Sonoma County Homeless Coalition Board

Homeless Coalition Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 24, 2025
1:00 – 4:30 PM, Pacific Time – Meeting held via Zoom

Zoom Recording:

https://sonomacounty.zoom.us/rec/share/gH90I3QSKcuxYqk8Y0_Agx7jqeS9xLMP9aDADL1wTwYD9oF-RH8MvoNTsuucTxzz.Rd_GNOWKI64FDqnotartTime=1758743945000

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Welcome and Roll Call Introductions (00:01:47–00:05:08)

Chair Jennielynn Holmes called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM and explained the Zoom rules regarding public comment and the Brown Act guidelines.

Chair Holmes made several acknowledgements prior to roll call:

- Many thanks to Rebekah Sammet for her years of service to the Homelessness Coalition (HC)as she now steps down from her position on the Board.

-Congratulations to Chessy Etheridge as she moves into the role of Chair of the Lived Experience & Advisory Planning (LEAP) Board. She will also retain her role in the Adult Lived Experience Seat on the HC Board.

-Welcome to Kimberly Stevens, who was recently appointed as the LEAP Board representative to the HC Board.

Present: Jennielynn Holmes, Catholic Charities | Caroline Bañuelos, City of Santa Rosa | Kevin McDonnell, City of Petaluma | Chris Coursey, Sonoma County Board of Supervisors | Dot Norton, proxy for Martha Cheever, Community Development Commission | Stephen Zollman, City of Sebastopol | Jackie Elward, City of Rohnert Park | Dannielle Danforth, West County Community Services | Chessy Etheridge, Adult Lived Experience Seat| Chris Cabral, Committee on the Shelterless (COTS) | Kristi Lozinto, Member At-Large | Angelica Smith, Tribal Seat | Rosie Traversi, Licensed Healthcare Organization Seat | Maria Rico, BIPOC Led/Serving Organization Seat |

Absent: Margaret Sluyk, Reach for Home

A quorum was present.

1 - 4. Approval of Consent Calendar (00:05:09 – 00:06:28)

- Chair Holmes presented the following consent calendar items for approval:
    1. 9/24/25 meeting agenda
    2. 8/27/25 meeting minutes
    3. Summary of Follow-Ups from the Previous Meeting(s)
    4. Reports for Standing Committee Updates

- **Public Comment**: None.

  Motion: Mayor Stephen Zollman moves to approve the Consent Calendar.

  Second: Ron Wellander seconds the motion.

  Abstentions or Objections: None.

  Motion passes. The consent calendar is approved.

5. Reports from Lead Agency Staff (00:06:29 – 00:29:54)

- **Department of Health Services (DHS) Director Updates:**

  -DHS Director Nolan Sullivan reported that interviews were conducted last week to fill the position of Interim Homelessness Services (HS) Division Director. A selection was made, pending formalizing of the offer process. The interim candidate will oversee the HS division for a period of six (6) to eight (8) months, during which time a class specification and recruitment will be constructed for a new (permanent) position of Deputy Division Director.

  -Additionally, the current Homelessness Services Division will be integrated into the Behavioral Health Division as a section, led by the envisioned new Deputy Division Director. The target date for the merge is January 1, 2026

  -A consultant firm, MRG, has been involved in assessing and creating work plans for the various DHS divisions over the last several months, including Homelessness Services. MRG will be analyzing the county's support to the Continuum of Care (CoC) as the lead agency and assessing how the county is doing with regard to homeless services.

  -Thai Hilton is working with Susan Price, a consultant with MRG, to collect data and host a series of work groups to solicit feedback. HC Board members, service providers, and individuals with lived experience, along with DHS staff, may be contacted to provide input.

  --Planning is being initiated to reimagine and reinvigorate Eliza's Village as a therapeutic and harmonious campus environment conducive to effecting enhanced life-altering changes for residents. Investments in additional resources, services, and perhaps additional dormitories, are being considered.

- The Measure O Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) closed last week, with fifty-two (52) applications being submitted for the ten million ($10,000,000) dollars of available funds.

Informational item only; no action taken.

- **Board Meeting Holiday Schedule Adjustments**

  Due to upcoming conflicting holidays, Andrew Akufo recommended that the HC Board meeting scheduled for November 26, 2025, be cancelled and the December 24th, 2025 (Christmas Eve) meeting be rescheduled to December 17th, 2025.

  Additional information is included within the packet of meeting materials, Item #5, pgs. 15-16.

- **Homeless Coalition Board Election Timeline**

  Jynessa Lazzaroni explained that a timeline has been developed for nominations and voting for the 2026 HC Board elections, which are upcoming in December 2025. Five seats will be open for election, to be announced at the January 28, 2026 meeting.

  The timeline and additional information are included within the packet of meeting materials, Item #5, pg. 16.

  Informational item only; no action taken.

- **Emergency Shelter Utilization Report**

  Daniel Overbury-Howland presented slides depicting shelter utilization trends and averages for 2025. Edits had been made, as directed by the HC Board at a previous meeting presentation.

  The average of shelter utilization for the period from March - September 19th, 2025 was about seventy-two (72%) percent. Capacity was nine-hundred thirty-nine (939) beds, with six-hundred eighty-five filled.

  Additional information and a link to the shelter utilization report is included within the packet of meeting materials, Item #5, pgs. 16-17.

  Informational item only; no action taken.

Public Comment: None

- **Motion**: Mayor McDonnell moves to approve the recommendation for holiday schedule adjustments as outlined in the staff report:
    - Cancel the November 2025 HC Board meeting.
    - Reschedule the December 24, 2025, HC Board meeting to Wednesday, December 17, 2025, 1-5 PM

  Second: Mayor Zollman seconds the motion.

  Abstentions or Objections: None

  Motion passes.

6. Lead Agency Evaluation Update (00:29:56 – 00:31:56)

- Jennielynn Holmes reports that the Lead Agency Evaluation Ad Hoc Committee is developing a survey to elicit public and stakeholder feedback for evaluation of the performance of the lead agency. The ad hoc plans to finalize the survey questions at their next meeting.

  Additional information describing the lead agency evaluation process is included within the packet of meeting materials, Item #6, pg. 18.

  Public Comment: None.

  Informational item only; no action taken.

7. Coordinated Entry Annual Performance Report (00:31:58 – 01:11:24)

- Thai Hilton presented the annual performance report for Coordinated Entry, as required by the HC Board charter. This assessment consists of three parts: regulatory compliance, presented by Thai Hilton; accomplishments, presented by Hunter Scott, Vice-President of HomeFirst Sonoma County; and data review, presented by Caitlin Johnson- Carney, HomeFirst Coordinated Entry Director.

  Additional information and a link to the complete self-assessment are included within the packet of meeting materials, Item 7, pg. 19.

  Public Comment: None. **Informational item only; no action taken.**

8. Service Provider Roundtable (SPR) Update (01:11:15 – 01:11:42)

- This item was omitted, as no representatives for the Service Provider Roundtable were in attendance to provide an update.

9. Committee Membership and Quorum Issues (01:11:45 – 01:23:31)

- Thai Hilton described quorum issues currently being experienced by the Coordinated Entry Advisory (CEA) Committee, as well as the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Data Committee.

  The CEA Committee allows as many as thirteen (13) to fifteen (15) participants. Difficulties arise when attendance at any given meeting is insufficient to maintain a quorum, resulting in cancelled meetings. No particular skill set is necessary to participate on this committee.

  The HMIS Data Committee is comprised of thirteen (13) seats, but currently only has ten (10) members. Recruitment efforts haven't proven fruitful in establishing a full roster. This committee explores issues of a more technical nature, so it's desirable that participants have some specialized skillsets, such as analytical, data, and systems thinking.

  The staff recommendation presents two options to amend the Governance Charter to address these issues:

  Option A: Adjust committee quorum requirements to improve functionality of large Committees,

  Option B: Reduce the required number of members for certain committees to better align with available capacity and skillsets.

  Additional information describing the membership committees' membership and quorum issue is included within the packet of meeting materials, Item #9, pg. 20 -21.

  Public Comment: Sasha Brown

  Motion: Mayor McDonnell moves to update the Governance Charter to reflect Option A: Adjust committee quorum requirements to improve functionality of large committees.

  Second: Councilmember Jackie Elward seconds the motion.

  Abstentions or Objections: None

  Motion passes.

10. 10-Minute Break: 2:22 – 2:35 PM (01:23:34 – 01:36:40)

11. **Point in Time (PIT) Count Full Report (01:36:41 – 02:30:33)**

- Michael Gause presented an overview of the full 2025 PIT Count Report. This count of the unsheltered population in Sonoma County occurred on January 31, 2025, and revealed a decrease of 23% in the unsheltered population in Sonoma County; a total of 1,952 individuals were observed, as compared to a count of 2,522 individuals in 2024.

  Of particular note, however, were an increase of 37% in unsheltered families, and an increase of 20% in the chronically homeless population.

  Staff analysis of the PIT Count Report and a link to access the full report are included within the packet of meeting materials, Item #11, pgs. 22 -24.

  The 2026 PIT Count will occur on Friday, January 30, 2026.

  In consideration of the current climate of impending funding cuts, the HC Board entertained an in-depth discussion of the findings of the PIT Count report with respect to prioritizing funding and developing collaborative efforts to consolidate resources to best support the future needs of various demographics within the unsheltered community.

  One suggestion is to utilize the 2025 PIT Count data in reviewing the Strategic Plan to identify the strategies that are most relevant in this moment, and to re-prioritize those that would most effectively produce optimal outcomes, although the Strategic Plan as a whole would not be rewritten. To that end, the Board desires to continue the discussion via a future agenda item.

  Public Comment: None.

  Informational item only; no action taken

12. **Word from the LEAP Board (02:30:37 – 02:34:00)**

- Chessy Etheredge reported that the LEAP Board has completed their survey of shelter residents and staff. Fifty-five (55) responses were received from residents and twenty-two (22) from shelter staff. The LEAP Board will now embark upon analysis of the results in an effort to acknowledge practices that are working efficiently, and to identify areas of needed improvement. Once further research is completed and solutions are developed, the LEAP Board will bring a new set of advisory recommendations to the HC Board.

  Public Comment: None.

  Informational item only; no action taken.

13. **Coordinated Entry Redesign Implementation (02:34:01 – 02:54:17)**

- In late 2023, a workgroup within the Homeless Coalition began a complex process to redesign the assessment and prioritization elements of Coordinated Entry (CE). Thai Hilton explained that the HC Board subsequently approved a proposal to redesign the CE assessment tool and prioritization process in May 2025. An abbreviated and more trauma informed assessment tool was developed to replace the VI-SPDAT, in collaboration with innumerable agencies, providers, and community groups.

  The lead agency has been working in conjunction with HomeFirst to implement the new assessment tool and prioritization process. Updated prioritizations were developed for all populations and a new population for seniors was added. Assessments for all populations were updated, as well, with one combined assessment to be utilized for all.

  Kaitlin Carney of HomeFirst presented an in-depth analysis of the updates and policy changes needed to put the new assessment tool and prioritization process into practice. Included are the replacement of the VI-SPDAT assessment tool with the "CES Combined Primary Assessment," and the renaming of the By Names List to the "Dynamic Housing Roster."

  The following changes to CE policies and procedures were unanimously approved at the September Coordinated Entry Advisory (CEA) Committee meeting

  - Edited Assessment and Prioritization sections to align with new CES model
    - Prioritization changes: pgs. 28-41
    - Assessment changes: pgs. 18-27
    - Enhanced Assessment, Prioritization, and Progressive Engagement Transfers: pgs. 28-34
  - Changed all mentions of VI-SPDAT to CES Combined Primary Assessment, By Names List/BNL to Dynamic Housing Roster: Throughout
  - Added Seniors population: Throughout
  - Added Additional Appendix- CES Combined Primary Assessment: pgs. 87-89
  - Added new Forms to Appendixes, pgs. 92-97:
    - Permanent Supportive Housing Enhanced Assessment Form,
    - Enhanced Assessment – Mitigation Form,
    - Progressive Engagement Form
  - Updated CES Performance Evaluation measurement criteria: pgs. 73-78
  - Updated MOU requirements for Cooperating Agencies: pgs. 79-85
  - Removed "Information Sharing Partner" Cooperating Agency designation. Pg. 80
  - Updated CES eligibility definition to align with the CoC/ESG rules rather than the HEARTH Act: pg. 3
  - Clarified that a simple majority is needed for all CES Case Conference votes EXCEPT the initial referral decision, which requires a unanimous vote. pg. 43

The staff recommendation is to approve the updates to the CE policies and procedures.

Additional information, along with a link to the full text of the CE Policies and Procedures document, are included within the packet of meeting materials, Item #13, pgs. 25-26.

Public Comment: None.

Motion: Chessy Etheredge moves to approve the updates to CE policies and procedures.

Second: Maria Rico seconds the motion.

Abstentions or Objections: None.
Motion passes.

14. October Quarterly Membership Meeting Agenda (02:54:19 – 02:57:18)

- Jynessa Lazzaroni presented the agenda for the October 16th Quarterly Membership Meeting, which includes presentations from Sonoma Works and the Family Justice Center. Thai Hilton will also present the annual Emergency Transfer Plan (ETP) training. The draft agenda is included in the meeting packet of materials, Item #14, pgs. 27-28.

  Motion: Maria Rico moves to approve the Quarterly Membership Meeting agenda.

  Second: Chris Cabral seconds the motion.
  Abstentions or Objections: None.

  Motion passes.

15. Review Agenda for October Coalition Board Meeting (02:54:19 – 02:59:14)

- Michael Gause reviewed the draft agenda for the October 22, 2025, HC Board meeting, which is included with in the packet of meeting materials, Item #15, pgs. 29 -31.

  Mayor Zollman requests the following additions to the October 2025 meeting agenda:

  - A continued discussion of utilizing the PIT Count data in consideration of adjustments to Strategic Plan priorities,

  - A discussion to brainstorm ways to incentivize Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) developers to incorporate Coordinated Entry and PIT Count data into their project planning process.

- **Public Comment**: None.

  Chair Holmes notes that the additional requests will be taken into consideration for future agenda items, if not possible for the October 2025 agenda

16. **Board Member Questions and Comments (02:59:17 – 02:59:41)**

- None.
- **Public Comment:** None.

17. **Public Comment on Items not on the Agenda (02:59:44– 03:00:00)**

- None.

Adjournment: 4:02 PM (03:00:04 – 03:00:26))