

Sonoma County Community Development Committee



Human Services Dept. Representative: Oscar Chavez (Chair), Tenant Representatives: Stephanie Hiller, Jessica Vega  
1<sup>st</sup> Dist: Betzy Chavez (Vice Chair) 2<sup>nd</sup> Dist: Michael Regan 3<sup>rd</sup> Dist: Vacant 4<sup>th</sup> Dist: Willie Lamberson 5<sup>th</sup> Dist: Linda Garcia  
Interim Executive Director: Barbie Robinson, MPP, JD, CHC

**Public Meeting and Workshop**  
**Concurrent with Cities & Towns Advisory Committee**  
Wednesday, March 18, 2020

**Minutes**

**1. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Oscar Chavez called the meeting to order at 10:07AM and roll was called  
Committee Members Present: Oscar Chavez, Stephanie Hiller, Betzy Chavez, Michael Regan, Willie Lamberson, Jessica Vega  
Committee Members Absent: Linda Garcia

CD Staff Present: Tina Rivera, Interim Assistant Director; Felicity Gasser, Equity and Compliance Manager; Martha Cheever, Housing Authority Manager; Diedre Duncan, Affordable Housing Asset Manager; Holly Kelley, Equity and Compliance Specialist; Thai Hilton, Housing Authority Special Projects Coordinator; Darrin O'Hara, Administrative Aide.

**2. Public Comments for Items Not on the Agenda**

No comments were made

**3. Approval of Minutes from January 15, 2020 Meetings**

Betzy Chavez moved to approve the minutes from February 19, 2020. Willie Lamberson seconded:

Ayes: Oscar Chavez, Betzy Chavez, Michael Regan, Willie Lamberson, Jessica Vega

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Linda Garcia, Stephanie Hiller

**4. Assistant Director's Report**

Tina Rivera, Interim Assistant Director, gave a report on the status of the Joe Rodota Trail efforts, the success of Los Guilicos Village and the current effort of the Board of Supervisors to site locations for a semi-permanent indoor-outdoor shelter. On March 10<sup>th</sup> the Board also received update on the Homeless Encampment Assistance and Resource Team (HEART) spearheaded by Supervisor Hopkins which does outreach for those living in encampments, and the 100 Day Challenge approved by the Board, which calls for the Community Development



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Commission to move at least 75 individuals through the systems of care into homes. Tina also briefed the Committees on the current response to the COVID-19 outbreak and how County is approaching response. Departments are reorganizing to enable social distancing and only essential functions are operating. Committee members had questions about how the County was working with providers to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among encampments and in homeless shelters.

### 5. Public Hearing: CDBG and HOME Recommendations

Felicity Gasser, Equity and Compliance Manager, presented the staff recommendations for FY2020-21 federal funding. If Committees' approve, we will include these projects for the 2020-2021 Action Plan which will then be submitted to HUD. Felicity went over the policies on the webex powerpoint and in the memos in the committees' agenda packets. Committee members had questions for staff as to whether the decision to move \$40,000 from Housing Rehabilitation to Catholic Charities' predevelopment would hamper the Rehabilitation Program's ability to carry out its work. The Committee also asked clarifying questions of applicants including populations to be served by the projects and certain project eligibility for CDBG-DR.

#### Public Comment

Mary Stompe, Director of PEP Housing, stated that CDC staff had told her not to apply for funding this round because City of Santa Rosa projects were not being considered. She has been turned down 3 times in prior applications. PEP was previously turned down for the Los Guilicos site which is now sited as a homeless shelter. Where are these policies and where are they written down and why in the last round would you not fund Santa Rosa projects but now you are [funding Caritas Center]?

Felicity Gasser explained that Los Guilicos was not eligible for Federal Funds for a permanent project. The shelter sited there is not federally funded and is temporary. The projects physically located in City of Santa Rosa recommended for funding are projects that serve clients referred through coordinated entry and therefore the population served is the Urban County. The regulations stipulate that is how the funding must be allocated. We can't fund a project that serves City of Santa Rosa residents only. Finally, the CDC did not tell any applicant not to apply. They only provided technical assistance and directed applicants to the regulations if in question.

Che Casul, Center for Social and Environmental Stewardship, wanted to clarify a few of CDC's staff concerns on the Windsor Center project. I appreciate staff evaluating us for HOME funding. I wanted to address some of the concerns over eligibility. The staff report says we



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don't bring other funding to the table - we own the property free and clear and have pledged \$500,000 of our reserves to that project. Other concern was over ability to fundraise. We are brand new staff, in four months they have already raised a significant amount of funds. This project would house transitional-age youth, which is the only population among homeless that is skyrocketing. We would also be teaching them skills and trades to be successful so that they could qualify for other units that the CDC is helping to fund and contribute to the community.

Pamela Swan, Catholic Charities, clarified that the Caritas Center project is aligned with Housing First and Coordinated Entry. The project will serve residents countywide.

Jessica Vega moved to approve the staff recommendations for FY 2020-21 Funding, Betzy Chavez seconded

Ayes: Oscar Chavez, Betzy Chavez, Michael Regan, Willie Lamberson, Jessica Vega, Stephanie Hiller

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Linda Garcia

### 6. FSS Action Plan

Thai Hilton, Special Projects Coordinator for the Housing Authority, gave a presentation on the Family Self-Sufficiency program and the benefits for participants. The program is not mandatory. An important part of the program is the establishment of a PCC or program coordinating committee, whose functions will be to assist the Housing Authority in securing commitments of public and private resources for the operation of the FSS program within the HA's jurisdiction. Thai also covered incentives and outreach for the program and how families are selected for the program. Clients accrue savings in an escrow account made up of the difference of their rent portion when it increases. Thai described how escrow funds are dispersed when a client graduates the program. Interim disbursements can be made to meet some part of the client's goal. Participation and success in the FSS program has no impact on participant housing assistance – if they fail to meet a goal on the program they do not lose their voucher. Thai shared a couple of success stories from recent graduates of the program. Committee members asked about case management, coordination with other service providers and how escrow income might affect other benefits. Thai is the Housing Authority's case manager, he actively coordinates with other service providers of the clients. Because the escrow is kept in the Housing Authority, the money deposited does not impact a client's



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qualification to other income-eligible programs.

**Public Comment**

Thomas Ells, St Vincent de Paul, had a question about those who are terminated or drop out of the program – what happens to their escrow funds? Are people immediately terminated, is there dispensation for those people? He also noted that some of the success stories had graduates who had been in the program for more than 5 years.

Thai responded that the program is initially 5 years, but clients can request an extension for two years. There’s a conversation between caseworker and client about causes as to why goals weren’t met. We make provisions for people who have reasons such as loss of job, sick family member, etc, it’s a very personal process.

Jessica Vega moved to approve the FSS Action Plan. Betzy Chavez seconded the motion:  
Ayes: Oscar Chavez, Betzy Chavez, Michael Regan, Willie Lamberson, Jessica Vega, Stephanie Hiller  
Nays: None  
Abstain: None  
Absent: Linda Garcia

**7. Housing Authority Rapid Rehousing Budget Update**

Martha Cheever, Housing Authority Manager, walked through the budget for the rapid rehousing program that was asked for at the February 19<sup>th</sup> meeting. She explained the breakdown of different sources and role of consultants. We expect over the next month to have 11 more people receiving services through the Housing Navigation and Location program – so far this program has served 2. She described all of the programs and funding sources (provided in slides and in packet) Committee members asked if the Housing Authority planned to spend all the money by December. Concerns about delays caused by the coronavirus aside, yes.

No public comment was received on the Housing Authority Rapid Rehousing Budget Update

**8. Public Hearing Open for PHA 5 Year Plan at 12:45PM.**

Martha Cheever, Housing Authority Manager, presented on the Public Housing Authority Five-Year Plan. She reviewed the goals (see slides or packet). She also went over the outcomes of the prior five year period (2015-2020). She then went over the proposed changes in the 1-Year



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Administrative Plan.

### Public Comment

Thomas Ells, I understand that there's approximately 3000 HUD vouchers in Sonoma County – how many are county and how many are city of santa rosa, and are there any in Petaluma?

Martha responded that the SoCo Housing Authority has 3000 vouchers, and the City of Santa Rosa has just under 2000 vouchers. While Petaluma is an entitlement jurisdiction, it is assigned to the County who oversees their vouchers.

Mark Krug, Burbank Housing, emailed in that non-competitive PBVs should be transparent Heather Anderson, resident, emailed in a comment expressing concern that residents in PBV housing apartments will not be required to participant in supportive services. We are enabling people who are in need of drug/rehab services (full comment attached)

Kirsten Barquist, resident, emailed a lengthy comment with proposals for recreational vehicles, and converting mobile home parks to telework sites, (full comment attached)

Thomas Ells, St. Vincent de Paul, so much in those last public comments warranted some comment. Some good suggestions about the RVs and utilization and problems with trailer parks, it would be helpful – there used to be a statewide funding source for residents of mobile home parks to purchase the parks. I don't know if that information is being provided and instead, outside parties are buying up the properties and making them unaffordable for seniors and low income. Some of those comments were very salient as well as other aspects of RV utilization.

### 7. Adjournment

Oscar Chavez adjourned the meeting at 1:13PM

Respectfully submitted,

Holly Kelley, Equity and Compliance Program Specialist



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