



## MARCH 2021 BOARD MINUTES

### **Board Members:**

Alix Midgley, Ben Ryan, Brendan Clark, Brian Arnold, Carla Respects Nothing, Eugene Wade, Elissa Hardy, Jennifer Biess, Kelli Barker, Mike Malloy

### **MDHI Staff:**

Jamie Rife, Julie Winkowski, Layla Said, Matt Meyer, Rebecca Mayer, Matt Richard, Sierra Trujillo

### **Other:**

Kristen Toombs (from the State), Mitch the Magician (Brian's icebreaker guest)

### **ADMINISTRATIVE**

Brian welcomed the group to the meeting. Brian invited his colleague Mitch to perform magic for the group.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Jennifer motioned to approve the consent agenda. Brian opened it up to the group for discussion. Ben asked if we had shares in Amazon stock. Matt said that we were given Amazon stock when we received the \$1.25 million award from the Bezos Day 1 Fund. The \$1.25 million is still in securities since the transfer had to go into a Fidelity brokerage account. Ben asked what the plan was for the securities account, which is something he did not anticipate us having. Matt said that we intend to spend the money rather than hold onto the securities long-term. Since the market is doing good right now, he said we plan to hold the stock until we know what we're spending it on. Fidelity is managing the fund for now, and the Finance Committee is analyzing this moving forward. Ben said there could be risk associated with a large market correction. Ben wanted to know if we had the capacity to hold stocks. He noted that he felt a little uneasy about it, depending on what the timeline is for spending the money. He hopes this is being discussed in the Finance Committee. Matt responded that we had to open the brokerage account quickly after receiving the award from Amazon. Matt said if the Board wanted us to sell the account, then we could sell it. Ben isn't sure that it would make sense for us to hold assets, as there is risk associated with this. He would prefer a high-yield savings account. Matt responded that the interest rate on these accounts was virtually zero. Ben would like the Finance Committee to re-examine this and analyze best practices around holding stock as a nonprofit. He would like us to answer this question in a more formal way. There were no more comments on the Consent Agenda.

*Brian covered the consent agenda.*

**Vote – Jennifer Biess motioned to Approve, Alix Midgley seconded, all in favor, none opposed**

### **TOPICS**

#### **Coordinated Entry Overview (Rebecca)**

Rebecca gave an overview of the Coordinated Entry System (CES). (*Slides included in Teams and via email*). She emphasized that although the system is mandated by HUD, we continue to adapt it to fit the unique needs of our community. Coordinated Entry (CE) is intended to fix the siloed social services system that existed prior to its creation, where someone experiencing homelessness would have to go provider by provider to find housing, filling out a different

assessment every time. We are no longer working on a first come, first serve basis in a system that retraumatizes people assessment after assessment. What CE does not fix is the amount of housing stock in the community. There are four main elements of CE: Access, Assessment, Prioritization, and Referral. Rebecca noted that we call it the *Community Queue* rather than “The List.” Since our queue is *prioritized*, it is dynamic and always changing. Rebecca reviewed the new COVID prioritization factors from HUD. Rebecca said she will return to the Board with a participating agency list.

Brian asked how people experiencing homelessness move through the system. Rebecca clarified that we are the lead agency for Coordinated Entry. While we have dedicated CE staff and a data team that manage it, it is inherently a community process. We want feedback and input. We cannot do it without the community. Our work lies in the convening, coordinating, and housing matching. Since we do not provide direct services, the client would be going to a service provider who has training to do diversion or give an assessment. The housing vacancies are entered in HMIS by our housing providers, and the OneHome team is does the matching. Ideally, the navigator is doing a warm handoff with the housing provider agency.

Brian asked how we interact with someone once they have been placed in housing, even 5 months after. Rebecca said it depends on the resource. If it is a CoC or ESG resource, that is where we are doing the monitoring. If we are seeing several unsuccessful outcomes from a PSH project, then we have a conversation in our Process Improvement Committee and System Performance Council. She mentioned the Board could talk more about the System Performance metrics that were turned into HUD 2 weeks ago.

Brian wanted to know more specifically about how we are measuring “quality of life.” After we spend all this money and effort placing people into housing, how are we making sure that their quality of life has improved overall and their mental state is healthy.

#### **Podcast (Brian)**

Brian asked the group what they thought about the Podcast he sent out called “The List.” Ben thanked Rebecca for emphasizing the undersupply of housing resources in the community. He said it’s a shame that we even have to make these prioritization decisions, as it seems somewhat inhumane. It can determine if some people live or die. One thing to remember that Rebecca highlighted well is that this doesn’t have to be where the sticking point is. There is no fundamental limitation to the amount of housing we could acquire and allocate. Ben said that while we should be looking at our prioritization being equitable, we also shouldn’t be forced to make these decisions as a community. Rebecca thanked Ben for that point.

Brian asked about how transparent we were about how we prioritized our queue, and how public facing this info is. Rebecca said we are not transparent in publishing the queue to the entire community since it is always moving and has PII (personally identifiable information), but we do share it in case conferencing with our providers. We are currently standing up more robust case conferencing. We share the queue with providers and go through the first 30 or so at the top. It is difficult when there are hundreds of names and maybe 6 housing resources on a given day.

Kelli said she really liked that podcast and thanked Brian for sharing it. Kelli had a question about how we are using OneHome for prevention. Kelli asked about what tool we use for prevention. Rebecca said we are in the early days with a pilot program for the ESG that comes through MDHI. We are starting with ESG partners and a partnership with the Salvation Army Connection Center. They have been an awesome partner in that work. Rebecca said she will share the assessment with the group. Kelli asked if the State’s HPA program is going to use OneHome as well. Kristen jumped in to say that we will not be using OneHome at this time. They are just piloting with the ESG program for now but will move other resources over to OneHome if necessary.

Eugene asked if we publish how we prioritize people. Rebecca said yes, and we have typically posted that on the OneHome website. Since we are in the process of revamping our prioritization, she can’t promise that we have it posted. Eugene also had a question about the lack of affordable housing. He asked: where is the money coming from, and where are they looking to build more housing at a more reasonable rate? Kristen said the State is currently looking across all of Colorado to see where we can build all types of housing projects. While we get money from HUD, it is only a sliver of

what we need to build enough to meet the demand. We try to prioritize projects that are committed to being affordable for a long time, are built in opportunity zones, have a focus on equity, and are dispersed across the state. Kristen said every year they have 2 trainings to help communities help build affordable housing. Kristen said she is happy to share more about what that looks like. Over 1,000 units have been created in the past 5 years in 19 different counties across Colorado. There are federal stimulus dollars coming in, along with State dollars.

Jennifer said from the perspective of the Department of Housing and Stability from City and County of Denver, they have a [2020 Budget](#) that shows a breakdown of funding line by line on page 17.

In reference to the podcast, Elissa said that she has had similar conversations with people she's worked with. She is curious what conversations are happening on the streets right now. She has heard people refer to CE as "the list" since people are always placed on lists, and she wanted to open that up for conversation. Alix said she has done 200-300 VI-SPDATS in the past few years, and the podcast resonated with what she's heard from people about their experiences. As a service provider administering the assessment or trying to explain to someone experiencing homelessness how the system works, it's very complicated. There are many cultural challenges. She could tell you which part of the population would be made uncomfortable by each question on the assessment. It is hard to be as transparent as possible with a system that is even complicated for someone who works in it every day.

Brian asked what happens when a provider doesn't want someone on that "list." What does that look like on the administrative side? Matt said we are not policing the truthfulness of the responses, which would be challenging for us to do as an organization. Matt wanted to talk about CE as a method for managing scarcity. He said we cannot design a good enough CE system to end homelessness with the current state of resources. Matt said that a national group calculated that the US is about 90 billion behind what we need to get people housed. Matt said that when he was discussing the matter with a Senator, he thought at the very least, we'd need to take what we have now, round it up to 30 million, and double that. Matt thinks that was probably being too conservative. He feels it's heartbreaking to listen to the arguments and tensions that exist in case conferencing when our providers and OneHome coordinators sit down to do the work. You can feel the tension in the room because it is a no-win situation. And these are people that care deeply about the people in the shelters and on the streets. He doesn't know how they do it day in and day out. He feels the most genuine part of the podcast was when the provider broke down at the end.

Ben said he is glad a national organization was able to put a number to how far behind we are in addressing the housing crisis. He would like to see if we could contract a third party to answer the question of how much it would cost specifically in Metro Denver. What is the gap between current funding and what we would need to solve this problem? He thinks we could gain a lot of credibility and traction against that number. He wants us to be able to give elected officials as informed of an answer as possible. Jennifer wanted to bring up the importance around the By Name List approach. This gives us a concrete understanding of our current rate of outflow and inflow. Getting to quality data for all our populations is necessary, and when we have the BNL, we can then get to a place where we determine the total amount it would cost to reasonably address the issue.

Alix said she has been looking at this work differently as she begins a new chapter in her life. She asked the Board what their ethical responsibility is to call out the perpetuation of scarcity and the white supremacist mentality behind the allocation of scarce resources. How can we shift the conversation to a place where we are not just managing scarcity, but actually generating meaningful systems-level changes. Brian added there will never be enough money to throw at the problem and emphasized the need for us to think of new solutions. We need to look at our system that isn't working for the people it needs to work for. He asked the group to keep asking ourselves "what is working, and what is not working?"

### **Regional Strategic Planning (Jamie)**

The regional convening is well underway. We will be meeting with elected officials next week March 18 from 8:30am-11:30am. We are talking about local planning to address homelessness coordinated at the regional level. This

coordination has been years in the making, and we are finally at a place with our CES and HMIS to make it happen. Now is the time for us to capitalize on the expanded resources of the past year.

The rollout is in 3 phases with different sets of stakeholders in each phase, centered around regional coordination through the Built for Zero (BFZ) framework. BFZ is a national movement of 80 communities trying to end homelessness one subpopulation at a time.

MDHI will piggy-back off [DRCOG's](#) (Denver Regional Convening of Governments) infrastructure, which has been convening elected officials for years. They will be creating a Technical Advisory Committee that has a direct relationship with elected officials or their appointees. They currently already do this with transportation, and they will now be doing this for homelessness. We will also engage in outreach to providers that have historically not been a part of the process or CES. Jamie opened it up to questions.

Brian asked about the Q and A will work. Jamie said it will be like a conference where the panelists can moderate questions. Jamie noted that she is cautiously optimistic about this convening. She feels people are dying to have something tangible to address this issue of homelessness. She believes the BFZ framework can help our elected officials see homelessness as a solvable issue.

Brendan sees how there is urgent action needed. MDHI and other organizations are doing so much, but without elevating the need to the highest levels of government, things won't change in the way we need them to. One part that especially struck Brendan was that there are more people coming into the system than are exiting it. If we are only treating the symptoms rather than the causes, we cannot address the issue. Even tying this back to the Aurora Mayor incident, putting the issue of homelessness on the individual is unfair. Jamie agreed this raises a key point, being that there is a lot of misinformation that our elected officials are perpetuating. We need to change the perception of the "undeserving" versus "deserving." Part of what we're educating them about next week is that homelessness is different than how most people think of it.

Matt commented that as we do the regional work, we are trying to accomplish engagement with the suburban communities. Matt feels the timing is right, and he sees that in the work he's been doing with Tri-Cities. They are going to have a deeper understanding into the issues of homelessness, and as a result they will inevitably see the need for more affordable housing development. Matt said that although impressive work is already being done in these communities, he sees this as a time for us to work alongside them so they don't get discouraged. MDHI wants to support all the good people and good work already happening throughout the region. He mentioned that the energy coming off the run-through of the Regional Convening today was very optimistic.

Kristen said in response to Brendan's and Matt's point: something that comes up a lot is that "what we are doing isn't working." The blame gets put on the individual who is homeless or the service providers trying to help them through it. The messaging that we need to share with the community is that we DO have great examples of what works, but we just don't have enough of it. In our PSH program at the state, we have an 85% long term housing success rate. That means 8-9 out of every 10 individuals stays in housing. How can we do more good from the good we are already doing? At the State, we often hear different communities aren't sure what to do because they feel that nothing works. We need to be able to help them understand the need and how we can match the need. She wanted to flag that nuance for the group.

Carla is grateful that we are taking an outreach approach and reaching out to different communities that don't know about the services available to them. Carla is also on the BOD for Access Housing. They didn't know what MDHI did, and they are interested in working with us now that they know what we do. Reaching out to the outside communities and educating them on what we do is important as well.

### **Tableau Dashboards (Matt R.)**

Matt Richard introduced himself as a data analyst at MDHI. He said we are going to be rolling out a suite of dashboards to Board members soon. These have interactive reports of HMIS data. As members get access and have time to review the dashboards, you can submit questions or comments directly through Tableau (process outlined below).

With our partnership with BFZ and Community Solutions, we gained access to Tableau Server. One you login, you will want to change the default password in “Account Settings.” By default, you will have access to MDHI internal. Here, you will see several different things. We went over the MDHI CoC/ESG portfolio before. We have Key Performance Indicators for 2020 Metro Denver, by project type and by agency. We also have a 1-pager about the Denver Consolidated Shelter Project. Last addresses are available for people, showing that most people were residents of Colorado at the time they became homeless. This disproves the thought that people experiencing homelessness moved from other states. He recommends viewing the Metro Denver COHMIS Breakdown. It has way more filters than the 2020 Metro Denver version, the most recent breakdowns of our Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

You can email Matt at [matt.richard@mdhi.org](mailto:matt.richard@mdhi.org), submit a ticket to the HMIS HelpDesk, or click on the “Comments” icon at the top and type @Matt Richard. This will notify Matt directly of your comment on the dashboard. Matt sees a real opportunity here to inform the public and is excited to roll this out to everybody.

Carla asked about collecting information about Tribal Affiliations. Matt specified that those are HUD-required demographic options. He acknowledged that we don’t have great granularity outside of the current census buckets, but we are interested in moving in another direction. Carla mentioned they are currently collecting this data in Portland or Seattle.

### **Governance (Ben)**

Ben said there were no huge updates this meeting. He reminded the Board to reach out if they had time to join a committee and dive a little deeper into the work of MDHI. Board members can serve on the Finance Committee or the Governance Committee, or be one of the offices for next year. He said himself and John will be reaching out to people directly, but extra points will be given to those who reach out them directly. Before Ben joined the Governance committee, he felt like an outsider showing up to the Board meetings. He thinks the Board Committees are a great way to be more connected to the work of MDHI, and it really helps the Board out. He thinks it would best if we handle our official Board functions in Committee meetings so that we can continue to have high-level policy discussions at our Board meetings. He asked the group to let Brian, Matt, or John know if they are interested in either committee.

Ben mentioned we are also working on scheduling the retreat for Policy Governance. We are trying to time it so that we can do it in person towards the end of this year. This means that we are going to have the introductory remote session a few months before that.

### **Concluding Remarks (Brian)**

Brian reminded the group that we put out a survey for changing the day/week of our Board meetings. If we went on the First Tuesday of the month, there would be a lag of an extra month in our financials. The Finance Committee would be able to present any pressing information to the Board directly. In the interest of time, Brian said we would move the Board meeting to the first Tuesday of the month, which would be April 6<sup>nd</sup>.

At the next meeting we will have an executive session for the last 10-15 minutes. We will be discussing Matt’s evaluation.

If you would like a BFZ overview, let Brian know. The City of Aurora is also doing a virtual [Symposium on Safe Outdoor Spaces](#) on March 19<sup>th</sup>.

Matt mentioned he was also inviting the Board to participate in the [Whole Life Challenge](#). Everyone sets 7 goals related to different types of wellness. You don’t have to share your goals, but you mark off if you completed them and track them as a team. It is a fun way to focus on wellness and be social. About a dozen staff members will be participating in this. If you are interested, please email Matt Meyer.