

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, August 16, 2021 PM

JD—Jim DeTro, BOCC, District 3, absent
AH—Andy Hover, BOCC, vice-chair, District 1
CB—Chris Branch, BOCC, chair, District 2
LJ—Lalena Johns-clerk to the Commissioners
LD—Lael Duncan, Exec Director, Okanogan County Community Action Council
CT—Collin Thompson, Office of Rural and Farmworker Housing
NN-M—Nancy Nash-Mendez—Executive Director, Housing Authority of Okanogan County

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Summary of significant discussions:

Commissioners discuss a request for additional funds for a 16-unit housing project for low income seniors in Omak. There is much discussion about the Affordable Housing budget vs the Homeless Housing budget and which budget the money should come from. It's decided that AH and LJ will examine the budgets and propose a scenario. If the Housing Coalition accepts the scenario, the budget request will be approved tomorrow morning.

2:58:30—Discussion of Meadowlark Senior Housing request made by the Housing Authority of Okanogan County.

LJ—Housing Authority has submitted a letter with a proposal for gap funding from either Affordable or Housing funds that the county has.

CT—introduces himself. Working with Nancy on the Meadowlark Senior Housing project.

CB—Request is for overrun that includes framing, floor joists, truss material, retaining wall, trenching conduits, primary power and contingency for future unexpected costs. Total \$100,000.

LJ—BOCC had approved earlier this year \$135,000 for cost overruns, due to project changes the city needed. Also includes additional things the city requires, and prices have increased significantly since the project was awarded.

LD—I don't know how much of the funds have already been committed. In principle, I support this request. Several of us suggested to the Housing Authority that they make the request for \$100,000 instead of having to come back for a third budget adjustment.

CB—But coalition recommends approval?

LD—Yes.

CT—I don't have anything to add. It's all in the letter. The project is 41% complete. We've had in-depth conversation with architect and general contractor and they don't foresee any future change orders. Most of those happen in the beginning. But you never know.

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AH—Just to be sure, because in another county, there were issues with homeless funds, does Meadow Lark meet the statutory requirements for both the Affordable Housing fund and Homeless Housing fund?

LD—My understanding is that this is Senior Housing.

CT—Yes. It's 16 units dedicated 100% to Senior Housing.

AH—So this is Affordable Housing, not Homeless?

CT—Yes. Low income, 50% Area Median Income (AMI) and no Homeless component.

AH—So the only budget we can look at is Affordable Housing, correct?

CT—Yes.

LJ—We allocated \$135,000...

AH—From the Affordable Housing fund?

LJ—From both. It was \$67,500 from Affordable and \$67,500 from Homeless.

CB—Is it correct that Homeless funds can't be used for this project, Lael?

LD—I have to check. There's some latitude. Certainly the Affordable funds are the cleanest way to look at it.

AH—We want to make sure the money we allocated to Homeless...

LJ—We also allocated \$75,000 to Homeless for the tiny homes.

AH—We need to get this straightened out. If we can't use the Homeless funds, their \$67,500 would need to come out of Affordable, and they're over-allocated in our budget this year.

CT—In our funding application to the Department of Commerce, we didn't made any commitment for Homeless at Entry. Based on that, Nancy would be OK with homeless because of the waiting list. We didn't commit ourselves to Commerce, but homeless would be served. I can confirm that with Serena on the phone or even Nancy. She's at Sea-Tac right now, but I think I could get her on the phone.

AH—Yeah. We need absolute confirmation that Homeless funds can be used for this project. We rely on the Housing Coalition to do this research for us.

AH and LJ review what amounts have been budgeted for the year.

3:12:35—CT—I have Nancy on the phone. She'll explain how the units would be allocated to Homeless.

NN-M—Project is not set aside only for homeless, but it's in our mission to waitlist our homeless seniors who are going to be served first in this property. The majority will be homeless at entrance. And I'm confident that serving the homeless seniors first will remain the policy for this property as well.

AH—Nancy, thank you for verifying this.

CB—I think the expenditures meet our own local homeless housing plan. Is that correct?

LD—Yes.

NN-M—Yes. (*Unintelligible due to bad phone reception*) This project will serve the whole county, not just Omak.

CB—Again, to meet the criteria for using Homeless funds, I recall part that of the strategy to avoid homelessness is to have affordable housing. Correct?

NN-M—Yes. That's correct.

AH—As long as it meets our Homeless Housing Plan?

AH—I wanted to double-check. (to LJ)—Do you have the budget printed now?

3:16:20—LJ—Yes. The Affordable fund has committed \$125,000. \$50,000 to Housing Services. \$75,000 to Community Homeless Shelters. We've spent a portion of that budget on the \$67,500 that we just processed.

AH and LJ discuss budget allocations. LD and Nancy both say that the money could come from the Homeless budget.

AH—Here's what I propose: Can we develop this further with a budget, where we can see all of the expenditures. The money we were just talking about is allocated through the Affordable fund. If that can

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be allocated through the Homeless fund, that's great and we probably wouldn't need a supplemental. But we'd have to do a supplemental for the Homeless fund. I want to make sure the entire Housing Coalition is on board and voted on any changes to the budgets we're looking at.

LD—I'm happy to facilitate. I don't think there's any question about this project.

CB—to AH—Can you do this by tomorrow?

AH—Yes.

CB—I think we're both looking at this in a positive light.

AH—Yes. I just want to make sure we have the money in these funds and how much we'll have at the end of the year.

CB—So we can make a decision tomorrow on this request.

AH—Normally when we're budgeting, the Housing Coalition comes up with the recommendations for us. I know it needs to be expedited. But I want the Housing Coalition to tell us how much they want to use from the Affordable fund and how much from the Homeless fund for this project. And then we have to come up with where are we going to take the extra \$100,000 from.

AH—Reviews the budget numbers.

CB—Given the time constraints right now... This is a letter from the Housing Coalition we're looking at...

LD—I can get together with AH and/or LJ

AH—LJ and I will get together and develop a budget and possible scenarios.

LD—I'll be available all day long and LJ knows how to get in touch with me.

NN-M—I'll be nine hours away, but Collin knows how to get in touch with me and LJ has my email, and I'll try to answer any questions.

AH—One question—are we going to split the \$100,000 50/50 between Affordable and Homeless?

LD—We were planning to allocate the money all from Affordable, but if we take some from Homeless, that would be great because then we'd have more in affordable.

AH—OK, we'll get you something to look at by tomorrow morning.

NN-M—Thank you for all your help.

CB—You're very welcome. OK. We're adjourned for the day.