

Board of Directors — Special Meeting

March 27, 2020, at 8 a.m.

Minutes of virtual meeting



Notice: This special meeting of the SJCoC Board of Directors was called in accordance with Section VIII, Part E of the SJCoC Charter by Chair Jon Mendelson to facilitate needed coordination and action regarding the COVID-19 public health crisis.

Call to Order

8 a.m.

Roll Call

Directors: Jon Mendelson, John Ledbetter, Adam Cheshire, Peter Ragsdale, Mike Kelly, Carrie Wright, Jenn Rowell, Kate Hutchinson, Matt Garber, Britton Kimball, Randy Pinnelli, Edward Figueroa, Bill Mendelson

Committee Chairs not on Board: Wayne Richardson, Kristen Birtwhistle

Minutes

1. Minutes from 03-23-2020 meeting
 - a. Minutes provided as "Attachment 1"

Motion by Bill Mendelson. Second by Carrie Wright. Approved 13-0.

Public Comment

None

Discussion, Information, and Action items

1. SB 89 funding for COVID-19

Decide priority areas for expenditure and decide actual expenditure of SB 89 funding to respond to COVID-19 crisis among homeless population for money allocated to San Joaquin Continuum of Care (\$512,733.78);

Recommend priority areas for expenditure of SB 89 funding to respond to COVID-19 crisis among homeless population for money allocated to San Joaquin County and City of Stockton
Jon Mendelson provided a recap of the need for this discussion and provided some detail on the process to date, and the importance of the SJCoC providing recommendations to city and county.

Adam Cheshire provided background on the process to date to acquire SB 89 funds and provided details about information coming out of the State

Carrie Wright discussed \$1.2M allocated by the Stockton City Council to a response to COVID-19 and discussed the priorities and goals of that funding and how it might be used for COVID-19 response; mentioned the specific plans around homelessness including direct allocations to St. Mary's, GCRM, SSH and CVLIHC; mentioned rental assistance as a major goal in order to prevent new homeless in this critical time; SB 89 funds from the City will not fund motels and will likely be used for trailers and other goals;

Jon Mendelson mentioned that there will be additional Federal ESG funds in the next 30 days that could go to current ESG recipients to support service providers; Bill Mendelson added that immediate local impact of ESG funds would be approximate 7 times the normal annual distribution, and also shared that CVLIHC has received in excess of 500 calls in the last few days from people unable to make rent, highlighting the urgency of Carrie's comments regarding rental assistance

Edward Figueroa stated that he hoped consideration would be made to increase the amount going to shelter operators because the funds being discussed are not currently sufficient to meet demand County-wide as local organizations are experiencing significant increases in cost due to COVID-19

Wayne Richardson stated that he agrees with Bill and Carrie regarding rental assistance, and that keeping individuals in their housing would contribute to the need to shelter in place; mentioned that the biggest expense for shelter operators is a loss of income because of inability to fundraise due to COVID-19, which is typically not a cost that grants will cover; highlighted that GCRM also does food daily and wants to be included

Matt Garber disagrees with everyone so far; the motel group doesn't have plans to move forward without funding; we need to be positioned when the money arrives; we should anticipate major increases in COVID infection; isolating the homeless should be our top priority to stop the spread;

John Ledbetter stated that County SB 89 money should go to procure facilities while other sources go to fill the gaps

Peter Ragsdale mentioned that front line operations will be a huge priority and support for service providers will be key to avoid worsening outcomes

Jennifer Rowell stated that it is important for the SJCoC to take an approach that is county-wide

Randy Pinnelli stated that funds should not right now be directed toward rental assistance because of the eviction protections put in place; and that the Army Corps of Engineers are available as a possible resource and could act very quickly, and we should be making an effort to bring them to San Joaquin County

Mike Kelly stated that in Manteca there were a couple of options for sites that could benefit from the Army Corps acting quickly

Carrie Wright stated that the CoC could provide resources outside of Stockton considering what the City and County will likely be doing with the funds; and that motels will alleviate pressure on the shelters so support for that effort will be important

Bill Mendelson commented that the SB 89 funds are for specific purposes and should be focused on immediate impact on the public health crisis involving the homeless and provided multiple suggestions for how that might best be accomplished; mentioned that folks have stopped entering the shelters according to HMIS data collected in the past two months, and more and more are going unsheltered because of COVID-19

Randy Pinnelli discussed that we should be examining the numbers of individuals needed to be moved out of shelters and focus on moving people out of the shelters; mentioned that it will be difficult to get folks to enter the shelter, and we should have a plan in place to support them outside the shelters; Bill Mendelson added efforts happening in SF around folks with greater personal means who could potentially be more self-supportive in a motel;

Peter Ragsdale stated that while he agrees with Bill and Randy, support for service providers will also be necessary to achieve those goals. He also stated this money should be put out in expeditious fashion, and should go out on a per-bid basis that puts some cushion in those operations as quickly as possible.

Jon Mendelson invited JoLyn McMillan, CEO of Stockton Shelter, to discuss how capacity would be affected due to social distancing; JoLyn mentioned that their capacity is so far less impacted on the family side but the men's shelter is continuing to operate at near capacity making it impossible to practice social distancing, and that necessarily their capacity will need to be restricted dramatically to practice distancing; SSH would have to pull about 100 individuals out if they practice social distancing on the men's shelter.

Jon Mendelson asked the group to move on to discussing options for the CoC to allocate its funds and to think strategically about how CoC money is allocated in light of other resources;

Adam Cheshire mentioned that it will be important to assume that the County will be using 100% of its SB 89 funds to the motels for purposes of what other funds could be used for;

Britton Kimball stated that right now the shelters are the ones that are most heavily impacted and need the most immediate support and are incurring large, unanticipated expenses as they try to respond to COVID-19 with increased focus on sanitation and distancing

Peter Ragsdale suggested that prevention and shelter operations were good options to split a relatively small amount of funds; Jon asked for clarification regarding whether that was a suggestion or a motion

John Ledbetter agreed with Peter but questioned if the funds were dispersed to shelters it should go County-wide and Peter clarified that he agreed with that method of disbursement; Jon highlighted that up front disbursement will be important to avoid constraints on service providers

Jenn Rowell mentioned that communities without shelters should be considered for similar support

Edward Figueroa stated that the CoC funds should subsidize shelters and other emergency providers while the City and County focus on motels and made it a motion;

Jon Mendelson asked for clarification regarding the motion made by Edward

Britton Kimball commented that invoicing is a timing constraint; Jon mentioned that the SJCoC would recommend a formula or other up-front method for disbursement rather than a reimbursement; Adam mentioned that the standard agreement will determine the restrictions on the grants

Jon Mendelson mentioned that prevention is not necessarily an eligible use of SB 89; Adam mentioned that isolation capacity could be considered

Randy Pinnelli advocated the SJCoC support the shelters reducing capacity instead of providing general support to continue business as usual

Bill Mendelson suggest that funds need to go to shelters to cover the increased costs that Britton had mentioned and to improve conditions in encampments

Matt Garber agreed that it must go towards isolating the homeless

John Ledbetter stated that supporting shelters allow these funds to meet those goals

Randy Pinnelli advocated for more detailed constraints on the specific use of funds to address goals of improving health outcomes in shelters and encampments

Jon Mendelson mentioned that competing priorities were making it difficult to develop consensus and provided a recap of the goals discussed up to the moment.

Jon Mendelson asked Carrie Wright for more specifics about Stockton's SB 89 goals and wondered what impact the COC recommendations will have on their decisions; Carrie stated that she was unable to provide more detail but reiterated that funding for trailers will be factor, and stated that the motels will be unlikely to receive specific support

Wayne Richardson suggested that any amount to shelter operations could be allocated by ESG formula

Bill Mendelson stated that there is no allocation formula for ESG but that there is one for Emergency Food and Shelter Program, and that what Wayne is talking about only applies to shelter operations but not other items like street outreach and meals and there are a number of complications that need to be considered before this is adopted.

Jon Mendelson tried to clarify previous motions/suggestions regarding SJCoC SB 89 funding breakdowns.

Jon Mendelson stated that given the previous comments, he proposed that 80% of SJCoC money will go toward supporting efforts throughout the county to deal with the COVID-19 crisis, including operations and staff. This is for specific expenses related to COVID-19, also can be used for shelter, changing conditions in shelters to respond to COVID-19, outreach, sanitation to encampments, etc. It should be made available up front, and to outfits that can demonstrate their expenses are directly related to COVID-19 response. The other 20% should go toward a collaboration with the County to support capacity outside of the shelter environment, such as motels/hotels.

Carrie Wright clarified that surplus funds and SB 89 funds with the City will likely go towards shelter operations in Stockton

Motion by Bill Mendelson to approve the chair's suggested 80%-20% split, that 80% supporting countywide efforts for expenses directly related to COVID-19 response, and 20% for expanding shelter capacity considered in terms of "density reduction." Second by John Ledbetter.

Roll call vote

Bill: yes

John: yes

Adam: yes

Peter: yes

Mike: yes

Carrie: yes

Jenn: yes

Kate: yes

Matt: yes

Britton: yes

Randy: yes

Edward: yes

Jon: yes

13-0 approved.

Randy Pinnelli mentioned that he was concerned as to the oversight of the funding. Jon replied that oversight would be twofold: Initial application. Then sanctions for use that isn't outlined by the contemplated allowable expenses.

Jon Mendelson proposed the SJCoC recommend Stockton SB 89 funding focus on shelter expansion, but for the County to use some funds for shelter operations; Bill Mendelson asked to change language to say reducing density of shelters rather than expanding capacity; Jon would draft a letter to the SJCoC General Membership and send the recommendations to the City of Stockton and San Joaquin County. Motion by Bill Mendelson. Second by Peter Ragsdale.

Roll call vote

Bill: yes

Peter: yes

John: Yes

Adam: yes

Mike: yes

Carrie: yes

Jenn: away

Kate: away

Matt: yes

Britton: yes

Randy: yes

Edsard: yes

Jon: yes

11-0 approved.

Jon Mendelson thanked the group for the long and productive discussion

He stated that the next meeting would focus on the need to potentially re-evaluate HHAP priorities in response to COVID-19.

Adjournment

Motion by Bill Mendelson. Second by Carrie Wright.

Approved at 9: 57 a.m.