the Housing Policy Board. The Intergovernmental Housing Policy Board (HPB) acts as a forum for public input into the community issues related to affordable housing. It reviews low-income housing issues and makes policy, funding, and other recommendations regarding affordable housing to Eugene, Springfield and Lane County governments. There are two task teams forming right now. One of the teams is focusing on how to make recommendations to increase local funding for affordable housing and as well as creating new funding opportunities. The other task team is focusing on how we can promote a wider array of housing types. Ms. Reiman will share notes from this meeting with the Housing Policy Board.

***Welcome and Agenda***

Angela Peacor, Chair of the Lane Workforce Partnership Board of Directors welcomed everyone to the meeting. She is excited for the two boards to explore how we can collaborate and work together to tackle some of the issues around affordable housing. Ms. Peacor stated that what is most important for today is to have the first conversation.

Pat Walsh, Chair of the Poverty and Homelessness Executive Board thanked everyone for being here. This is a really good first step. Mr. Walsh provided some background on the Poverty and Homelessness Board. The Poverty and Homelessness Board is four years old and everyone serving on the Poverty and Homelessness Board is appointed by the Lane County Commissioners. The Board advises the County Commissioners on issues relating to poverty and homelessness. The Board does not have a budget and they do not make policy. The Board has developed and implemented a strategic plan for the County to use in helping to guide policy.

Ms. Peacor stated that the agenda for today is to have a conversation around the following:

- Current state of housing in Lane County
- Projected future needs for housing in Lane County
- What can the Lane Workforce Board do in collaboration with the Poverty and Homelessness Board around workforce and housing issues

Commissioner Farr started the conversation by reviewing the PHB strategic plan. The PHB has identified three areas of strategic focus to guide its work in alleviating poverty and homelessness over the next five years:

1. Increase availability and access to coordinated, supportive housing, shelter, and services
2. Prevent homelessness and poverty
3. Inform and enhance public awareness and advocacy efforts

The three identified areas of strategic focus all have sub-committees assigned to them. Commissioner Farr believes that Goal 1 is one of the areas that the Lane Workforce Board and the Poverty and Homelessness Board can overlap as the Lane Workforce Partnership Board reaches deep into the community and consequently we can consolidate resources.

Commissioner Farr sees this meeting as not a beginning but rather a continuation of the work we are doing together. Over the next five years, the PHB partners will coordinate with other agencies in Lane County to create an additional 600 units of supported housing for chronically homeless individuals, including veterans, youth, those who experience mental illness, domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, and those exiting the criminal justice, foster care and child welfare systems. There is currently a 50 bed supportive housing facility planned on MLK Boulevard.

Steve Manela said that in preparation for this meeting, workforce staff along with health and human services staff gathered data for this conversation. Trends we are seeing in the health and human services division serving adults 18 – 65 include:

- Large portion of the workforce wages are at or below median household income
- Working with people who do not have full-time employment.
- The housing situation has become more critical for employers. We have had difficulty recruiting for county positions as individuals are not able to secure housing. The housing situation for all levels of social economics (with the exception of high wage earners) is constrained. Construction activity has not returned to pre-recession levels.
- As illustrated in the State Housing Plan presentation, financing is very difficult to obtain for housing developers. Lenders want more capital up front. The labor market data shows that there are less people working in the construction industry. Many Lane County residents are spending in excess of 50% of their income on housing costs. This influences their ability to

secure and maintain housing. It also influences all the individuals who are trying to enter the market regardless if they are renters or first time home buyers.

Cindy Perry provided an overview on the Gap Analysis from the PHB Employment Committee. The Employment Committee of the PHB has been tasked with developing a gaps analysis to determine areas of need within the employment service system. In order to achieve this, Lane County Human Services, in collaboration with WorkSource Lane, has been working to obtain data on the services currently available.

On July 14<sup>th</sup>, a focus group meeting was held with housing, employment, and other social service agencies within Lane County. Groups were asked to discuss current service provision and coordination, common barriers to employment, and additional services needed.

Following the focus group meeting, additional online surveying was widely conducted to gain further data about services and assistance available in the community relating to employment, specifically for those experiencing homelessness. A summary of the findings included:

- Wide range of employment services are available, particularly within the Eugene/Springfield metro area. Access may be limited for some rural area households. 65% of survey respondents indicated that sufficient employment services are available, based on experience.
- Given the current unemployment rate, those accessing services are likely to be high need with multiple barriers to obtaining employment.
- While employment services are often provided in conjunction with other services, such as housing assistance, collaboration or alignment of these services could be improved.
- Services that are not as prevalent include micro-enterprise opportunities; skill building; on-site job training or paid work experience; and full-time, year-round employment opportunities.
- The most common barriers to employment include criminal history; lack of skills; health issues; and disability. Other barriers cited by survey respondents included child care; substance use; motivation; no employment history; and transportation.
- Young people may require employment services and interventions specific to youth, including education support.

Recommendations included:

- Increase collaborative business networking or relationship building with employers on a system level.
- Create a shared list of employers willing to hire those with challenges or barriers to employment.
- Implement an awareness campaign and conduct community outreach to the business community, employers, and the public.
- Increase collaboration between service systems within Lane County including housing, employment, legal aid, education, and health.
- Explore emerging models or approaches for housing and employment from other cities.
- Provide additional opportunities for people to obtain relevant job skills and paid work experience.

It was noted that supportive employment is provided to individuals with disabilities. Much of that work is done by Voc Rehab but not everyone is eligible for the services.

Mayor Vinis asked if a distinction was made between a female head of household versus a male head of household. Ms. Perry responded that a distinction was not made.

Stephanie Jennings asked that people recognize that there is a lot of work happening statewide and locally to address the issues. Ms. Jennings noted that a number of bills passed in the most recent legislative session that will provide additional resources. The Oregon Housing Stability Council is discussing the Emergency Housing Account that is administered by the Housing and Community Services Department. The Emergency Housing Account is to assist homeless persons and those persons who are at risk of becoming homeless. An additional \$1.2M has been put into the Lane County community to support a variety of housing programs. Another good resource for this group is the Eugene-Springfield Consolidated Plan. The Consolidated Plan has an established five year goal of creating affordable housing throughout Eugene and Springfield and uses federal funds received by the cities of Eugene and Springfield. Ms. Jennings said that through the Housing Policy Board, we have a number of affordable housing providers that continually explore ways to increase the pipeline as well as exploring ideas on streams of revenue to help support affordable housing. Ms. Jennings noted that some of the affordable housing units in Eugene are 30 – 40 years old and are in need of re-investments so that they can serve individuals for the next 30 years.

Commissioner Farr said that in the spring of next year, the Shelter and Supportive Housing Development subcommittee is planning a summit to bring participants together to maximize efforts. The date and agenda have not been determined yet. Mayor Vinis also noted that on January 18, 2018 at 5:00pm, there will be a Missing Middle Housing Conference held at the EMU Ballroom on the U of O campus. The hope is to identify a couple of key things that we think we can do relatively quickly. Mayor Vinis referenced a conversation she and Kristina Payne had several months ago about the potential for collaboration on construction skills and building houses. Lake Oswego High School has a program where they buy a house, renovate it, and then sell it. Profits from the sale of the house are used to purchase the next property. The high school students are learning construction/building skills while adding to the housing supply. Mayor Vinis said we need to think about ways to build skills among high school students and possibly adults while adding to the housing supply. Mayor Vinis reiterated that as we are thinking about the connections between workforce development and housing, we need to think about how we are working with the school districts and creating opportunities for students.

Kristina Payne wanted to have this conversation because as we look at the funds we receive, we can look at the parameters around those funds. For example, the On-The-Job-Training program offers Lane County businesses up to \$3,500 for hiring an eligible job seeker or current employee who is *almost* perfect, but is lacking a skill, or set of skills, AND is willing to train them on the job. Known as a “hire first” activity, it creates a win-win for employers and job seekers. Reimbursements are calculated at 50% of the wages earned by the new hire during the training period. The minimum that someone can be paid is \$11.00 an hour. That was set probably five years ago when we established the program. It is conversations like this that will help in determining what changes need to be implemented. Ms. Payne noted that there are funds at the state level that we might be able to access. She would like to explore developing a pilot program that can grow and be sustained in Lane County.

Kris McAlister relayed his own life experiences with homelessness. He lived on the streets from 13 – 22 years of age. He has been involved with almost every program he was eligible for and has seen first-hand the gaps from the federal level down to the local level. Mr. McAlister said he has a lot of program

ideas but has run into roadblocks with agencies telling him that staffing and/or funding is not available. Mr. McAlister said there is a lot of room to expand services but the key is to reach homeless people where they are. The projects that seem to get funded are the ones that help the most number of people and have federal dollars attached to them. We might need to look at giving some employers tax incentives or some kind of fee waivers to get them involved. Mr. McAlister would love to work closer with workforce people on some of his ideas.

Dan Bryant talked about a conference he attended a year ago in Boston. One of the presentations focused on the Bakersfield Sanitation Department and a great program they implemented. The Sanitation Department partnered with the local mission and hired some of their clients to help pick up trash along the roadways. The program launched first as a pilot project with 5 individuals. They ended up exceeding the contract and were able to expand the program. The program now employs 57 individuals and is a \$1.1 billion dollar contract. Individuals have been able to move on from the mission and have their own place. Mr. Bryant has been trying to figure out a way to implement a program like that here locally. The only thing he has come up with so far is trying to partner with BRING in the waste products program. BRING is currently employing some residents living in Opportunity Village for a few hours of work. Mr. Bryant would like to develop a partnership that helps individuals get off the streets and provides them with meaningful employment.

Councilor Sean VanGordon asked how many individuals used the OJT and Scholarship Award program last year. Sue Thompson responded that there were approximately 350 people which is about the maximum the program can support. The programs are used by a variety of industries.

Ms. Peacor asked about land availability. If we had the construction workers and financing to build affordable houses, do we have the land to build on? Mayor Vinis responded that this is a controversial issue in Eugene. The City is looking at how to adjust the density in each new planning area to accommodate single family housing. One of the challenges is how to make it all pencil out for the developer. Commissioner Farr stated that land is definitely an issue and not just for Eugene and Springfield. Ms. Jennings noted that the City of Eugene is actively looking for more sights. They often work with institutional partners such as the school districts who have been great partners. This is definitely an area where we have money and goals established around it.

Mike Clark suggested that this discussion could be helped by having less semantical conflicts. One of those conflicts being the difference between affordable housing and the marketplace for housing that is affordable which in his opinion, we are actively working against. He has worked with home builders for many years and he recently changed careers and joined an industry where he funds the purchase of homes. He can say with absolute certainty that the price of all types of housing in our community (barring a recession like we saw in 2008) will continue to increase at the 7% - 10% a year rate. We are going to need strategies to understand that the marketplace is not going to correct. We can bite around the edges of it or we can address this straight on which is what he says needs to happen.

Councilor VanGordon noted that it is easy in this conversation to get into broad topics about what is happening at the state level with land development. Land is a complicated issue. When we envision where we want to go, we want a marketplace where the private sector builds housing that is affordable. To be fair, the public entities sitting around this table do make policy choices. Springfield has chosen to focus on driving up density. For example, the City has waived fees in some instances. There are two things to consider: do we have people to physically build houses and do we physically have land for the houses to be built on. Councilor VanGordon said there are conversations happening but as public

entities, the cities have responsibilities for this too. Mr. McAlister noted that affordable housing is not necessarily low-income housing. Low-income does not equal affordable housing.

Mayor Vinis wants to plant the seed that perhaps a subgroup of this larger group would be interested in exploring this more and learning what options there are in terms of housing, funding streams, training programs, etc., and then identify where the connections could occur in this larger realm. Mayor Vinis would be happy to be a part of the subgroup.

Mayor Lundberg said we need to work on state laws and try and make more land available. She noted that it will take the private sector stepping up as well and maybe we need to offer more incentives. Mayor Lundberg referred to a chart provided in the packet. Maybe we need people who will build at that top end so that people will move up through the housing system – similar to what we do with people moving up within the workforce. If you move people through the system, you free up housing at the other end. What we have found in Springfield with our home funds is that we are using them but we are not creating additional units. The same people are staying in those units. The other issue for us is how do we make sure we are addressing skills and the need for additional training.

Ms. Payne said that based on conversations she has had, there is an opportunity to put together a proposal that would focus on entry level housing and work on skill/training development opportunities. We have experts around the table who can help us formulate the model. We have an opportunity to do something new and different and the opportunity is now. Councilor VanGordon mentioned the G Street Oasis in Springfield might be a great place to start a pilot project. The G Street OASIS is a collaborative project providing homeless families with children priority access to a coordinated set of services offered at multiple locations within the immediate G Street neighborhood of Springfield. The participating organizations function as a campus, with all services within easy walking distance. The gap that exists with that program right now is employment skills.

Mr. Bryant believes that focusing more on policy issues is worth the time and investment because that is how we influence the most people. All these different programs tend to focus on a small group of people. If you can change the policies, you change the playing field for everyone. Delta Sand and Gravel is a great example of private businesses working with public agencies. Delta Sand and Gravel has been working with Opportunity Village and the numbers of businesses that are now stepping forward is great and very much appreciated.

Ms. Jennings mentioned a workplace-based financial literacy pilot program that NEDCO offers to employers for their employees. The City of Eugene participated as an employer. It was very powerful in terms of helping people think about how to stabilize their lives, how to deal with unexpected expenses, etc. This is the kind of model where providing these types of educational services to employees in the workplace could yield tremendous benefits for the employer and the employee. Ms. Reiman shared that the biggest thing they learned is how many employees need and want this service. 81% of adults identified money as a significant source of stress in their life. It was a very successful pilot and NEDCO still offers this as a service. Ms. Reiman noted that there are also partnership models where employers work with housing developers to create a workforce benefit for their employees recognizing that if an employee purchases a home in their local community, they are more likely to stay and provide a stable workforce long-term.

Ms. Payne said that for Lane Workforce Partnership, the next steps will be to explore funding opportunities for connecting entry-level housing with employment skills and training services. She also wants to follow up with Ms. Reiman on the Housing Policy Board as we might be able to participate on

one of their task teams as well. Jessica McCormick with Lane Workforce Partnership and Cindy Perry with WorkSource will continue to participate with the Poverty and Homelessness Board so we will maintain those connections as well. Ms. Payne said this meeting provided us the opportunity to have an open conversation to identifying how we are connected so as staff go back and work, we are all at the same place of understanding. If we can get a project launched, progress/updates can be provided to both boards through our staff. We might not need to come back jointly as a large group but rather have reports going back and forth between the boards. Mr. Walsh said this approach makes the most sense. If an issue does come that that we should form a sub-committee between the two boards, we can always do that too.

***Adjournment***

Angela Peacor thanked everyone for coming and the meeting was adjourned at 2:00pm.